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**Internationalism and Isolationism in Early American  
Foreign Affairs, circa. 1774 to 1789.  
An Eighteenth Century Balance of Power Perspective.**

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## Abstract

It is the central argument of this thesis that American foreign policy in its critical founding years involved an active participation in the European balance of power. A framework is presented of American foreign engagement in this period which rejects existing notions of the newly independent nation as diplomatically isolationist from the start. The thesis also rejects two generally accepted origins of isolation, an interpretation of President's Washington's 1796 Farewell Address as a warning against entangling alliances, and of an American neutrality as, what John Adams referred to as a perfect impartiality. Instead, concerns with neutrality and avoidance of alliances which are interchangeably quoted when discussing isolationism, are exposed as nuanced terms that had specific meanings. They are best understood as a framework that mandated a hybrid approach to the creation of policy, within which ideology and realism were given greater relative weight depending on international conditions. Hence, at the commencement of the Revolutionary War, the ideological basis of foreign affairs that rejected political alliances, enshrined in the 1776 Model Treaty, was compromised in favour of a French Treaty. After success in that War, foreign policy took on a subtle complexion. Once independence had been achieved, American statesmen felt compelled to articulate an approach to foreign affairs that, whilst claiming an equality of dealings with European powers, in practice circumvented that neutrality by taking advantage of their rivalries in a rapidly evolving view of American national interest. Analysis of early foreign affairs through this prism of balance of power, illustrates the effectiveness of the emerging, ideologically polarised American nation in confronting the established international structure that was the European equilibrium. An equilibrium designed to contain conflict and restrain power, provided fertile ground for statesmen to achieve the objectives of national interest without compromising the fundamental tenet of the American founding.

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arcane and esoteric ideas that sprang from the American Revolution and Constitutional reform, and his invaluable advice throughout.

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K.S. Girn

London, 2017

## Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1. Chapter One: Introduction .....</b>	<b>8</b>
The Analytical Timeframe .....	17
The First Period .....	18
The Second and Third Periods .....	20
The National Interest in the Second and Third Periods .....	22
Early Ideas of Isolationism .....	25
The Analytical Balance of Power Framework .....	29
Balance of Power: A General Theory .....	30
Balance of Power: A Theory of Peripheral State Involvement .....	33
The Historiography of Internationalism and Isolationism in Early American Foreign Affairs .....	38
Contribution of this Thesis to the Literature .....	44
Construction of the Thesis .....	47
<b>2. Chapter Two: National Interest on the Eve of the Revolution.....</b>	<b>53</b>
The Concept of National Interest.....	53
The Three Conditions for National Interest .....	54
The First Condition of National Interest: A Common Colonial Interest.....	61
The Quitrent as a Feudal System of Control .....	67
The Board of Trade as an Instrument of Colonial Government.....	68
The Expansion of Representative Assembly .....	71
The Development of Colonial Autonomy.....	74
The Second Condition of National Interest: Representation.....	77
The Catalyst for Action.....	77
Cohesion and the Predominating Grassroots View .....	81
Facets of Pan Colonial Cooperation at the Outset of the Revolution.....	83
The Colonial Surrender of Power to Congress.....	85
The Third Condition of National Interest: Neutralisation of Dissent .....	87
Conclusion.....	91
<b>3. Chapter Three: Balance of Power Thinking in the War Years .....</b>	<b>96</b>
Congress as the Unifying Force .....	96
French Motivation in Supporting Independence .....	103
Hard Balancing in the European Equilibrium: Alliance Building .....	107
Hard Balancing in the European Equilibrium: Naval Power.....	110
Soft Balancing in the European Equilibrium: France .....	112
Soft Balancing in the European Equilibrium: Spain.....	117

America as a Balance Participant in the Second Period .....	124
Conclusion.....	132
<b>4. Chapter Four: Balance of Power Thinking in the Post War Years .....</b>	<b>134</b>
The Conflation of Neutrality and Isolation within the Farewell Address.....	134
A Qualified American Neutrality .....	136
The Post-War National Interest .....	139
Neutrality and the Balance of Power.....	145
Exploiting Superpower Rivalries .....	148
National Interest in Security: Military Alliances.....	153
National Interest in Trade: Leveraging the 1778 French Alliance.....	155
National Interest in Territory: A Balance of Power Consideration .....	158
Conclusion.....	161
<b>5. Chapter Five: The Eighteenth Century Meaning of Isolationism .....</b>	<b>162</b>
Introduction .....	162
The Agri-Idealism of Jefferson .....	164
Location in the Literature of Foreign Influence .....	168
Republican and Monarchical Interest.....	171
The Permissive Environment of the State System .....	172
Incompetence of the Articles.....	172
Interstate Conflict .....	174
Incompetence in Trade .....	176
What the Constitution Would Achieve .....	179
The Federalist Argument for Engagement in Foreign Affairs .....	180
The Anti-Federalist Argument for Isolation in Foreign Affairs.....	184
The Isolationism of the Anti-Federalists .....	184
The Anti-Federalist Objection to Concentration of Power .....	187
The Anti-Federalist Reliance on the Balance of Power of the State System .....	192
<b>6. Chapter Six: Conclusion.....</b>	<b>194</b>
The Argument of this Thesis .....	194
Future Research Agenda .....	201
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>204</b>
Primary Sources .....	204
Secondary Sources .....	206

## 1. Chapter One: Introduction

An early twentieth century America isolated from the affairs of Europe, unwilling to enter into political alliances, and determined not to become unwittingly involved in European wars, has come to be associated directly with President Washington's Farewell Address of 1796.<sup>1</sup>

Washington explained that distance from Europe made the country safe from external danger and that it was permanent alliances with European nations that held out the prospect of dragging America into unnecessary wars. Hence; "*our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course....Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? ... It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world*".<sup>2</sup> It is this warning, that America must avoid entangling alliances, that has been taken by subsequent commentators to be evidence of the Founders' original intent that America must be isolated in its foreign affairs.<sup>3</sup> The Address has contemporary resonance with Donald Trump's America First doctrine, which, according to some, mandates disengagement from the world.<sup>4</sup> Hence, the warning of the Address as the *de facto* premise of an isolationist foreign

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<sup>1</sup> President George Washington, first President of the United States (1789 to 1797), and former Commander of the Continental Army. See; (i) Beeman R., *Plain, Honest Men, The Making of the American Constitution*, (Random House: New York, 2011), p. 415., Rossini D. (ed.), *From Theodore Roosevelt to FDR: Internationalism and Isolationism in American Foreign Policy*, (Keele University Press, Keele, 1995), pp. 13., and, Morison S. E., (et.al), *The Growth of the American Republic, Volume I*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1980), p.315., (ii) However, Bagby W. M., *America's International Relations Since World War I*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1999), p. 11., argue that Washington only warned against participation in European wars, not against trade and commercial connections. (iii) This is the idea of a Washingtonian "*quasi regime*", i.e. neutrality and isolationism, see Watson R. P., (et.al.), *Presidential Doctrines, National Security from Woodrow Wilson to George W. Bush*, (Novo Science: New York, 2003), p.15. (vi) However, some historians regard the warning of the Address as not actually influencing American foreign policy until about 1917 when President Woodrow Wilson finally called for a rejection of entangling alliances, and therefore power politics in international affairs, instead for a partnership of nations dedicated to world peace (within the League of Nations). Wilson explicitly rejected "*entangling alliances which would draw [nations] into competitions of power*", hence closely linking the consequences of entangling alliances with participation in the balance of power. See, Ambrosius L. E., *Woodrow Wilson, Alliances, and the League of Nations*, (*The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, Vol. 5, No. 2, April 2006), pp. 139-165. (v) For this idea that American isolationism in the early part of the twentieth century involved a desire to avoid entanglement in Europe, see; Morison S. E., (et.al), *The Growth of the American Republic, Volume II*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1980), p. 403. (vi) see also Johnstone A., *Against Evil. American Internationalists and the Four Freedoms on The Eve of World War II*, (Cornell University Press: New York, 2014), p.1, in which Johnstone argues for isolationism on the eve of World War II as no more than non-interventionism, and for the avoidance of any participation overseas.

<sup>2</sup> See [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/washing.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/washing.asp), accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2017.

<sup>3</sup> The actual term "*entangling alliances*" in fact comes from Thomas Jefferson's first inaugural address on election as President, see [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th\\_century/jefinau1.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/jefinau1.asp).

<sup>4</sup> See for example; Rothman L., *The Long History Behind Donald Trump's 'America First' Foreign Policy*, (Time Magazine, 28<sup>th</sup> March 2016) <http://time.com/4273812/america-first-donald-trump-history/>, accessed 16<sup>th</sup> January 2017, and Stephens P., *Trump Presidency: America First or America Alone?*, (Financial Times: London, 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017). For an alternative point of view which sees Trumpian policy not as isolationist, but in terms that define national interest in very specifically American, as opposed to



policy, persists and has been given the weight of history by equating it with the founding period.<sup>5</sup>

This thesis dispels the notion that America was founded on ideas of isolation by presenting an analysis of American foreign affairs in the years before Washington became President. An inquiry into the factors that influenced engagement with the world in the critical founding period from 1774, the ostensible start of the American Revolution, to 1789, when the Constitution had been adopted by the states, suggests that, from the start, America was actively involved in the European balance of power.<sup>6</sup> The analysis exposes, therefore, not an isolationist nation, but one firmly committed to full engagement with Europe, in other words, to an internationalist foreign policy.<sup>7</sup>

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universal terms, in other words not America First, but Americans First, see; Kagan R., *Trump marks the end of America as world's 'indispensable nation'*, (Financial Times: London, 19<sup>th</sup> November 2016).

<sup>5</sup> Kaplan L.S. in the essay; *Toward Isolationism: The Rise and Fall of the Franco-American Alliance*, in Kaplan L.S. (ed.), *The American Revolution and A Candid World*, (The Kent State University Press: Ohio, 1977), p.134., argues that whilst isolationism had its origin in the Farewell Address, it was not a term that came into common usage until 1920. Underlying its importance in the American foreign and domestic policy discourse, given both its warning of foreign alliances, and of faction at home, the Address has been read aloud at the beginning of every session of the United States Senate since 1901, see; *Riddick's Senate Procedure: Precedents and Practices*, (U.S. Government Printing Office: Washington, 1992), S. Doc. 101-28.

<sup>6</sup> The eighteenth century is generally regarded as the era of balance of power politics. See; (i) Morgenthau H. J. *Politics Among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace*. (McGraw Hill: New York, 1993), Sheehan. M. *The Balance of Power. History and Theory*. (Routledge: London, 1996), Scott. H.M. *The Birth of a Great Power System. 1740–1815*. (Pearson: Harlow, 2006), and Dull J. R., *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution*, (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1985), pp. 13-25., (ii) for discussions of the idea that a European balance of power was “no more than a phrase” and has not been properly analysed, see Black J., *British Foreign Policy in the Eighteenth Century: A Survey*, (*Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1, January 1987), pp.26-53., (iii) however, for theories of eighteenth century balance of power politics see the same author's analysis in; Black J., *The Theory of the Balance of Power in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century: A Note on Sources*, (*Review of International Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1, January 1983), pp. 55-61., and (iv) Jonas M., *Isolationism in America* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1966), who argues that America was isolationist from the start 'to safeguard the independence of a new and weak nation by avoiding, whenever possible, involvement in the military and political affairs of the major powers', i.e. that America did not take part in equilibrium politics.

<sup>7</sup> Gilbert F. *To the Farewell Address. Ideas of Early American Foreign Policy*. (Princeton University Press: New Jersey, 1961). Gilbert explains that, although foreign affairs *per se* had not been developed in policy terms during the colonial period, through immigration, and the medium of print, Americans were cognisant of the English debate over isolation from, or active involvement with the European balance of power. Thomas Paine, through his work *Common Sense*, argued for an American freedom from balance of power politics, by highlighting the close connection between trade and foreign policy, in particular the idea of free trade. Freedom to trade without artificial monarchical inspired governmental restrictions, i.e. mercantilism, would tie foreign affairs to the people and not to those of a political elite. As a partner willing to trade freely with all of Europe, America would be a friend to all. Political ties would be destructive to these ends. This was to be the new order in world affairs, and America would be at the vanguard of this economically interdependent world. Considered in these terms, American foreign policy was not isolationist. Alexander Hamilton, however, rejected the notion that free trade would make the world a safer place. He favoured power politics since strength would give respect aboard. An America that was a hegemon in its geographic domain would be the best guarantor of safety and prosperity.

At this juncture it is important to note that the early American foreign policy discourse did not utilise terms such as isolationism and internationalism to describe an approach to foreign affairs or as a consideration in the development of policy. These terms are being used in this thesis to permit discussion of the central argument that ideas akin to isolationism and internationalism in foreign affairs are located in the founding period. Hence the intention is not to describe early American foreign affairs as isolationist or as internationalist *per se* but more specifically to expose, as an alternative to the Farewell Address, the importance of the balance of power to Americans of this period. In so doing, the aim is to demonstrate that foreign policy was predicated on the basis of an active involvement in European affairs, and therefore, to borrow a modern phrase, internationalist as opposed to what has become acceptable to describe as isolationist as a direct consequence of relying on the Farewell Address.

The internationalism argument relies on the participation of America in the Eighteenth Century European balance of power as will be explained later in this Chapter. The absence of ideas akin to isolationism as an influencing factor in foreign policy making are therefore not a necessary condition of the thesis argument. However, a discussion of foreign affairs in this period would be incomplete without an attempt to identify if the converse to internationalism had meaning, and, if it did what that meaning was and if it was influential. Chapter Five achieves this by exploring what isolationism meant, and then rejecting the notion that such ideas were either ever taken seriously, as in the case of the fleeting exploration by Jefferson of a closed society, or that they failed to gain traction, as in the flirtation of some Anti-Federalists with the political and geographic separation from Europe. This thesis does not argue that Anti-Federalists were isolationist, only that the arguments of some of these, predominantly men, can be described as such. This final rejection of isolationism therefore simply underpins the earlier internationalist argument of the thesis.

Other terms used in developing the argument also require some definition. Firstly, neutrality which was a term in common use in this period, arises often in the writings of American politicians, writers, and statesmen to state a desire to remain aloof from European affairs. Chapter Four explains the specific meaning of this term to those who made policy and to those who wrote about foreign affairs. Secondly, realism and pragmatism are used interchangeably to describe an approach to foreign affairs that is based around the view that there is essential anarchy in the international state system and therefore that nations compete to gain advantage and in which, therefore, the balance of power system is an organising and stabilising force.<sup>8</sup> Thirdly, equilibrium is defined as the essential equality of power between nation states participating in the balance of power resulting in the absence of actual or threatened preponderance. Lead indicators of a threatened change in the balance are discussed later in this chapter.

Moving on to a discussion of the argument, in the period analysed, America was committed to a narrow definition of its national interest, that emphasised the pursuit of trade, security and territorial expansion, all within the confines of an aversion to political alliances.<sup>9</sup> This basis for policy was asserted in the 1776 Model Treaty, the framework for foreign affairs, adopted at the outset of the Revolution.<sup>10</sup> Americans did not, therefore, in the words of John Quincy Adams, go in search of monsters to destroy, they were not committed to the spread of liberty

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<sup>8</sup> Morgenthau (1993)

<sup>9</sup> For the idea that national interest is shaped and defined by ideas of national identity, see; Chafetz G. (et al), (eds.), *The Origins of National Interest*, (Frank Cass: London, 1999) pp. vii-x., and p.203. The role of slavery in shaping a distinctly American identity, albeit manifesting itself in political terms as an anti-slave North and a pro-slave South, is explained in Mason M., *Slavery and Politics in the Early American Republic*, (The University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 2006); pp. 4-5. Although Mason explains that slavery formed an “integral part of Northern sectional identity”, clearly the politics of slavery affected both Northern and Southern sections and therefore can be regarded as having shaped national identity.

<sup>10</sup> A copy of the Model Treaty, also known as “A Plan of Treaties”, may be found in the Adams Papers, held at the Massachusetts Historical Society, <https://www.masshist.org/publications/apde2/view?id=ADMS-06-04-02-0116-0002>, accessed 5<sup>th</sup> June 2016. Some regard parts of the Model Treaty as having been taken almost verbatim from British treaties, see Grant J., *John Adams, Party of One*, (The Folio Society: London, 2008), p. 143. However, the Model Treaty, in its free trade ideas, is also described as being the polar opposite of the regulations by which British trade operated, see Rappleye C., *Robert Morris, Financier of the American Revolution*, (Simon and Schuster: New York, 2010), p.52.

and freedom, or to Puritan notions of separation from Europe.<sup>11</sup> The national interest demanded not an isolationist America safe by virtue of distance, unwilling to engage diplomatically, but an active America willingly participating in the European balance.<sup>12</sup>

This conclusion is surprising given that political separation from Europe was simply indispensable to the singularity that was the Republican union, with its distinctive ideas of liberty captured in the 1776 Declaration of Independence. However, such an ideal could never survive if *actual*, as opposed to *declared*, independence was to be achieved because foreign alliances were needed to strengthen the American military capability. The Declaration pre-empted this situation when it referred to holding nations; “*Enemies in War, in Peace Friends*”, but it was the penultimate paragraph that referred to the contracting of alliances, which clarified that friendship would mean alliance making.<sup>13</sup> The tenet of aloofness from Europe therefore came to be compromised in 1778 with execution of the French Treaty, and would again, for example, with **Thomas** Jefferson’s proposal in 1786 for a reciprocal military alliance with Portugal for protection of the Mediterranean trade against the Barbary Pirates.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> This is not to say that all historians have rejected the idea of there being an American participation in the European balance of power. For example, Herring G. C. *From Colony to Superpower. U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776*. (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2008) explains that, despite being morally opposed to the machinations of European politics, the Americans sought to actively exploit balance rivalries. However, policies aimed at taking advantage of balance rivalries in the post War period, after the French alliance, are not brought into consideration in this work. For the warning against looking abroad for “*monsters to destroy*”, see; Schlesinger Jr. A., *Foreign Policy and the American Character*, (*Foreign Affairs*, Council on Foreign Relations, Vol. 62, No. 1, Fall 1983), pp. 1-16., this is a warning against entangling America in foreign wars which only have the objective of promoting (very loosely defined herein) liberal values, as opposed to narrow economic, or security interests.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid* Schlesinger (1983), the author argues that in fact maintenance of an American independence depended on the European state system remaining in balance, in the sense that it was not in American interests to weaken either Britain or France.

<sup>13</sup> A copy of the Declaration of Independence may be found in *The Constitution of the United States of America and Selected Writings of the Founding Fathers*, (Barnes and Noble: New York, 2012). p. 108. The fact that the in the penultimate paragraph of the Declaration powers concerning alliances and trade; that is; “*contract alliances, establish commerce*”, appear separately may lead to a conclusion that alliances were not contemplated only as pertaining to trade but in a far wider sense, as recognising that the union would not be independent without foreign alliances. See also Higginbotham D., *The War of American Independence, Military Attitudes, Policies, and Practice, 1763-1789*, (Indiana University Press: London, 1971), p. 117., in which the author explains that declaring independence would encourage foreign support.

<sup>14</sup> *Letter from William Carmichael to the American Commissioners in Europe. 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1786*, TEN III, pp. 85 to 89. Jefferson also proposed a more general alliance involving Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Naples, Sweden, and France as a bulwark against Barbary attacks, see; Oren M. B., *Power, Faith, and Fantasy, America in the Middle East 1776 to the Present*, (W.W. Norton and Company: New York, 2011), p.24.

It was this combination of ideology and pragmatism in policy making, with ever shifting weights between the two, that meant that after the end of the Revolutionary War, the policy of neutrality adopted by the Continental Congress did not preclude the negotiation of post-War British trade concessions using the threat of an ever closer union with France. National military, naval and economic weakness, required a more nuanced approach to the making of foreign policy, albeit within the overriding ideological framework of the Model Treaty, but one that emphasised the importance of the European balance.<sup>15</sup>

The argument of internationalism as an active participation in the European balance of power presented here, is contrary to the opinion of many modern historians who have come to describe early foreign affairs as isolationist because of a desire to avoid political alliances.<sup>16</sup>

This thesis provides an alternative analysis to that of historians who base themselves in the Farewell Address, and those that refer to the 1778 French Treaty as an outlier in foreign policy

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<sup>15</sup> Gilbert (1961), provides an illustration of the nuanced nature of American foreign affairs. He describes the two opposing approaches to post war foreign affairs as aloofness from balance of power and the involvement in balance of power. The former to be achieved by a concentration on American maritime power and commerce.

<sup>16</sup> Hendrickson D., *Union, Nation or Empire, The American Debate over International Relations, 1789-1941*, (University Press of Kansas: Kansas, 2009). The author explains that internationalism, as a concept in the eighteenth century, represented a commitment to the international law of nations and the society of states. American diplomats were attached to a diplomacy that would have as its aim, the reduction of the risk of war through economic interdependence, for which free trade was critical. Hendrickson says that, from about 1776, concepts of international relations, such as cooperation, constancy and predictability were constantly debated. Hence, while the descriptive policy, *internationalism*, did not exist in the eighteenth century, the conditions associated with such a policy did. However, it is not just historians that reject internationalism in foreign affairs. Some Americans of the early period similarly rejected involvement in the European balance, describing it as “*summary of the evils which America has escaped*”, and rejecting the idea that equilibrium encouraged stability and not constant war, quoted in the essay; *The Expanding Union*, Onuf. P. S. in König, D. T.(ed.), *Devising Liberty. Preserving and Creating Freedom in the New American Republic*, (Stanford University Press: Stanford, 1995), p. 55. The American academic Walter Russell Mead, tantalisingly described foreign policy as being activist and involved in world affairs from *the start*, but referred only to the 1778 alliance, and the Louisiana Purchase in the Napoleonic period without reference to the post-Revolutionary War period, see; Mead W. R. *The American Foreign Policy Legacy*, (*Foreign Affairs*, Council on Foreign Relations, Vol. 81, No. 1, January to February 2002), pp. 163-176. For a view that isolation as non-entanglement in European affairs was mentioned as early as 1775, see Weinberg A. K. *International Affairs: The Historical Meaning of the American Doctrine of Isolation*, (*The American Political Science Review*, American Political Science Association, Vol. 34, No. 3, June 1940), pp. 539-547. Political considerations are here thought of as those that lead to entanglement in the, predominantly, foreign affairs of another nation which could lead to unwanted or unforeseen military or naval engagement on behalf of that nation or another. This definition can be contrasted with that given, for example, in Giesecke A. A., *American Commercial Legislation Before 1789*, (Burt Franklin: New York, 1970), pp. 144-145, who illustrates political considerations by reference to a British refusal to treat with America after 1783 whilst there remained uncertainty as to the strength of the post War union. Marks takes the view that Americans only opposed alliances because they feared being the weaker partner, not because they had a fear of alliances, see; Marks F. W.III. *Independence on Trial. Foreign Affairs in the Making of the Constitution*. (Louisiana State University Press: Baton Rouge, 1973).

making.<sup>17</sup> Although reference is made in the literature to the writings of the Founding Fathers, there is not the balance of power analysis of American foreign affairs that is provided herein.<sup>18</sup> This apparent oversight may in part be attributed to a refusal to accept that there was an American foreign policy until such time as there was a Constitutional Republic, in other words, until 1789 when the Constitution had been ratified by nine of the original thirteen states.<sup>19</sup> One implication of this argument is that there was no American national interest until ratification. This idea is rejected in Chapter Two of this thesis, which explains that there was an extant national interest on the eve of the Revolution, being the shared and common objective of the colonies in maintaining autonomous government autonomous of Great Britain.<sup>20</sup>

Considerations of European superpower rivalries were first brought into sharp relief in colonial affairs from the commencement of the Seven Years War in 1756.<sup>21</sup> The British American

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<sup>17</sup> Or fail to lay sufficient weight on American foreign affairs between 1774 to 1789, see for example Ryan D. *US Foreign Policy in World History*. (Routledge: London, 2000).

<sup>18</sup> See for example, Adler S. *The Isolationist Impulse: Its Twentieth Century Reaction*, (Abelhard Schuman: New York, 1957). pp.10-11. Adler provides the exemplar for this analytical gap. He describes the writings of the Founding Fathers as urging Americans to stay out of the affairs of Europe, but then relies heavily on the Farwell Address as the origin of American isolation. Brown R. D. in *The Founding Fathers of 1776 and 1787, A Collective View*, (*The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol 33 No 3, July 1976), pp. 465 to 480, provides a definition of the Founding Fathers to include the ninety-seven individuals who either signed the Declaration, attended the Constitutional Convention, or both. See also Rakove J., *Revolutionaries, Inventing an American Nation*, (Vintage: London, 2011), p. 247., in which Rakove explains that the reality of the foreign situation meant that it was left to a small group of what he calls “well-situated actors”, Benjamin Franklin, John Jay and John Adams, to determine an American foreign policy. Historians would suggest that the relationships between not just politicians, statesmen, political writers and commissioners but also those between “ordinary citizens” are also an important of foreign relations and policy making, see; Goedd P, *GIs and Germans, Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949*, (Yale University Press, Princeton, 2002), and Gienow-Hecht, J.C.E., *Sound Diplomacy, Music and Emotions in Transatlantic Relations 1850-1920*, (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2012).

<sup>19</sup> This is the implication of the preface to; Schmitz, D. F., *The Triumph of Internationalism. Franklin D. Roosevelt and a World in Crisis, 1933-1941*, (Potomac Books Inc.: Washington D.C., 2007) p. xi. It is also the conclusion of; Clinton W.D.s., *The Two Faces of National Interest*, (Louisiana State University Press: Baton Rouge, 1994), p. 14. Clinton explains that Constitutional reform “brought closer the day when state interest would be labelled national interest”. However, Mead would disagree with the notion that there was no American foreign policy in the early days of the Republic, by pointing to the American exploitation of European rivalries, see; Mead W. R., *The American Foreign Policy Legacy*, (*Foreign Affairs*, Council on Foreign Relations, Vol. 81, No. 1 (Jan-Feb, 2002)), pp. 163-176. See also; Brands H. W., *The Idea of the National Interest*, (002). (*Diplomatic History*. 23. 239 - 261. 10.1111/1467-7709.00165).

<sup>20</sup> Identifying the existence of national interest at the outset of the Revolution goes some to way address some of the concerns of historians for example *ibid*, Schmitz (2007), p. xi., who regards the creation of a Constitutional Republic as the point at which America had a foreign policy.

<sup>21</sup> See Shennan J. H., *International Relations in Europe, 1689-1789*, (Routledge: London, 1995), p. 51, who describes the British belief at the outset of the Seven Years War that the European equilibrium depended on victory over France in America. In Massachusetts, two counties proposed as early as 1774 that any foreign protestant power be called upon to negotiate with Britain on behalf of American rights, see; Brown R. D., *Revolutionary Politics in Massachusetts, The Boston Committee of Correspondence and the Towns, 1772-1774*, (W.W. Norton and Company: New York, 1970), p.110. See also, Jones D. V., *License for Empire, Colonialism by Treaty in Early America*, (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1982), pp. 7-9., in which the author describes the importance of America in worlds affairs after the Seven Years War as involving the Iroquois League as part of a Euro-American treaty system. However, Borneman W. R., *The French Indian War, Deciding the Fate of North America*, (Harper: New York, 2006), pp. 298-299, explains that all the colonists learned from the war was the importance of acting in concert with other colonies, and

colonial experience, had formed distinctive ideas for some colonists that the conflicting demands of European nations interested in North America, were fertile ground for exploitation in their interests.<sup>22</sup> Whilst fought ostensibly to restrain French territorial ambitions in America, Britain's aims in this war in expelling the French from the continent chimed with those of the colonists who had sought such an end for "over....forty years".<sup>23</sup> Hence, very early on, colonists had betrayed an insight into the value of an Anglo French rivalry to what could generally be in their interests.<sup>24</sup> Some historians have argued that the experience of the Seven Years War more fully integrated the colonists into the British Empire.<sup>25</sup> However, the end of

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the limits of British power. The reference to the major European powers as "superpowers" is intended to convey their relative international military, naval and political power as opposed to a more modern definition which assumes nations with a nuclear capability.

<sup>22</sup> Simmons R. C., *The American Colonies, From Settlement to Independence*, (W. W. Norton and Company: New York, 1976), p. 275. Morison (1980), pp. 114 to 115, take the view that the Albany Plan for union of the thirteen colonies on the eve of the Seven Years War was influenced by a desire to restrain French expansion which had been underway for many years prior to 1753. Hence, quoting, Governor William Shirley of Massachusetts; "the French seem to have advanced further toward making themselves masters of this Continent". The Plan, providing for a union of the colonies under control of the Crown with a council of advisors comprised of colonial representatives, would bind Americans closer to the British for purposes of protection from French expansionism and would be part of a wider plan for alliance with the Six Nations of the Iroquois. This is also the view of Hinderaker E. (et.al.), *At The Edge of Empire, The Backcountry in British North America*, (The John Hopkins University Press: Maryland, 2003), p. 106. See also, Kane T. M., *Theoretical Roots of US Foreign Policy, Machiavelli and American Unilateralism*, (Routledge: New York, 2006), p. 35. For the idea that the Albany Plan was nothing more than a plan for colonial security, with the implication therefore that it was independent of considerations of an Anglo-American bulwark against French expansionism, see Boyd J. P. *Anglo American Union, Joseph Galloway's Plans to Preserve the British Empire, 1774 – 1788*, (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 1941), pp. 36 – 37. For the idea that the Albany Plan was a plan only for the better management of Indian affairs, see; Alden J. R. *The Albany Congress and the Creation of the Indian Superintendencies*, (*The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 27, No. 2, September 1940), pp. 193-210. On the other hand, the French similarly concerned themselves with colonial interference in New France, in particular occupation of the Ohio lands and in the French fur trade, see; Eccles W. J. *France in America*, (Fitzhenry and Whiteside: Vancouver, 1972), pp. 178- 179. In support of the thesis, Draper, explains that a local conflict, fought to preserve the interests of "land speculators" was blown up into a wider conflagration until it's raison d'être became one of altering the European balance of power, see; Draper T. A *Struggle for Power. The American Revolution*, (Times Books: New York, 1996), pp.166-167. It was not only Britain in this sense that concerned itself with changes to the equilibrium, Spain also worried that the War threatened changes to the balance on the North American continent, see; Corbett J. S. *England in the Seven Years War, A Study in Combined Strategy*, Volume II (Longmans, Green and Co.: London, 1907), p. 74.

<sup>23</sup> Alsytne R.W.V. *Empire and Independence. The International History of the American Revolution*. (John Wiley and Sons: London, 1965), pp. 12-13. For the aims of Britain in the Seven Years War, to impose hegemony on its "Atlantic empire" as well as for providing for the security of the colonies, see Tucker R.W. et al, *The Fall of the First British Empire, Origins of the War of American Independence*, (The John Hopkins University Press: Maryland, 1982), p.23. However, also see Lowe J. T. *Our Colonial Heritage. Diplomatic and Military* (Lanham: New York, 1987), pp. 292-293. The author argues that a British involvement in the removal of the French presence in America was ill judged, altering as it did the balance of power in Europe to the ultimate detriment of the British Empire, because it ultimately foreshadowed the American drive for independence.

<sup>24</sup> See; Brown R. E., *Middle Class Democracy and the Revolution in Massachusetts, 1691-1780*, (Cornell University Press: New York, 1955), p.205., in which Brown explains that the Seven Years war had as its objective the security of the British trade only. See also; Savelle M., *Seeds of Liberty, The Genesis of the American Mind*, (University of Washington Press: Seattle, 1965), pp. 343-345. Alternatively, the colonists are said to have developed their understanding of foreign affairs from their involvement, through their London agents, with the British Parliament see; Bemis S. F., *The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy*, (Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1927), p.3. Alternatively, some authors take the view that the consequence of the Seven Years War was to reinforce the colonies in their right to be different from each other i.e. they became even more focussed on their own affairs now that French Indian threats on the western border had dissipated, see; Watson J. S., *The Reign of George III, 1760-1815*, (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1985), pp. 174-178.

<sup>25</sup> For the idea that the end of the Seven Years' War created the circumstances for the American Revolution, see Scott H. M., *British Foreign Policy in the Age of the American Revolution*, (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1990), chapter *The Legacies of the Seven Years War*, pp. 29-52.

this conflict also witnessed the beginnings of a colonial antipathy towards the Empire because, for example, of the colonial experience of engaging with British soldiers, who regarded irregular militia as inferior fighting men.<sup>26</sup> Colonists were therefore becoming aware of their distinctiveness and were even preparing, according to some authors, to express their demands for independence.<sup>27</sup>

Benjamin Franklin was one such early exponent of balance of power, and he warned Britain in 1756 of the risk of a French Indian encirclement of the English American colonies, appealing directly to Britain's strategic concern to contain French ambitions in America. This appeal is one of the first instances of active American [that is British American colonial] involvement in the European balance of power between France and Britain.<sup>28</sup> Ironically later, after the end of the Seven Years War, as Parliament refused to countenance British American colonial military adventures against Canada, balance of power concerns would act as a restraint on American expansionist tendencies. For example, the Quebec Act of 1774, one of a series of acts known as

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<sup>26</sup> Butler J. *Becoming America. The Revolution before 1776*, (Harvard University Press: Cambridge Massachusetts, 2000), pp. 127-130. Further, whilst making no comment on the balance of power perspective given above, Marshall sees the Americans, as willing, diligent and keen participants in the Seven Years War on the North American continent, and hence believing themselves to have earned the right to be regarded as an important and integral part of the British Empire, a belief that ended with the stationing of troops in the colonies after the end of the War and subsequently by the Coercive Acts, see; Marshall P. J. *The Thirteen Colonies in the Seven Years' War. The View from London*, in Flavell J. and Conway S. (eds.) *Britain and America Go to War. The Impact of War and Warfare in Anglo-America, 1754 -1815*. (University Press of Florida: Gainesville, 2004), p. 71. For the concern amongst British politicians that the end of the Seven Years war was leading to ideas of separation from Britain, see the description of the views of British politician William Burke, a relative of Edmund Burke, in Galloway C. G., *The Scratch of a Pen, 1763 and the Transformation of North America*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2006), pp. 165-168. But also see Lovejoy, D. S., *Rhode Island Politics and the American Revolution, 1760-1776*, (Brown University Press, Providence, 1969), p. 19-22, for discussions of the negative economic impact of the Seven Years War on Rhode Island as a result of the loss of ships and depression caused by falling demand after the end of war spending. See also; Rogers A., *Empire and Liberty, American Resistance to British Authority, 1755-1763*, (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1974), p. 59., for a description of the development of the American view of themselves as different from the British soldiers sent to prosecute the war, because of the high degree of independence of the average American soldier from command, and a general dislike of the ostensible threat to liberty posed by the existence of the British soldier in America.

<sup>27</sup> This is the point made by Savelle M., *Seeds of Liberty, The Genesis of the American Mind*, (University of Washington Press: Seattle, 1965) quoted in Greene J. P. *Interpreting Early America, Historiographical Essays*, (University of Virginia Press: Charlottesville, 1996), p. 329. See also; Kagan Robert. *Dangerous Nation, America and the World. 1600 to 1898*. (Vintage Books: New York. 2006).

<sup>28</sup> Graebner Norman A. et al. *Foreign Affairs and the Founding Fathers. From Confederation to Constitution. 1776 to 1787*. (Praeger: California. 2011) support this view that the colonials were the first to engage the balance of power. Inherent, then, in this assessment is the acceptance that the colonies, before the Revolutionary War, shared an interest in expelling France from North America.



the Coercives, caused Americans to believe that the British were appeasing, what for Americans was, a threatening Catholic dominion of America.<sup>29</sup>

### The Analytical Timeframe

The analysis that underpins the argument is usefully developed in three distinct phases, the period from the start of the War for Independence to 1782, the intervening years 1782 to 1783, when peace in the War for Independence was being negotiated, and the post War years to 1789. In these periods, American Commissioners and Congress tried to exploit the competing interests of France and Great Britain in what was in the interests of the American union.<sup>30</sup> In turn, for two reasons, it was in the interests of the European nations to balance the union of the thirteen states. Firstly, the American union was a balancing weight in the equilibrium and an alliance with it, or its detachment from a competitor, was an important consideration in European politics. Secondly, America was regarded as being of future influence as an emerging nation, and therefore a prospective danger to the equilibrium, and could not be ignored. Hence, as will be demonstrated below, from the start, European balancing strategies sought to limit the degree to which the union, could influence the equilibrium.<sup>31</sup> American internationalism in this early period is therefore described by its participation in the European balance of power, and by the balancing strategies adopted by the European nations to contain the usefulness of America to the equilibrium.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> See for example, Coupland Sir R. *The Quebec Act: A Study in Statesmanship*. (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1968). For an alternative view, see Phillips P. C. *The West in the Diplomacy of the American Revolution*. (Johnson Reprint: Mississippi, 2009). The author explains that the Act incorporated the northern Ohio territory into Quebec, thus excluding the Americans and sparking fears of a British strategy of containment or at least a restraint on the ability of the states to expand westwards. However, Bourke R., in *Empire and Revolution, The Political Life of Edmund Burke*, (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2015), p. 448, makes the point that the Quebec Act was motivated by nothing more than the obligation felt by Parliament towards the French population of Quebec after the victory of the former in the Seven Years War which had seen the expulsion of the French from North America.

<sup>30</sup> Armitage D. *The Declaration of Independence. A Global History*, (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass, 2007).

<sup>31</sup> An explanation of England's situation in the European balance of power, given by Lord Bolingbroke, philosopher and politician, in the early part of the eighteenth century, provides the framework for the American involvement in balance of power politics adopted here. See Maurseth P. *Balance of Power Thinking from the Renaissance to the French Revolution*, (*Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 1. No. 2, 19764), pp. 120 – 136.

<sup>32</sup> Congress was fully cognisant with the idea of a European balance of power, see Hutson J. *Intellectual Foundations of Early American Diplomacy*. (*Diplomatic History*, Volume I Number I, Winter 1977). However, Graebner *et. al.* (2011) offer the view that it was only certain Founders, for example John Adams, who recognised the existence and value of the European balance of power

## The First Period

In the first period, an active engagement in the equilibrium is identified in the American diplomatic overtures to France and to Spain given the latter's alliance with France under the Family Compact.<sup>33</sup> The French alliance was possible because of France's desire to regain prestige after its disastrous losses to Britain in the Seven Years War. Congress recognised that France was anxious to redress the balance with Britain and that it could do so by assisting American Independence.<sup>34</sup> France, however, delayed overt involvement until 1778 for one of two reasons. Some historians take the view that it was success in the battle of Saratoga in what is now upstate New York, that finally convinced the French Foreign Minister, Comte de la Vergennes that the Americans could win independence.<sup>35</sup> Others, take the view that France had regained her lost naval power and, confident in her ability to provide support, formally recognised the American nation.<sup>36</sup> Either way, France was actively concerned to increase her power relative to that of the British by depriving her of her North American colonies.<sup>37</sup>

As the 1778 French Treaty was confirmed in the Continental Congress, a conviction developed amongst some American statesmen that independence would involve full participation in the balance of power, with diplomats assigned responsibilities consistent with a nation that would be internationally engaged.<sup>38</sup> It was not just independence that would be causative of this

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and that others chose to adopt an isolationist view of the American situation (i.e. they preferred to rise above the politics of Europe).

<sup>33</sup> For an alternative view, see Stagg J. C. A. *Borderlines in Borderlands. James Madison and the Spanish American Frontier. 1776 to 1821*. (Yale University Press: Virginia, 2009).

<sup>34</sup> Herring (2011).

<sup>35</sup> Gordon William. *The History Of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the Independence of the United States of America, including an account of the late war and of the Thirteen Colonies, from their origin to that period. Volume III*, (Printed for the Author: London, 1788). This view is reinforced by Rakove J. N. *The Beginnings of National Politics, An Interpretative History of the Continental Congress*, (Alfred P. Knopf: New York, 1979), p. 251, who explains that Congress "hoping to capitalise on Saratoga, was anxious to see an alliance with France".

<sup>36</sup> Dull J. R. *The French Navy and American Independence. A Study of Arms and Diplomacy. 1774 to 1787*, (Princeton University Press: New Jersey, 1975).

<sup>37</sup> See for example, Bemis. S. F. *The Diplomacy of the American Revolution*. (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1957).

<sup>38</sup> Arthur Lee to The Committee of Foreign Affairs, Paris, April 2<sup>nd</sup> 1778, DCAR Volume II, p. 148. Lee explained that the powers to be given to American diplomats in the future would determine "the future rank of the United States of America" amongst other nations. Indeed, such powers and the "rank" assigned to the diplomats would determine, "the importance they must command in the balance of European power".

outcome, a prolonged War held out the possibility of transforming the union into a militarist society. America was a union of states engaged in an existentialist conflict, it was flanked by adversaries, and opposed by domestic loyalists unwilling to support separation from Britain. Americans were therefore required to develop the “*military virtues and talents*” that would assure not only victory, but sustainability of the post-War state against external dangers.<sup>39</sup> According to John Adams, one time plenipotentiary to Holland, prolonged conflict with modern European armies, would cause Americans to become ineradicably accustomed to war, the art of conflict, and to participating in an ongoing struggle against one European nation or another. In other words, America would, because of a continuous struggle with Europeans anxious to destabilise it, develop the capacity to reciprocate, create dangers for European powers, and therefore decide the balance, by either refraining from military involvement, or offering its participation on one side. Even if it tried to avoid military involvement, it would be drawn into the politics of the balance since its existence made it, according to Adams, a “*weight candle*” in the equilibrium.<sup>40</sup>

Hence, from the beginning, American statesmen absorbed as an essentially universal truth, the importance of active international engagement. Whereas in the first period, engagement

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<sup>39</sup> John Adams to the President of Congress, Paris April 18<sup>th</sup> 1780, DCAR Volume III, p. 5. “*The longer this war is continued in America, the more will America become habituated to the characters of the soldier and the marine..... the deeper will the foundations of American power be laid, and the more dangerous will it become to some other of the Powers of Europe*”. Alternatively see; Hoffman E. C., *American Umpire*, (Harvard University Press: Massachusetts, 2013), in which the author argues not for an American empire but for America as the umpire of the world that acted as the exemplar for international change in which empires as controlling international entities were replaced by the nation state.

<sup>40</sup> *Extracts from a Journal. John Adams. DCAR Volume III. p. 695.* Whether a balance of power framework explained engagement between European powers or whether equilibrium as a factor in foreign affairs was illusory, Adams’ comments betray an acceptance of the balance and of its importance to American foreign policy thinking; “*It is obvious that all the Powers of Europe will be continually manoeuvring with us, to work us into their real or imaginary balances of power. They will all wish to make of us a make-weight candle, when they are making out their pounds*”. What may have influenced American statesmen in these years was the danger of pursuing a strategy based on taking advantage of rivalries too far, to the extent that one nation or another in the equilibrium would be irreversibly damaged so as to alter the balance in favour of the other, leaving America at the mercy of a newly emerged European hegemonic power. This was a consideration for Jefferson in 1807 as Napoleon’s Continental System came to be opposed by Great Britain, and Americans wondered whether the European balance of power as the basis of American security, could be maintained, see Tucker R. W. and Hendrickson D. C., *Empire of Liberty, The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1990), p. 217.

would involve an alliance, made possible by extant balance rivalries, in the following two periods, balance of power influences on American policy are described by considering the importance of it, as an emerging nation, to the equilibrium.

### **The Second and Third Periods**

In the following two periods then, American participation in the equilibrium is described from two perspectives. Firstly from the positive actions that European states took in a desire to maintain the balance against a prospective American hegemony because of its dangerous ideas of republican government, and free trade.<sup>41</sup> Secondly from the proactive American participation in balance rivalries in the national interest.

From the first perspective, in the two periods that follow the Revolutionary War period, American internationalism is explained by an expansion of the theory of balance of power which describes risks of disequilibrium from an emerging hegemon within a balance, to one that describes risks that are posed by states that are otherwise on the *periphery* of a balance.<sup>42</sup> Hence, since Americans had adopted ideas of free trade that were dangerous to European nations accustomed to state controlled mercantilism, and because Americans posed the risk of allying with current balance participants, they were brought into direct contact with the European balance.<sup>43</sup> In short, France and Great Britain were anxious to ensure that relative

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<sup>41</sup> Ideas of free trade did exist in the American exploration of foreign affairs. Free trade is not, however, a term that is completely synonymous with current definitions or understanding. Instead it is used by early Americans to move the focus of trade away from state controlled mercantilism, of which the British Navigation Acts were a significant mechanism, to a system of trade that placed the merchant at its centre. Hence, merchants would be free to trade with their foreign counterparts in their own economic self-interest, albeit within a general framework of which state controlled tariffs would be an element, but, for example, the tight restrictions akin to those imposed by the Navigation Acts, would not. The literature describes economic interdependence as a foreign affairs benefit of these notions of free trade, since nations that trade with each other would not go to war with each other, (see, for example, Meyers(1973)).

<sup>42</sup> For discussions of equilibrium see, Gulick. E. V. *Europe's Classical Balance of Power*. (W. W. Norton and Company: New York, 1955). For discussions of methods and approaches adopted during the eighteenth century, to assess the relative strength of competing balance of power participants, see Scott (2006). Scott explains that military build-up, changes in population size, colonial possessions and ownership of territories, might all be leading indicators of a risk of change in the balance.

<sup>43</sup> Hoffer P. C. *The Brave New World, A History of Early America*, (The John Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 2006), pp. 364 – 394. The author explains that the basic ideas that would support free trade were already underway by the end of the seventeenth century in so far as the protection of private property rights was concerned, and that by the middle of the eighteenth century,

power in Europe was not altered by a newly independent America. Restraining the ascendancy of the post-War American Republic would involve both France and Britain in attempts to “diminish” American power, specifically by “stinting her growth”, and for France to interfere in her domestic affairs to secure political outcomes favourable to Louis XVI.<sup>44</sup> In other words, France and Britain would each ensure that a strong America did not become a valuable ally to its competitor. Put another way, in the words of the theory of equilibrium, these nations would adopt *balancing strategies* against the peripheral American state. Strategies adopted by states operating within equilibria are described further below. It is important to note at this juncture that it is not being suggested that Congress was actively developing a policy of alliance making that would involve military commitments on behalf of one or other European power.<sup>45</sup> A far more nuanced approach to foreign affairs was being debated and shaped by men at the fore of thinking about how the Republic should engage with the world.

Central to thinking from the second perspective, was the idea that America would adopt an ostensible neutrality in an effort to remain diplomatically equidistant from Great Britain and from France.<sup>46</sup> In other words, signalling that it would not align with one or other of these

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although legislation was being passed in Britain that empowered businessmen to build the transport infrastructure, which “undercut mercantilism at every turn”. See also Greene J. P. (ed.), *The American Revolution, Its Character and Limits*, (New York University Press: New York, 1986), essay of Higginbotham D., *The American Republic in a Wider World*, pp. 165-170, in which the author explains that negotiation of free trade agreements with European nations were not easy because of the fear amongst these nations that such arrangements threatened to weaken Britain and therefore invite British reprisal. For the value of colonies to European nations, given mercantilist ideas of trade, see; Calder A., *Revolutionary Empire, The Rise of the English Speaking Empires From the Fifteenth Century to the 1780s*, (Pimlico Press: London, 1998), p. 419. Free trade would be based on treaties and implied the imposition of imposts (duties on trade) no greater than those levied on the imports of other nations with whom such “most favoured nation” arrangements existed. See *American Commissioners to Favi, with Observations on Treaty Project, 8 June 1785*, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, vol. 8, 25 February–31 October 1785, Boyd J. P. (ed.), (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1953), pp. 187–195. FONA.

<sup>44</sup> TFP, p.55. The desire to restrain American growth is in the argument made by Alexander Hamilton in Federalist Eleven when he explains that Great Britain worried that America would create a navy and begin to compete directly with her in the carrying trade. Therefore, for Hamilton, it was in the interests of Europe to “foster division” amongst the states in order to keep America weak or in a state of disarray.

<sup>45</sup> Williams A. W. *From Colony to Empire: Essays in the History of American Foreign Relations*. (John Wiley and Sons: New York, 1952).

<sup>46</sup> For the interchangeability of neutrality with impartiality, see Winik J., *The Great Upheaval, The Birth of the Modern World, 1788-1800*, (Simon & Schuster: London, 2008), p.465.

nations.<sup>47</sup> America would, however, offer to compromise its neutrality if it could secure valuable concessions from one or other European nation. Hence, whilst, professing neutrality, men such as Washington, Thomas Jefferson (Virginia Governor and delegate to the Continental Congress), John Adams (in addition to being plenipotentiary to the Netherlands, was Commissioner to France and Great Britain between 1778 and 1788), John Jay (Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Commissioner to Spain), and Benjamin Franklin (United States French Commissioner), would actively shape a policy that demanded concessions in exchange for compromising American neutrality. Far therefore, from asserting as unconditional the idea that there should be no political connection, the realities of the international situation in so far as the American national interest was concerned, inevitably required a more careful blend of that ideology with realism.<sup>48</sup> Thus, America continued to be actively involved in the European balance of power, after the War had ended. These ideas are explored in Chapter Four.

### **The National Interest in the Second and Third Periods**

A post-War American national interest required participation in the equilibrium for three reasons; firstly, the expansion of the international trade, secondly for the ideological reason

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<sup>47</sup> This is described as the strategic viewpoint of Great Britain and France in an essay by Graebner A. N. *The Pursuit of Interests and a Balance of Power*, in Merrill D. and Paterson. G. T. (eds.) *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations. Volume 1: to 1920*. Sixth Edition. (Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston MA, 2005). The Oxford English Dictionary provides a definition which infers that triangulation involves positioning oneself by reference to two political standpoints in order to, either appeal to, or to appease, two opposing political parties. In the sense used here, I am suggesting a third option, neither appeal nor appeasement but manipulation. See also; Marshall P.J. *Remaking the British Atlantic. The United States and the British Empire after American Independence*. (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2012). p. 55. The author takes the view that once American Peace Commissioners had negotiated separate peace preliminaries without recourse to the French, America as well as Britain, could be assured that the French alliance had ruptured. Hence, that American could thereafter be neutral.

<sup>48</sup> Onuf et al describe the American approach to the European balance of power in more specific terms, as an attempt by American statesmen to remake the European equilibrium according to the principles of free trade, i.e. as an interdependent system of nations for whom war would be economically unviable, see, Onuf P. and Onuf N., *Federal Union, Modern World, The Law of Nation in an Age of Revolutions, 1776-1814*, (Madison House: New York, 1993), p.93. The ideas of realism and ideology were expressed in Washington's Address, in terms of; realism as practical conceptions of interest in foreign affairs versus political alliances, and the avoidance of entanglement with other nations that might be predicated only on the grounds of ideology. Further that trade ties were more valuable than those based on political considerations, see; Chernow R., *Washington, A Life*, (Allen Lane: London, 2010), p.756. The description of a non-isolated America given here is the opposite of what is termed neo-isolationism which arises by virtue of geographical distance, the isolationist bent of its politicians, and, more importantly, weak neighbours. As far as the last of these criteria are concerned, America would not have been described as neo-isolationist in this period, due to the existence of hostile Spanish and British neighbours see; Cox, M. and Stokes. D., *US Foreign Policy*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2008), p.19., see also; Brown M. E., *America's Strategic Choices*, (The MIT Press: Massachusetts, 1997), p. x.

that Americans wished for a total independence from the French treaty commitment, and finally to assure the security of the states.

The expansion of international trade with France and Britain on equal terms through a policy of favourable, non-monopolistic, trade treaties was the primary means to achieve economic growth.<sup>49</sup> A failure to treat French and British trade equally, through the imposition for example of reduced imposts, would alter the economic power of one or **another** of the European nations and run the risk of altering the balance of power.<sup>50</sup> Secondly, America needed to extricate itself from the mutual defence terms of the 1778 treaty with France, since these obligations threatened to embroil the Republic in unnecessary European wars.<sup>51</sup> Although the opportunity to do so would not present itself until 1793, when Revolutionary France declared war on Great Britain and Washington declared an American neutrality, the Americans had preferred a closer post-War relationship with Britain than with France.

Finally, the several states had to be protected from external threats that risked diminishing the Republic, leading to a rupture in the union and the creation of three confederacies. Risks to the security of the union were very real. The British continued to occupy the north western

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<sup>49</sup> Murphy O.T. *Charles Gravier. Comte de Vergennes. French Diplomacy in the Age of Revolution. 1719 to 1787*. (State University of New York Press: New York, 1982). The diplomatic objectives of France, in assisting America, included trade as a fundamental aspect of French aims because in 1778 the Americans achieved separate treaties of amity and of commerce. Although the French Foreign Minister, Comte de la Vergennes, was not a believer that the cost of keeping and maintaining colonies was economically viable, especially since treaty making could provide a similar outcome, he nevertheless recognised that the aim of weakening Britain inevitably required capturing its colonial trade.

<sup>50</sup> A similar point was made, albeit in relation to Spain, by the early eighteenth century Spanish diplomat Jose Campillo y Cossio when he explained, discussing a reformed economic policy towards the Spanish American colonies, how “each million that goes to another nation without a corresponding million returning to Spain amounts to putting the nation on a higher level than ours and lowering ours in the process”, see; Cowans J. (ed.), *Early Modern Spain. A Documentary History*, (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 2003). *A New Economic Policy for America. 1762*, p. 217, essay by Cossio Jose Campillo. Congress generally, however, lacked the power to enforce treaty commitments across all the states, therefore blunting somewhat the strategy explained here, see; *Letter from John Adams to Secretary Jay. Grosvenor Square. 17<sup>th</sup> October, 1785*, TWJA Volume VIII. p. 322.

<sup>51</sup> Stinchcombe W. C. *The American Revolution and the French Alliance*. (Syracuse University Press: New York. 1969). pp. 8-9. The author states that commercial ties were the primary goal of American foreign policy at this time but that the military alliance was the main reason for the alliance with France. The author quotes Gilbert (1965), pp-54-66., as concurring with this analysis. Americans rationalised an approach to extrication from commitments to the French by applying greater weight to their manifest destiny than to assistance from the French, when considering their obligations under the 1778 Treaty, see; Corwin. E. S. *The Monroe Doctrine*, (*The North American Review*, University of Northern Iowa, Vol. 218 No. 817, December 1923), pp. 721-735.

forts, refusing to relinquish them despite assurances in the 1783 Paris Peace Treaty, ostensibly in retaliation for the failure of the state legislatures to permit enforcement of the debts of British merchants. Congress suspected that the situation suited the British since it allowed them to maintain a presence in North America.<sup>52</sup> Suspicion was only heightened by British support for the creation of an Indian Confederacy and attempts to entice the Vermont territory away from the union.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, in the southwest the Spanish tried to encourage into their North American colonial system, western settlers in the Kentucky and Franklin colonies.<sup>54</sup> There also remained the risk of attack from Indian tribes all along the western border, and a continued dispute with the Spanish over navigation rights to the Mississippi River which some Americans believed important to the trade of the western settlements. Hence, if the American Congressional union could not guarantee the security, rights of self-governance and ultimately republican forms of government to settlers in the west, the Spanish would do so by offering access to a colonial system that went some way to do meet these demands.<sup>55</sup>

Given these considerations of national interest, an America that was disengaged or isolated from the world, ran the risk of becoming nothing more than a vassal for European interests.

Therefore, it was never in American interests to disengage or to maintain an isolation in

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<sup>52</sup> Letter from John Adams to Secretary John Jay. Grosvenor Square. 21<sup>st</sup> October. 1785, TWJA Volume VIII, p. 325. Adams reported how William Pitt had closely tied the question of the British Forts to the outstanding debts but, now decided to go further by insisting that Congress pay those debts, to which Adams had replied that no such thing had been contemplated, only that British creditors would meet with "no lawful impediment to the recovery of their debts". However, Pitt took the view that since *lawful impediments* had indeed been put in the way of British creditors, i.e. the stay laws passed in certain states, then Congress must as a consequence have adopted those debts to itself.

<sup>53</sup> Marshall (2012), p. 89. The British were busy trying to tempt the Vermont settlers to a closer connection to Quebec, and to separate Kentucky from the American union by developing a separate trade with those settlers. See also, Bennett D., *A Few Lawless Vagabonds, Ethan Allen, The Republic of Vermont, and the American Revolution*, (Casemate: Philadelphia, 2014)

<sup>54</sup> See; Phillips (2009), and; Barksdale K. T., *The Lost State of Franklin, America's First Secession*, (The University Press of Kentucky: Kentucky, 2009). The suspicion that the Spanish were trying to entice the fledging territory of Franklin away from the union, and to support Indian insurrections encouraged proposals for barter and trade, and more permanent solutions by encouraging Indian American intermarriage, education and exemption from taxes. The latter was a measure too unsavoury for the Virginia legislature to consider in 1784, see; PHP, pp.193-283. However, such sensitivities did not apply in the Illinois territory where the number of French Native American marriages was significant, see; Morrissey R. M. *Empire by Collaboration. Indians, Colonists, and Governments in Colonial Illinois Country*, (University of Pennsylvania Press: Pennsylvania, 2015), p.149

<sup>55</sup> Weeks W E. *The New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations. Dimensions of the Early American Empire. 1754-1865. Volume 1*. (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2013).



economic or diplomatic terms. This was not to say that the idealistic notion of *no political connections* described in the Model Treaty would be discarded. Rather, it is to say that such a consideration would simply mean that it was possible to avoid alliances, whilst still being an active participant in balance rivalries.

### Early Ideas of Isolationism

Given the importance of isolation to this discussion, it is important to consider whether it was ever considered as a policy construct in these years. Quite apart from the idea of isolation in the eighteenth century, it is clear from the literature that there is no one clear definition of isolationism even in the twentieth century. Johnstone describes the difficulties in trying to define an American isolationism given that the nation has been connected to the world through international trade for much of its history.<sup>56</sup> He explains that men such as Washington and Jefferson knew that it was never possible for America to isolate itself given its need for, even temporary, military and commercial alliances. Indeed Johnstone points to Doenecke's, *Storm on the Horizon*, as an explanation that isolationists were predominantly concerned with avoidance of unnecessary war, not for a political separation from Europe *per se*.<sup>57</sup> American isolationism has traditionally been thought of in terms of the geographical isolation that is implied by this political separation from the affairs of Europe, but, for some, subject to the proviso that Americans continued to retain some interest in European political affairs because of the latter's importance to the national interest.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Johnstone A. *Isolationism and Internationalism in American Foreign Relations*, (*Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, Vol. 9, 1, 2011), pp. 7-20.

<sup>57</sup> Doenecke J., *Storm on the Horizon* (Rowman and Littlefield; Oxford, 2000). This desire to remain uninvolved in European problems, does not, for Schlesinger prohibit active engagement in the international trade, or the use of military action in defence of this interest; Schlesinger A. Jr., *Back to the Womb? Isolationism's Renewed Threat*, (*Foreign Affairs*, Council on Foreign Relations, Vol. 74, No. 4 (Jul - Aug., 1995)), pp. 2-8.

<sup>58</sup> Rofe, J. S. *Isolationism and internationalism in transatlantic affairs*, (*Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 2011, 9: 1), pp.1-6. This is also the definition of isolationism in Fensterwald B., Jr., *The Anatomy of American "Isolationism" and Expansionism. I*, (*The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Sage Publications, Vol. 2, No. 4, December 1958), pp. 280-309. Other definitions equate isolation with nationalism based on both a fear of the destructive wars in which the European nations have historically involved themselves, see; *ibid*, Rofe, p.3. See also; Boyle P. G., *The Roots of Isolationism: A Case Study*, (*Journal of American Studies*, Cambridge University Press, Vol. 6, No. 1, April, 1972), pp. 41-50., who argues that the European balance of power should be viewed only in terms of power politics, not, for example, as a struggle between good and evil. This view of isolationism is attributed by the author to Hiram

If, for some, avoidance of military alliances is a requisite for isolationism then, for other historians foreign policy takes on an internationalist complexion when America is challenged by competitors, requiring it to safeguard its security and access to overseas markets through alliance making and diplomatic activity.<sup>59</sup> Others would, however, say that internationalism requires involvement in multilateral action, since, unilateralism is simply a characteristic of isolationism.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, that unilateralism is in the national interest because it allows for flexibility in policy making because multilateralism limits the room for manoeuvre due to the demands of alliance partners.<sup>61</sup> However Cole brings the argument full circle when he explains that isolationism means not just unilateralism, but specifically non-interventionism, echoing the circumstances of a militarily weak eighteenth century America. Further, that isolationism is a child only of the twentieth century because eighteenth century America had close European economic, diplomatic and familial ties, and could therefore never be described as isolationist. However, since America was affected by European power politics, it could not ignore what was happening in Europe.<sup>62</sup>

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Johnson, an early twentieth century Governor of California, and United States Senator. However, Unger defines an internationalist foreign policy as one that requires strong nations to use their economic and military strength to promote the development of the weaker and less developed nations, see; Unger D. C., *A Better Internationalism*, (*World Policy Journal*, Duke University Press, Vol. 29, No. 1, Spring 2012), pp. 101-110.

<sup>59</sup> Conn R. E. *Toward an Entangling Alliance: American Isolationism, Internationalism and Europe, 1901-1950*. (Greenwood Press: Connecticut, 1991). Walker explains that overseas competition was influential in an isolationist approach to policy making in circumstances when American leadership was not needed in the absence of international dangers. Hence, as the Cold War came to a conclusion and Congress questioned expenditure on overseas involvement, policy makers saw America as one of many, albeit preponderant, international economic actors, but one which no longer needed to use force of arms to maintain peace, see; Walker M., *New American Isolationism? The Mood of American Introspection and Fatigue with the Tiresome World Is Growing Fast*, (*International Journal*, Sage Publications, Vol. 52, No. 3, Summer, 1997), pp. 391-410. For the idea that internationalism is linked to the decisions and education of a foreign policy elite, see; Busby J. W. and Monten J., *Without Heirs? Assessing the Decline of Establishment Internationalism in U.S. Foreign Policy*, (*Perspectives on Politics*, American Political Science Association, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Sep., 2008),) pp. 451-472. See also Johnstone (2011) who explains that less has been done to create a reliable definition of what internationalism means, and often any involvement of America in the affairs of other nations is sufficient grounds for defining the policy to be internationalist. Johnstone points to Kuehl et. al. to explain that internationalism can be defined as a political internationalism or belief in international institutions, and a single international community with no borders. Other definitions refer to the spread of democracy and democratic values, see; Kuehl W., and Ostrower G., *Internationalism*, in Deconde A., Burns R. D., and Logevall F., (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of American Foreign Policy*, Second Edition, Volume 2, (Scribner: New York, 2002), p. 241, and p.254.

<sup>60</sup> Legro J. W., *Whence American Internationalism*, (*International Organization*, MIT Press, Vol. 54, No. 2, Spring, 2000), pp. 253-289.

<sup>61</sup> Ikenberry G. J., *Is American Multilateralism in Decline?*, (*Perspectives on Politics*, American Political Science Association, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Sep., 2003), pp. 533-550.

<sup>62</sup> Cole W. S., *United States Isolationism in the 1990s?*, (*International Journal*, Sage Publications, , Vol. 48, No. 1, United States Foreign Policy: A New Isolationism?, Winter, 1992/1993), pp. 32-51.

Despite these arguments, it is safe to say that the term isolation itself was not used in the eighteenth century American foreign policy debate. However, isolation as an ideological concept was present, but it is not to be found in the Washingtonian avoidance of entangling alliances, with all that this implies. Instead it is located in two essentially theoretical arguments. Firstly, in the Jeffersonian discussion of a closed agricultural society, independent of all connections with the outside world.<sup>63</sup> Secondly, in the arguments of the two blocs that respectively supported or opposed the draft Constitution of 1787, the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists. The Federalists sought centralisation of power to protect from foreign dangers and to provide the means to engage with the world on equal terms, that is, as a unified nation, as opposed to a loose confederation. The Anti-Federalists, however, regarded the threat of external dangers as exaggerated, and looked inwards to a stable state system, akin to the European equilibrium within which the states maintained independence from Congress. These ideas are discussed in detail in Chapter Five. At this juncture it is useful to summarise the Constitutional arguments.

In essence, Anti-Federalists proposed an isolation from the affairs of Europe predicated on the one truism that America was free from foreign dangers to its union by virtue of distance. Indeed, that foreign dangers would only present in the American continent, if political power came to be centralised by Constitutional reform. The creation of an overly powerful federal government that took powers from the states, it was argued, and placed it in the hands of a powerful Executive, and a small number of Congressional representatives, would only create the circumstances for foreign political interference. This would happen because foreign agents would be tempted to encourage state faction, destabilisation of the union, and its division, by

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<sup>63</sup> This was not a theory that at all influenced foreign affairs nor that was even considered as a realistic proposition. The intention of bringing into this argument is to demonstrate that isolationist ideas in this period can only be found in this type of theoretical construct, the musings of thinkers such as Jefferson and of some of the Anti-Federalist writers.

offering bribery to the Executive and Congressmen. Hence, the current state system, by maintaining a balance of power between the states because of the loose confederation of the Articles of Confederation, offered better protection. Simply, this was because state, unlike national, Congressmen were more likely to have sympathy for local concerns, be closer to the people, and less in thrall to either an all-powerful Executive or to foreign interests.

The Anti-Federalist belief in separation from Europe and the benefits to national security found in the state system, contrasted with that of the Federalist desire to pursue a policy which inevitably involved participation in the balance.

According to the Federalists, centralisation of power would provide two important elements, fundamental to the execution of such a policy. Firstly, reform would create a stronger union, freed from European intrigue, which threatened post-War state cohesion, a directly opposing view to that of the Anti-Federalists.<sup>64</sup> State cohesion was at risk, because the individual American states saw no need for a constitutional arrangement stronger than the Articles, now that they had achieved their original War aim of maintaining state autonomy from Great Britain.<sup>65</sup> Secondly, it would grant the Executive the power to protect the union from foreign dangers by removing certain powers from the states and placing them instead within a central government. Centralisation would strengthen the union by granting the power of taxation, maintenance of an army, command of the state militia (when called into the actual service of the United States), regulation of commerce and enforcement of treaties. A Congress able to remove the fault lines in the union of which foreign nations would seek to take advantage, would also be better able to protect itself against foreign dangers.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Lang D G. *Foreign Policy in the Early Republic*. (Louisiana State University Press: Baton Rouge, 1985).

<sup>65</sup> See for example; Barker C. A., *The Background of the Revolution in Maryland*, (Yale University Press: Yale, 1967), pp. 184-188.

<sup>66</sup> See for example; Marks (1997)

Federalists, anxious to ensure support for Constitutional reform, went to great lengths to warn that these foreign dangers existed, even if there was insufficient evidence of an inevitable interstate civil war. In the absence of actual conflict, dangers to the union from external menaces were explained in more abstract terms, by reference to antiquity, as those that afflict states that choose to maintain loose arrangements with each other, and are therefore vulnerable to foreign peril.<sup>67</sup> Chapter Five explores these ideas in greater detail.

### **The Analytical Balance of Power Framework**

In investigating the American national interest in 1952, Morgenthau, when discussing elements of national interest in the early founding period, provides support for the arguments presented above. Morgenthau explains that *“the Founding Fathers had a clear conception of the relationship between the isolation of the United States from the affairs of Europe and an active foreign policy to be pursued by the United States.... isolation was not a gift of nature to be preserved by doing nothing. It was rather the result of an intelligent and deliberate foreign policy to be achieved by hard thinking and hard work”*.<sup>68</sup> Hence, if Americans were to achieve a detachment from Europe, avoidance of entanglement in the words of the Address, they had to adopt an overall schema for a post-War foreign policy, that involved, as a key element, a pragmatic engagement in the European equilibrium.

The analytical framework of this thesis that describes the engrossment of this equilibrium thinking in the early American foreign policy debate, requires the definition of two theories of balance of power. One, a general theory, describes how member nations, such as France and

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<sup>67</sup> See; Wood G.S. *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787*, (The University of North Carolina Press: North Carolina, 1969), p. 6. For the problems of effectively extrapolating the experiences of antiquity in order to arrive at an acceptable formulation of Eighteenth Century (or indeed later) federalism, see Deudney (2007), p.5. These limitations, Deudney explains, arise because discussion in the literature of the experiences in antiquity on which international theory is based, arise from an investigation of only a small number of small polities and not a *“random selection... from Western ...historical experience”*.

<sup>68</sup> Morgenthau H. J. *What Is the National Interest of the United States?* (*Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 282., July 1952), pp. 1-7

Britain, behaved relative to each other, the second, a theory of peripheral state involvement, describes the importance of smaller, emerging or states otherwise peripheral to the general equilibrium.<sup>69</sup>

### Balance of Power: A General Theory

The general theory of balance of power explains how nations within the equilibrium relate to each other, and develop policies to maintain or, in the event of disruption, reinstate the equilibrium.<sup>70</sup>

The eighteenth century Swiss political philosopher Emer de Vattel in his work, *the Law of Nations*, provides the foundation for balance thinking in Europe in this period.<sup>71</sup> According to Vattel, central to the European system was national interest, and each nation made policy and formed alliances, that achieved its own national objectives.<sup>72</sup> One implication of Vattel's theory is that nations were not influenced by ideological considerations that conflicted with the hard goals of national interest.<sup>73</sup> However, he explains that national aims were complemented by a

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<sup>69</sup> Hawthorn G. *Thucydides on Politics. Back to the Present*. (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2014). The author describes a similar situation when discussing the Greek states around 432 BC. Members of the Peloponnesian League shared the common interest within a balance of power system of protecting themselves against a strong Athens. Further, Hawthorn explains that a larger and more powerful state was incentivised to engage with smaller states to avoid the risk of losing influence over a period of time, if it failed to protect their interests. In other words that smaller states would seek protection from association with other participants.

<sup>70</sup> Chafetz et. al., (1999), provide a definition of balance of power as a system in which strong nations do not concert with other strong nations, but with smaller and weaker nations, because the aim is not to "maximise power", but to ensure that the essential balance remains inviolate. However Inis explains that it is unclear in the definition of balance of power, how power is distributed between the participants, i.e. whether equally or unequally, and further that adherents to balance of power theory fail to explain why such systems have failed to restrain participants from waging war, see; Inis L. C., *The Balance of Power Revisited*, (*Review of International Studies*, Cambridge University Press, Vol. 15, No. 2, Special Issue on the Balance of Power, April 1989), pp. 77-85. In support of this latter point, see the explanation provided by Little, that a balance of power system encourages conflict, because of the emergence of a nation willing to exert itself, causing other participants to re-balance by waging war; Little R., *Deconstructing the Balance of Power: Two Traditions of Thought*, (*Review of International Studies*, Cambridge University Press, Vol. 15, No. 2, Special Issue on the Balance of Power, April 1989), pp. 87-100. Further, for the point of view that power, by definition must be distributed unequally since otherwise equally powerful nations would constantly be at war see; Hjorth. R., *Hedley Bull's Paradox of the Balance of Power: A Philosophical Inquiry*, (*Review of International Studies*, Cambridge University Press, Vol. 33, No. 4., October 2007), pp. 597-613. Finally for a description of balance of power as either; (i) an "adversarial" system in which nations go to war to re-instate the equilibrium, or (ii) an "associational" system, in which nations cooperate to maintain stability, see; the review by van de Haar E., of Little R., *The Balance of Power in International Relations: Metaphors, Myths and Models* (*Royal Institute of International Affairs*, Wiley for The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1944-, Vol. 84, No. 6, November 2008), pp. 1303-1304.

<sup>71</sup> Haakonssen K. (ed.). *The Law of Nations, Emer de Vattel*, (Liberty Fund: Indianapolis, 2008).

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, Haakonssen (2008). p. 496.

<sup>73</sup> Chatterjee P. *The Classical Balance of Power Theory*, (*Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 9 No. 1, 1972), pp. 51-61. The author gives a definition of balance of power politics by defining the key characteristics of nation-states who participate as "individual actors",

desire, shared by all balance participants, to maintain the equilibrium.<sup>74</sup> This is because it was in the interests of each balance participant to ensure that no one nation gained pre-eminence over any of the others since this could ultimately result in, what might be termed, hegemonic tyranny, an implication of Vattel's reference to a desire to maintain "*order and liberty*" within the system.<sup>75</sup> Risks of disequilibrium, and the threat of tyranny, could arise from the build-up of economic or military resources by one participant and the changed balance would then demand that rebalancing take place.<sup>76</sup> Equilibrium could be reinstated in one of two ways. Firstly, by virtue of a concert of the remaining members of the system which might require a union of both stronger and peripheral nations, or secondly, a strong balance participant may build up its military and naval power in order to redress the disequilibrium.<sup>77</sup> Just as importantly, participants may unify as an opposing confederacy in anticipation of a threat and not only in the face of it. Therefore, de Vattel explains, it is permissible to take precautions to protect against the emergence of a hegemon and indeed that it would be prudent to do so.<sup>78</sup> One implication of de Vattel's theory of pre-emption is therefore that, emerging, and hence, peripheral states, that in the future could be valuable members of a counter balancing concert, must either be embraced as current alliance partners or they must be contained to prevent them from allying with a future hegemon.<sup>79</sup> It is this anticipatory view

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the leaders of each state being concerned primarily with preserving and furthering their perceived national interests, and in which a single actor cannot dominate but a system which allows actors to increase their own capabilities within the system.

<sup>74</sup> In support, see; Stein A., *The Balance of Power in International History. Theory and Reality*, (Journal of Conflict Resolution, Centre for International Studies, Cornell University, Vol. 17. No. 1, March 1973), pp. 33-69. Stein describes the literature as referring to six propositions one of which describes the efforts of participants to balance a nation that threatens "*preponderance*". See also Maurseth (1964), pp. 120-136. Maurseth describes power within the balance in terms of a zero sum relationship. In other words, preponderance of a nation signals a reduction in the power of other nations, requiring the latter to re-balance the threatening power. See also Gulick (1955), who describes this re-balancing as being both the most effective response of threatened nations, and critical to the maintenance of stability in the system. However, Papayoanou P. A., *Economic Interdependence and the Balance of Power*, (*International Studies Quarterly*, Wiley, Vol. 41, No. 1. March 1997), pp. 113-140., explains that nations sometimes do not directly confront a threatening nation but pursue more passive measures whilst simultaneously pursuing military build-up. Papayoanou also explains that nations do not always pursue balancing strategies when they are economically interdependent on the threatening nation because they cannot leverage domestic resources in pursuit of hard balancing strategies.

<sup>75</sup> Haakonssen (2008). p. 496.

<sup>76</sup> However see, Maurseth (1964) who also describes the difficulties in trying to establish when a change in the balance has taken place because of the difficulty in making unbiased decisions.

<sup>77</sup> Hawthorn (2008). p. 27, and also p. 498., this is the reference to the creation of "*confederacies*".

<sup>78</sup> Haakonssen (2008), p. 499. This is the reference to the maintenance of a "*vigilance*" to prevent being "*lulled to sleep*".

<sup>79</sup> Haakonssen (2008), pp. 496-499.

of a possible disequilibrium that explains American involvement in the balance of power, as will be described in greater detail later.

An alternative view put forward by Henry Kissinger, is that America has never in its history participated in the European equilibrium, because it has never been faced by a power in need of balancing, or that could balance it.<sup>80</sup> In other words, America has never faced a nation that can sufficiently threaten it, and that when America did intervene in the two world wars it did so for reasons not involvement in the European equilibrium, but for reasons of ideology.<sup>81</sup> This conclusion, however is puzzling from two points of view. Firstly, America as a confederation of former colonies at the start of the Revolution, was directly threatened by Great Britain leading ultimately to the 1778 alliance with France. Kissinger's view may therefore rely on a definition of America as a Constitutional Republic as opposed to a loose collection of colonies, as it was at the start of the Revolution. Secondly, Kissinger's conclusion relies on the general balance theory, and places little or no emphasis on the importance of peripheral nations, that is, America in the eighteenth century. Other political scientists argue that although it is puzzling that America has not previously been balanced this does not mean that it is either not in need of balancing, or that there is no nation or nations that can balance it. Hence, for example, modern China and Russia, have the ability to balance America, either in isolation or with others. Further, that it is only a question of time before a unipolar nation becomes too dangerous and must be brought back into some form of balance.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Kissinger. H. *Diplomacy*. (Simon and Schuster, New York, 1994) pp. 17–22, and p. 137.

<sup>81</sup> Quoted in; Kesler C. R., *Saving the Revolution, The Federalist Papers and the American Founding*, (The Free Press: New York, 1987), p.83.

<sup>82</sup> This is argued in the introduction to; Ikenberry G. J. (ed.), *America Unrivaled, The Future of the Balance of Power*, (Cornell University Press: New York, 2002), pp. 4-6. For the inevitability of balancing see also in this volume the essay by Waltz K. N., *Structural Realism after the Cold War*.



Aside from the considerations described above of, what might be termed, full members of an equilibrium, emerging states can also threaten imbalance.

### **Balance of Power: A Theory of Peripheral State Involvement**

An explanation of the balance of power theory as it applies to what might be termed smaller, peripheral, or emerging states is needed to fully describe the American situation in the eighteenth century.

Balance of power theories deal with a wider definition than the general balance theory, and embrace emerging nation states. Alfred Vagts, starts from the convenient assumption of a nation state in isolation to describe its possible importance to balance participants. He explains that although any state isolated from balance of power politics may not see itself as in competition with others in the balance system, it may, because of competition amongst balance participants, be forced into the competition.<sup>83</sup> Vagts does not explain the circumstances that might cause forcible entry other than to refer to the American experience at the outbreak of the Second World War. However, Stephen Walt (quoted in Levy *et al*) assists the argument, when he describes threats to the balance of power that arise both from perceptions of possible future actions and from ideologies that are considered dangerous.<sup>84</sup> Further, Levy *et al* support Vagts' explanation, when they describe how some historians have accepted the notion that it is not necessarily the strongest power that threatens to upset the balance, but sometimes the "*greatest threats to [the] interests [of the balance powers]*" that is

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<sup>83</sup> Vagts A. *The United States and the Balance of Power*, (*The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 3. No. 4, November 1941). pp. 401–449.

<sup>84</sup> This more traditional theory of balancing is that expounded, according to Levy *et al*, by Waltz N.K. *Theory of International Politics*. (McGraw Hill: New York, 1979) and Walt S. M. *Origins of Alliances* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1987). That the American Revolution, with its novel ideas of republican government were dangerous to monarchical states, was held true by Leopold von Ranke, the German historian, to the King of Bavaria, when in 1854, von Ranke explained that the creation of "*a new republic based on the rights of the individual...introduced a new force into the world....up this point the conviction had prevailed in Europe that monarchy best served the interests of the nation*", quoted in; Adams W. P., *The First American Constitutions, Republican Ideology and the Making of the State Constitutions in the Revolutionary Era*, (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers: New York, 2001), p. 128.

considered dangerous to the balance.<sup>85</sup> This explanation does not, it is submitted, preclude risks to the balance from essentially peripheral states that arise from their availability as possible allies.

Hence, the clearest demonstration of American involvement in the equilibrium is in the foreign policies of the European nations towards it. Policies represented stark illustrations of, what are called, soft and binding balancing strategies, adopted against emerging threats to the balance. Quoting works by Paul, Nexon explains that traditional *hard* balancing strategies, such as military buildup or alliance building, are usually adopted against an emerging hegemon (a current balance participant that increases its military might, for example) within a balance of power system, but that it is *soft and binding* balancing that is used to restrain or prevent disruption from a prospective entrant. Soft balancing, may involve *divide and balance* strategies in which the “*balancer*” concerns himself with trying to entice allies away from the prospective entrant or tries to create faction within the prospective entrant state in order to create instability. The intention being to create intrastate volatility leaving a state vulnerable to a *divide et impera* strategy. The fear of such an enterprise helps to explain Congressional concern with protecting the union from European intrigue.<sup>86</sup>

In the American experience, Spanish incentives to western settlers to entice them away from the union, British support of Indian tribes in the North as a buffer against American expansion, and encouragement of the Vermont territory to cede into the remnants of a British colonial system, are illustrations of divide and balance strategies. Indeed, Morgenthau confirms this assessment in his explanation of how divide and balance strategies apply equally well to

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<sup>85</sup> Levy J.S. and Thompson. W. R. *Hegemonic Threats and Great Power Balancing in Europe. 1495 –1999.* (*Security Studies*, 14:1, 1-33, 2005).

<sup>86</sup> Nexon. D. H. *The Balance of Power in the Balance*, (*World Politics*, Vol. 16. Issue 02, April 2009), pp. 330 -359. See also Paul T.V. *Soft Balancing in the Age of US Primacy*, (*International Security*, No. 1, Summer 2005). pp. 46–71.

strategies that create tensions intra-union (within the American union) as they do to prospective threatening alliances between competing nations within a balance of power system. In support, Morgenthau provides the illustration of the French strategy from the seventeenth century to World War II, to divide the German empire into small states, so as to prevent the creation of a cohesive union of them.<sup>87</sup>

On the other hand, binding strategies attempt a more direct subservience of a prospective entrant by creating interdependencies with the aim of weakening an opponent's ability to "*pursue autonomous policies*" that might be counter to the balancer's interests. Work by Schweller indicates that binding may be more relevant to later periods when there were more formal international institutions, into which powers could be *bound*, than in the eighteenth century. However, Schweller's description of binding strategies as those that are aimed at bringing a power into the "*established order*", with the aim (one of many) of "*entangling the rising power in a web of policies*", is also helpful and it describes European strategies towards America.<sup>88</sup> Hence, European inertia in adopting American ideas of free international trade and, for example, Britain's policy of constraining post-War American shipping within the ideas of the pre-War Navigation Acts, are illustrations of binding strategies. In many ways, therefore, America was being enticed into the European balance.

European powers in their preoccupation with America, were concerned not with traditional strategies of balancing against a currently observable threatening hegemonic power, the general theory explained above, but with the threat posed by an emerging American nation and its dangerous ideology; the peripheral state theory described here. Further, American

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<sup>87</sup> Morgenthau (1993). See in particular p. 194.

<sup>88</sup> Schweller R. L. *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power*. (Princeton: New Jersey, 2008.) p.36.

continental, as opposed to European continental, hegemony threatened the Spanish colonies in the southwest, and the British Canadian relationship in the northwest as a result of Congressional plans to extend Republican government to the western settled territories.<sup>89</sup>

Hence, Congress was brought into direct conflict with Britain's plans to create disunion, and Spanish concerns to protect its North American colonies from American expansion.

Therefore, before the War, American involvement in the balance can be understood from the perspective explained by the general theory outlined above. For France, an American alliance held out the hope of re-balancing against Britain. After the War, American involvement is described by the soft and the binding balancing strategies that mandated a policy of containment of American ideology and of American expansion. Fears of both free trade with its promise of creating economic interdependencies between nations, are ideological conflicts with European forms of monarchical and absolutist government.<sup>90</sup>

The question however remains, does the above framework describe an *American participation* in the equilibrium? What is incomplete in this schema is the perspective of the peripheral state, and specifically whether it is true to describe it as a balance participant solely by virtue of it being the subject of a balancing strategy. In other words, can a peripheral state be described as participating in the general balance of power when it is being balanced? Alternatively, must the peripheral state be adopting its own balancing strategy *vis a vis* the general balance, in order to be properly described as participating? The question of whether or

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<sup>89</sup> Some historians take the view that the risk of a prospective American hegemony was recognised as early 1763, and that it is for this reason that the British government rejected out of hand the idea that there could be an "*imperial legislature*" in which there would be colonial representation because this would only create significant American power by uniting the colonies, see; Dickerson, O. M., *The Navigation Acts and the American Revolution*, (University of Philadelphia Press: Philadelphia, 1951), p. 55

<sup>90</sup> See Black (2004), and Black J, *A System of Ambition, British Foreign Policy 1660 – 1793*, (Longman: London, 2000) for discussions of foreign affairs within constitutional and absolutist monarchies. However, for the view that George III rejected sectional political interest as the basis for foreign affairs in favour of an idea of national interest, see; Middlekauff, R., *The Glorious Cause, The American Revolution, 1763-1789*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2005), p. 20.

not America *participated* in the balance is central to the internationalism argument of this thesis.

An answer to the question of participation can be identified by adapting the aforementioned questions as two propositions. The first proposition postulates that it is sufficient only for a balance member to subject a peripheral state to a balancing strategy, for the latter to become a balance participant. If this is true, then the above analytical framework describes American participation. That is, the very existence of an American state with prospective or actual economic and military power, or conflicting ideologies, made it a nation peripheral, but salient to the equilibrium. Hence, one could, describe America as a passive participant.

The second proposition, however would introduce the troublesome idea of materiality to the argument by tightening the condition that must be fulfilled if America is to be described as participating, by requiring that a peripheral state is only a participant if it specifically adopts its own balancing strategy. An analysis of the ideas that shaped American foreign affairs makes it axiomatic that it, as a peripheral state, small and emerging, and lacking substantive military or diplomatic power, adopted a policy stratagem that did just this. Applying the ballast of influence to balance rivalries in the national interest, it offered to alter the balance in favour of France or Britain. Whether or not, as a peripheral nation, its overtures succeeded is beside the point. What is important is that the *offer was credible* and this can be measured by the response of the British and the French. The Spanish control of navigation of the Mississippi River was to prevent American growth, as was the presence of British troops in the northwest.<sup>91</sup> Congress' attempts to limit the facility of European powers to influence the

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<sup>91</sup> David Ramsay's Oration at Charleston, South Carolina, Bailyn B. (ed.). *The Debate on the Constitution. Federalist and Anti-Federalist Speeches, Articles, and Letters During the Struggle over Ratification. Part Two.* (Library of America: New York, 1993), pp. 506-510. See also Maier. P. *Ratification. The People Debate the Constitution. 1787-1788.* (Simon and Schuster: New York, 2010). pp. 12, 238, 277 and 278.

separate states which could have led to the creation of separate confederacies within the union, was another. Hence, European powers were pre-occupied with America as an emerging and potentially powerful state, and American policy was to take advantage of this concern.

### **The Historiography of Internationalism and Isolationism in Early American Foreign Affairs**

Theories that describe early American foreign affairs, put forward an alternative view to that described above. These theories include; Appleman-Williams W., *From Colony to Empire: Essays in the History of American Foreign Relations* (1952); Gilbert F., *To the Farewell Address. Ideas of Early American Foreign Policy* (1961); Varg P., *Foreign Policies of the Founding Fathers* (1970); Marks III F., *Independence on Trial. Foreign Affairs in the Making of the Constitution* (1997); Onuf P. and Sadosky L.J. *American Internationalism and the U.S. Constitution* (2005); Kagan R., *Dangerous Nation, America and the World. 1600 to 1898*; (2006) Graebner N. (et al.), *Foreign Affairs and the Founding Fathers. From Confederation to Constitution. 1776 to 1787* (2011); and Herring G., *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (2011).<sup>92</sup>

Whilst some historians have accepted the importance of balance of power to American statesmen such as Jefferson and Adams after 1789 (Graebner), these arguments place less emphasis on the balance of power, and hence internationalist, perspective presented here. Instead historians discuss the importance of the maintenance of the balance of power to American security. In other words, the hope and expectation that equilibrium members would be too preoccupied with their own rivalries to be concerned with America.

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<sup>92</sup> Williams (1952); Gilbert (1961); Varg P., *Foreign Policies of the Founding Fathers*, (Pelican, London, 1970); Marks (1997); Essay by Onuf. P. S. and Sadosky L. J. *American Internationalism and the U.S. Constitution*, in Merrill et. al. (2005); Kagan R. *Dangerous Nation, America and the World. 1600 to 1898*. (Vintage Books: New York. 2006); Graebner N. A. (et. al.), *Foreign Affairs and the Founding Fathers. From Confederation to Constitution. 1776 to 1787*, (Praeger: California, 2011), and; Herring (2011).

Otherwise, current theories describe the foreign policies adopted by early American statesmen, as representing five substantive courses of action. Firstly, there is the *universalist* description, or the idea that American foreign policy seeks to spread universally applicable, Revolutionary ideas of liberty and freedom (Varg, Marks, Kagan, and McDougall).<sup>93</sup> Universalism in foreign affairs in the period under review appears on first blush to be a misnomer given the military weakness of the early Republic. However, universalism implies both idealism and pragmatism. As an exemplar for the oppressed peoples of the world, but not necessarily as a nation willing or able to assert itself on their behalf, it is idealistic.<sup>94</sup> However, when used to justify expansion west on the grounds that Congress sought to spread American values by guaranteeing western territories a republican form of government, universalism is pragmatic.<sup>95</sup> Alternatively, one might regard such a position as cynical in the sense of being a justification for westward expansion at the expense of the Indian tribes.

Universalism has also been considered in more trade centric terms (Varg, Herring, Marks, Hendrickson). Hence, that trade was not just a goal of foreign affairs in the national interest of economic expansion, but that it contributed to the spread of republican ideas that emphasised economic interests above military objectives for their own sake. Therefore, Americans did not just wish to expand trade, they desired a commercial revolution that would encourage free trade, by creating free ports as an alternative to the prevailing form of state controlled

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<sup>93</sup> See for example Kaplan S. L., *The Treaty of Alliance with France and American Isolationism*, in Merrill D. et. al. (2009). Kagan (2006) describes the American Revolution as a universalist event, one in which liberal principles of free trade and representative government would be a beacon for the oppressed peoples of the world. Brands H.W., *What America Owes the World, The Struggle for the Soul of Foreign Policy*, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1998), within the context of Washington's Farewell Address, brings a different perspective to the argument that America represented the exemplar for the world. Brands argues that entanglement in the affairs of Europe would "*corrupt the example*" of a republican and free America. This is what Brands calls the *exemplarist school*, i.e. the example that American ideas of republican liberty set for the rest of the world which is essentially benign compared to Brands' vindicationist school which requires the exertion of force in support of these American ideals.

<sup>94</sup> When America does not seek to spread its Revolutionary ideals, but instead becomes a nation "*to whom all Nations will come...to whom the Remnants [sic] of all ruined people will fly ....for refuge*", see the essay; *The Expanding Union*, Onuf. P. S. in; Konig (1995), p. 57.

<sup>95</sup> See also; Kissinger, H., *World Order*, (Random House: London, 2015), p.6. The author describes American foreign policy in this period as being to promote Revolutionary values of liberty and republican government.

mercantilism.<sup>96</sup> For Americans, free trade would not just deliver commercial benefits, it would create economic interdependence and therefore reduce the risk of international state conflict.<sup>97</sup> In terms of foreign policy engagement, the revolution in international trade, would require active commercial treaty making, diplomatic engagement and ultimately the development of a navy to protect American interests (Onuf *et al*).<sup>98</sup>

The American demand for luxury goods and need for overseas markets for agricultural and manufacturing surpluses, was to be served by an internationalist foreign policy which, according to Onuf *et al*, would not be theirs of right, but would require treaty making within a broad strategy of foreign engagement.<sup>99</sup> Commercial engagement implied both the deployment of a navy to protect trade, and active European diplomacy, which required effective federal government to sustain diplomacy, restrain interstate competition, and remedy the failure of the states to comply with treaty commitments. Commercial agreements, did not, however, imply military treaty commitments. Hence, whilst foreign affairs were concerned with the development of commercial relationships, since it was the general belief, according to Varg, that all international relationships should be based on consent and trust, political alliances were to be avoided since they could ultimately require the deployment of military power. In any event, since foreign affairs, in the eighteenth century, served monarchs and princes and not the people, the people had more to gain from an international system that promoted free trade, as opposed to a mercantilist system which was the servant of the ruling

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<sup>96</sup> See Greene (1986), p.165.

<sup>97</sup> However, see Meyers M. (ed.), *The Mind of the Founder, Sources of the Political Thought of James Madison*, (Brandeis University Press: Hanover, 1973), p. 215., who argues that this doctrine of economic interdependence was more a pragmatic choice than it was an idealist one given the weakness of the American military, the absence of a navy, and an American dislike of standing armies. For an alternative perspective, that global interdependence has been “*the dominant trend in human history*” for at least five centuries, see; Deudney D. H., *Bounding Power. Republican Security Theory from the Polis to the Global Village* (Princeton University Press: New Jersey, 2007). P. 1.

<sup>98</sup> American interests against Barbary Pirate attack would not ultimately be protected by a navy until about 1794, see Puls M., *Henry Knox, Visionary General of the American Revolution*, (Palgrave: New York, 2008), p. 213.

<sup>99</sup> Essay by Onuf and Sadosky, in Merrill, et. al. (2005).



classes. Hence, according to Varg, the Founders desired replacement of the balance of power with economic interconnectedness, and Americans were prepared to trade their dislike of the centralised power that the Constitution would bring, for international trade, and the security that it would assure.<sup>100</sup>

The second course of American foreign policy is the imperialism of territorial and trade expansion, but independent of ideological considerations, explained by McDougall by reference to the contradictions inherent in universalism. According to McDougall, Alexander Hamilton in *Federalist One* had not only equated the dangers faced by the Republic in 1783, from the Spanish in the southwest and the Barbary Pirates in the Mediterranean, with security but more importantly as a constraint on a rapidly expanding future American empire.<sup>101</sup>

Therefore, American security concerns were not only with the preservation of the union from external interference, but with concerns that they would act as a restraint on the ability of the union to expand beyond the original thirteen states. Hence, that the Constitution was needed to perfect the union in large part for the purposes of security, and to permit prosecution of an effective expansionist, foreign policy.<sup>102</sup> Kagan supports this argument, but concludes that

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<sup>100</sup> Varg (1970). The right to the western lands was justified on a variety of different grounds including one that sought vindication from the failure of the Native American tribes to settle and organise the land which therefore left it free for imperial expansion, see Black J. *Crisis of Empire, Britain and America in the Eighteenth Century*, (Continuum UK: London, 2010), p. 11. However, Jennings F., *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire, The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies*, (W. W. Norton and Company: New York, 1984), p. 243, explains that the idea that the western lands were free for occupation, referred to as *vacuum domicilium*, as wrong on the grounds that, firstly the Indian tribes, if not conquerors, were certainly “preservers” of the land, and secondly because the western lands were ordered by successive British monarchs to be purchased from Indian tribes, who were hence by implication its legitimate “owners”.

<sup>101</sup> The collocation of the west with growth of the American economy is referred to as the “*Frontier thesis*”, after Turner F. J. who stated that “*the advance of American settlement westward explains American development*”, see Faragher J. M. (ed.), *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner*, (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1998). See also, Nester W. R., *The Frontier War for American Independence*, (Stackploe, Pennsylvania, 2004), p. 342., who explains that American values of independency, and liberty were “*partially forged on the anvil of frontier hardships*”. See also, Bickford C. B. and Bowling K. R., *Birth of the Nation, The First Federal Congress, 1789-1791*, (Madison House: New York, 1989), p. 77. who explain that Franklin, Adams and Washington were all believers in the inevitable westward expansion of an American empire. This latter belief is reinforced in; Richter D. K., *Trade, Land, Power, The Struggle for Eastern North America*, (University of Pennsylvania Press: Pennsylvania, 2013), p.8., who quotes Theodore Roosevelt as explaining that the War for Independence was also a war for control of the west either by conflict or by treaty. See also; Sexton J., *The Monroe Doctrine, Empire and Nation in Nineteenth Century America*, (Hill and Wang: New York, 2011), pp.77., who describes the irony between America’s avowed denial of the imperial colonialism of the Europeans whilst promoting ideas of expansion westwards. See also, Stuart R. C., *United States Expansionism and British North America, 1775-1871*, (The University of North Carolina Press: North Carolina, 1988), pp. xi-xiii.

<sup>102</sup> McDougall W.A. *Promised Land, The American Encounter with the World Since 1776. Crusader State*. (Houghton Mifflin Company: New York, 1997).

idealism was a driving force in foreign affairs since the colonists shared an Anglo-Saxon vision of themselves as bringing civilisation to the world, and hence their right to expand on the North American continent.<sup>103</sup>

Thirdly, is the idea supported by Hendrickson, who unpicks the ideology of American trade explained by Herring and others, in order to identify the internationalist nature of foreign affairs as representing two facets.<sup>104</sup> Firstly, an attachment to neutrality as the basis for eliminating wars and secondly, a commitment to free trade, with the same objective. This then is an alternative view, that equates neutrality, not internationalism, with free trade as the basis of a more stable world.<sup>105</sup>

Fourthly, for Bemis, American security was firmly anchored in the European balance of power, and the French alliance was made possible because of equilibrium considerations.<sup>106</sup> The Founders, Graebner explains, established the framework of American foreign policy with the balance firmly in mind since, because it had the effect of “*limiting the behaviour of the ambitious*”, it acted in the interests of American security.<sup>107</sup> Hence, for historians such as Herring, the balance operated so that America had little to fear from European nations, since an attack on America by any one nation would signal a change in the equilibrium, immediately provoking support for America from other balance participants. Kagan, however, regards the European balance of power as working directly against American expansionist plans after 1763. Hence, for example, Edmund Burke, the Anglo Irish politician regarded French Canada as

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<sup>103</sup> Detweiler F.G. *The Anglo-Saxon Myth in the United States*, (*American Sociological Review*, Vol. 3, No. 2, April 1938), pp. 183-189. The author attributes this shared Anglo-Saxon vision to an inherited corpus of “*political, legal, and intellectual*” discourse and tradition brought to America by successive generations of English colonists.

<sup>104</sup> Herring (2011).

<sup>105</sup> Hendrickson (2009).

<sup>106</sup> The interest of France in entering the Revolutionary War on the side of America, is effectively regarded as a pursuit of national interest within the European balance of power by Bemis (1957). For Jefferson, sustaining the European balance of power was key to ensuring American security, see; Malone D., *Jefferson the President, Second Term, 1805-1809*, (Little Brown and Company: New York, 1974), p. 95.

<sup>107</sup> Merrill et. al. (2010).

important to British interests as it would act as a constraint on American expansionism.

Therefore there was a balance of power not only in Europe but on the North American continent, according to Burke.<sup>108</sup>

The above descriptions of internationalism in foreign affairs as being rooted in territorial expansion are used by Kagan to dilute any thought of isolationism by rejecting the traditional view of it as located in the early seventeenth century Puritan New England colonies.<sup>109</sup> Kagan dismisses the myth of an American shining city as a sanctuary from the religious oppression of the Old World on two grounds. Firstly, by describing Puritans as “*global revolutionaries*”, who used America as their base for a “*counter offensive*” aimed at reformation of the Scottish and English churches.<sup>110</sup> In other words, as a launch pad for active involvement with the Old World. Secondly, by pointing out that the idealism that had brought the Puritans to America was swamped, by the turn of the seventeenth century, by evolving liberal societies that were preoccupied with material possessions, the foremost being the hunger for land.<sup>111</sup> The middle and southern colonies, which had not originated in Puritan ideals, always had the straightforward objective of material gain from acquisition of land.<sup>112</sup>

Whereas the above theories to some degree refer to balance of power considerations, none explore sufficiently the effect that equilibrium thinking had on early American statesmen at the forefront of shaping foreign policy. The creation of the American state by the 1776

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<sup>108</sup> This is quoted in Draper T. *A Struggle for Power. The American Revolution*, (Times Books: New York, 1996), pp.9 -10.

<sup>109</sup> This is the view attributed to, amongst others, Gilbert ( F. *The Beginnings of American Foreign Policy: To the Farewell Address*. (rev. ed.) (Princeton University Press: New Jersey, 1965).

<sup>110</sup> For example, according to Miller, the Puritan exodus to the New World represented “*an organised task force....executing a flank attack on the corruptions of [English] Christendom*”, see; Miller P. *Errand into the Wilderness*, (Harvard University Press: Cambridge Massachusetts, 1984), p. 11.

<sup>111</sup> Weeks (2013). Weeks explains this point by reference to the period after the Revolution, years which saw the development of the liberal, capitalist state, giving rise to ambition and individualism. However, the degree to which the Puritans sought isolationism from Europe, or involvement with it, depended on the extent of the trading relationship with British merchants, see; Hall M. G., *The Last American Puritan, The Life of Increase Mather*, (Wesleyan University Press: Connecticut, 1988), pp.186-187.

<sup>112</sup> Kagan (2006).

Declaration of Independence, which, according to Armitage, by proclamation, met the three conditions necessary for statehood, also created the circumstances for balance participation.<sup>113</sup> The Declaration asserted an equality in status as a nation with other nations, an American willingness to abide by the rules of international society in terms of making war and peace, and a treaty making capacity and therefore a legitimacy in international trade. Hence, Armitage believes that Europeans were caused to fear for their colonial possessions, which in turn created a danger to America that there could be a British French Spanish concert against its independence. It is submitted that Armitage's explanation simply reinforces the idea that it was in American interests to engage European nations to prevent this threatening alignment by taking advantage of their balance rivalries.

### **Contribution of this Thesis to the Literature**

This thesis offers an original contribution to the interpretation of early American foreign affairs, by building on the work of existing scholarship (including Kagan, *Dangerous Nation* and others referred to later).<sup>114</sup> Firstly, it is argued that it is spurious to locate the origin of a twentieth century American isolationism in Washington's Address. The identification of an early form of national interest of the union of the British American colonies at the outset of the Revolution, implies that an interpretation of an origin of American foreign engagement should begin much earlier than 1796. By tracing its evolution from colonial times, and by identifying the development of autonomous government in the colonies from the early to mid-eighteenth century, this thesis explains how colonial shared interest came to be described as a pan-colonial interest, or an early American national interest.<sup>115</sup> Collective interest, as national

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<sup>113</sup> Armitage (2007). However, see Kuethe A. F. and Andrien K. F., *The Spanish Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century, War and the Bourbon Reforms 1713-1796*, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2014), p. 278, who explain that the French were motivated in encouraging the Spanish to strengthen their colonial system (the years from about 1765 were characterised by unrest across Spanish American possessions) in preparation for war, because the French wished to make Spain more economically reliant on France.

<sup>114</sup> Kagan (2006)

<sup>115</sup> For an alternative view of the national interest see Varg (1970).

interest with its roots in colonial self-determination, in which Lutz locates the origin of representative state government, was the aim of a much earlier American internationalist foreign policy.<sup>116</sup>

It is important to dispel the notion that twentieth century isolationism was a child of the eighteenth century, because not do so would leave later isolationist policies with an undeserved ancestral legitimacy.<sup>117</sup> Kaplan supports this proposition to a degree when he explains that the term *isolationist* is no older than the 1920s, and that the isolationism of early America was directly concerned with not joining any confederacies, even when these had the aim of free trade, and had nothing to do with European politics.<sup>118</sup> This explanation of isolationism does not preclude the involvement of America in the balance of power, it simply confirms the aversion to political treaty making.

Secondly, this thesis explains that post-War neutrality, the essential proxy for descriptions of isolationism, in its substance held a highly nuanced meaning for Americans. It decreed the blending of ideology and realism as the foundation for conducting foreign affairs. The ideology of no political connection was blended with pragmatic considerations of the national interest to produce a policy that implicitly supported participation in the balance of power.

Thirdly, this thesis places balance of power thinking at the heart of American foreign policy making. The equilibrium was an important element of eighteenth century European politics, it is important therefore, to explain American involvement in it relative to the accepted

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<sup>116</sup> Lutz D. S., *Colonial Origins of the American Constitution. A Documentary History*. (Liberty Fund: Indianapolis, 1992).

<sup>117</sup> Doenecke (2000), and Cole W.S. *Roosevelt and the Isolationists 1932–1945*, (Lincoln: Nebraska, 1983), *Divine R.A., The Illusion of Neutrality*, (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1962), and Jonas (1966).

<sup>118</sup> Essay by Kaplan, in Merrill et. al. (2005).

neutralist and isolationist interpretations of foreign affairs.<sup>119</sup> The balance of power perspective of this thesis does not reject idealistic or pragmatic universalism but adopts it, by using it to define national interest, as an interest in commercial innovation, western expansion, and security. Universalism as an ideology that sought to spread American ideas of liberty and republican government, is however rejected on the grounds of military weakness.

Fourthly, this thesis rejects the dismissal, by for example Dougherty and Hendrickson, of foreign affairs as only a catalyst for constitutional reform, i.e. as its *casus*, and, instead, explains constitutional reform as arising directly from the demands of an internationalist foreign policy, i.e. as its *ratio essendi*.<sup>120</sup> Strong national government was required in the national interest, since, as Marks explains, domestic failures exacerbated external dangers thereby magnifying security concerns.<sup>121</sup> Constitutional change therefore made for a more credible nation abroad.

Finally, this thesis exposes the meaning of isolationist ideas as an argument between Federalist and Anti-Federalist. Whereas Federalists saw dangers to the union everywhere, Anti-Federalists saw them only in Constitutional reform that, *inter alia*, centralised power, creating

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<sup>119</sup> Ideas of American isolationism and neutrality were, according to some historians, formed as early as the mid seventeenth century, and subsequently “*crystallised*” after the end of the Seven Years War after which the French left the North American continent and Americans came to realise that they had been simply used by, European powers, as participants in a wider struggle for dominance within the balance of power equilibrium, see; Adler S. *The Isolationist Impulse: Its Twentieth Century Reaction*, (Abelhard Schuman: New York, 1957). p. 10. The author also makes the rather peculiar assertion that the Declaration of Independence itself represented “*an act of isolation, for it cut the umbilical cord with the mother country*”. This is also in, Greene J. P. (ed.), *The Reinterpretation of the American Revolution 1763-1789*, (Harper and Row: New York, 1968), p. 314, essay by Kenyon C. M. *Republicanism and Radicalism in the American Revolution: An Old Fashioned Interpretation*. Kenyon explains that far from creating the basis of an internationalist foreign policy, the Declaration of Independence caused Americans to look inwards at domestic affairs safe in the protection afforded by the national government of the Continental Congress, and isolated from external threats by geography and water. Other historians consider the Declaration to represent the precise opposite, that is signalling the creation of a nation willing, and now able to treat with other nations, see; Armitage (2007). For support that the Declaration was an internationalist act, see; Sadosky L. J., *Revolutionary Negotiations, Indians, Empires, and Diplomats in the Founding of America*, (University of Virginia Press: Virginia, 2009), p.79., who describes independence as “*American entry into the European centered [sic] diplomatic and commercial system*”.

<sup>120</sup> The grounds upon which the Constitution actually obtains.

<sup>121</sup> However, see; essay by Kenyon C. M. *Republicanism and Radicalism in the American Revolution: An Old Fashioned Interpretation*, in Greene (1968), p. 315, According to Kenyon, the minimum awareness of foreign dangers amongst Americans more generally, and the existence of faction prevented the emergence of a common interest, or national interest.

the circumstances for foreign intrigue. This is the major theme of Chapter Five and is exposed in the writings of the two blocs during the Constitutional ratification debates.

### **Construction of the Thesis**

The argument of this thesis is made in four further major chapters.

It is taken as axiomatic that the fundamental aim of foreign policy is the achievement of the national interest. Given that at the beginning of the Revolution there were a disparate set of thirteen colonies each with its own form of government and with a relationship primarily with London, it is important, when prescribing any explanatory description to the foreign policy of the early union, to ascertain if there was such an idea as national interest. It is submitted that, if there was such a thing as an early national interest, then three general requirements would need to have been met. Firstly, that there was an interest common to and shared by all of the colonies, and secondly, that achievement of this interest was delegated to a representative body. If there was no easily identifiable concept of a national interest of the thirteen colonies, it would be difficult to argue that they, as a unified body, adopted *one* foreign policy. Hence, thirdly that dissent in any and all of the colonies was silenced or compromised.

Chapter Two explores the idea of a national interest at the outset of the Revolution, using these three conditions, in two second order questions. Firstly, since it has been argued that the complexion of early American foreign engagement was internationalist, what was the national interest that was the antecedent cause of this policy? Secondly, given the lack in 1774, of cohesion between the original colonies, how could this interest be described as national, and indeed, did national have meaning at the time? In other words, was there really a shared interest and to what extent could it have been described as an American *national interest*.

This chapter explains that each colony had developed local government autonomous of Great Britain by the eve of the Revolution. Hence in 1774, as the colonies prepared to confront the

consequences of what are referred to as the Coercives, the legislative attacks on American freedoms, each had the same interest, and that was preserving the extant, *de facto* autonomy of government from Great Britain. This independence of government was located in the constitutional arrangements in each colony that had allowed local legislatures to assume a high degree of control over local affairs, a view supported by a recent study of the government of Virginia from 1600 to the present day.<sup>122</sup> That constitutional arrangements are emblematic of the principle that local matters were to be determined locally, was made by de Vattel, who explained that constitutional arrangements are the “*fundamental regulation that determines the manner in which the public authority is to be executed*”.<sup>123</sup> In other words, the public authority, being the local legislature in each colony, regulated the affairs of its citizens with a view to the general colonial welfare and to procure their obedience. These essentially independent states maintained ties of loyalty, trade and, at some level, a supervisory subservience, to London, but certainly not to each other nor to any overriding American authority.

However, the effect of the Coercives was to cause a sudden change in the colonial relationship from one centred on London, to one based on an intercolonial acceptance of the interest that was common to them all, the maintenance of autonomy. The mechanism that facilitated the change was the creation of reliable lines of inter and intracolony communication, through the development of Committees of Correspondence that suddenly began to spring up in each colony, and that took on extra-legal powers until they became the representative colonial

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<sup>122</sup> Tarter B. *The Grandees of Government Origins and Persistence of Undemocratic Politics in Virginia*. (University of Virginia Press: Virginia, 2013.) pp. 89 to 108. I am indebted to Brent Tarter, University of Virginia Library, for his explanations and discussion of this concept in his emails of 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> April 2014 and for his reference to the 1933 edition of *Black's Law Dictionary* (West Publishing Co: St Paul, Minnesota, 1933), the legal dictionary used as standard in the United States. The point made by the quote is that the nature of colonial government had been so engrained that this effective “*grant*” of government by the British authorities had become “*beyond legal memory*”. See also Beeman R. et al., (eds.), *Beyond Confederation, Origins of the Constitution and American National Identity*, (University of North Carolina Press: North Carolina, 1987), p. 29., in which the author points to the colonists understanding of a constitution as being “*a written.... or an...unwritten.....design*” for government.

<sup>123</sup> Haakonssen (2008). pp. 91 to 92.



body. The Committees were responsible for resolving the hitherto separate colonies into a single coherent voice, by authorising, at least initially, delegates to a Continental Congress, to insist on the single aim of returning the colonies to the *status quo ante*. This is the early and shared interest of the colonial union.<sup>124</sup> Consensus was by no means universal, or arrived at by virtue of an immediate colonial unanimity. Chapter Two therefore explores the disagreement between two major factions, the radicals in support of a break with Britain and the conservatives, in favour of compromise, that required resolution before the First Continental Congress was able to fully articulate a shared interest.

The conclusion of Chapter Two is that there was a shared colonial interest, sufficient to be described as a national interest, which was the *raison d'être* for a balance of power based foreign policy that is described in Chapter Three. It is left to Chapter Four to explore further the idea of a post-War national interest which evolved into one that went beyond the desire to maintain an independence, to matters of security, economy, and territorial expansion.

Chapter Three explains that internationalism in early American foreign policy through the lens of exploitation of balance of power rivalries, was shaped by men such Adams, Franklin, John Jay and Jefferson who were actively involved in foreign affairs. The union that emerged in 1774 from the separate colonies lacked the military strength to win independence without foreign support, hence alliance building by participation in the balance of power, was at the core of American foreign policy. Given the always precarious nature of the War, American statesmen were more willing than in later years to make concessions that involved political alliances. This chapter, therefore, explores the work of American Commissioners to Europe in their efforts to

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<sup>124</sup> [*Amicus Republicae*] *Address to the Public. Containing Some Remarks on the Present Political State of the American Republics [sic], etc. Exeter 1786*, Hyndman C. S. and Lutz D. S. (eds.), *American Political Writing During the Founding Era 1760-1805. Volume I.* (Liberty press, Indianapolis, 1983). p.656.

secure the French alliance to support the War effort in terms of loans, materiel, and favourable trade agreements.

The balance of power framework adopted in the analysis that underpins Chapter Three exposes the two central themes of the equilibrium argument of this thesis. Firstly, the exploitation of balance rivalries that for many years after the War had ended would continue to be a feature of policy making. The 1778 French alliance would take on importance just as great as it had during the War, if not greater as fears of either a Franco American or an Anglo American alignment were used in trade and territorial negotiations in Europe and on the North American continent. Secondly, the analysis exposes the importance of the early American union to the equilibrium as both a current participant, peripheral but important to the balance, and as a prospective hegemon. The Chapter describes the balancing and binding strategies adopted by the European powers to contain an independent America, and to prevent it becoming too strong.

It is not suggested that the balancing and binding strategies were sufficient to restrain a post War American expansion, but the country was weakened after the War had ended. Hence, as described in Chapter Four, the ostensibly neutral American foreign policy adopted after the War had ended had at its root, the exploitation of rivalries by offering an American alignment.

Chapter Four exposes the professed neutrality of foreign policy thinkers as more nuanced than a cursory definition of neutrality might suggest. It was only after the War had ended that it was possible for Americans, free of considerations of an existentialist threat, to contemplate that neutrality might allow a greater engagement with the world.

Hence, this Chapter explains that neutrality was defined on the basis of five basic precepts, the effect of which was to mandate active engagement with European nations. Firstly, that the no political connections ideology of the Model Treaty was to be paramount but that, secondly, this did not mean that America should become insular and inward looking. Thirdly, that these two conditions should be compromised if the national interest demanded. Fourthly that the very existence of American as an independent regional power threatened disequilibrium, and hence fifthly that geographic distance was not a protection. Given these basic conditions for an American foreign policy, the traditional definition of neutrality must be subjected to two provisos. Firstly, neutrality should be compromised from a view of it as a perfect impartiality, to one that allowed for leverage of the French alliance. Secondly, that military or other alliances where the national interest demanded it, should be considered a realistic foreign policy choice. This chapter explores these ideas within the context of the prevalent continental situation, viz, the presence of both Spain and Britain in the North American continent.

Whereas this and preceding chapters have sought to dispel the notion of an American isolationism by arguing for its obverse, that is internationalism as an active participation in the balance of power, the argument is completed in Chapter Five by dismissing altogether the existence of ideas of isolationism in the eighteenth century foreign policy debate.

As explained above, Chapter Five locates the meaning of isolationism, as it might have been understood in eighteenth century American foreign affairs, as representing the Jeffersonian ideal of a closed society, economically isolated from the rest of the world, reliant on its own agricultural output, and dependent on a basic manufacturing capability for the luxuries previously provided by British merchants. The chapter explains that European immigration and familial ties, trade connections and reliance on British credit, and the limits to economic

growth inherent in such societies, meant that the concept of the virtuous American farmer, growing sufficient only for domestic demand, never gained credibility as a policy choice.

The second meaning of isolationism is to be located in the debates that took place between the Federalist and the Anti-Federalist blocs.<sup>125</sup> If isolationism was to gain traction in the Constitutional Republic, it would require the victory of the Anti-Federalist view of the American state system as being the guarantor of security from foreign interference in American politics, as against the Federalist argument that centralisation of power within the Executive and the Congress provided this safety.

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<sup>125</sup> The Federalists have been described as "*conservative...[and] aristocratic*", and the Anti-Federalists as representing the "*agrarian*" interest, see; McGuire R. A., *To Form a More Perfect Union, A New Economic Interpretation of the United States Constitution*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2003), p.15.

## 2. Chapter Two: National Interest on the Eve of the Revolution

### The Concept of National Interest

Nye explains that there is no such thing as national interest because nations generally fail to achieve domestic agreement on what should be international objectives.<sup>126</sup> Hence, he explains that in the absence of a public opinion that is fully engaged with foreign objectives, it is left to a policy elite and to factional groups to determine, by definition a limited view of interest. In modern terms, examples of this lack of consensus include: any relatively weak domestic support for the twenty first century goal of globalisation; the most effective approach to domestic terrorism, and; whether American values or interests should form the basis of policy.

However, Morgenthau explains that national interest is founded in a pragmatic assessment of the international environment and, in particular, in the international competition for economic and military power and that it is this consideration that forms the basis of national interest, not, for example, ideology.<sup>127</sup> Morgenthau explains that in the eighteenth century, the national interest of the United States, according to the Federalists was located in three areas. Firstly in protecting the republican experiment from foreign influence, secondly in maintaining an isolation by remaining neutral in the affairs of Europe, and thirdly in the balance of power for American security because nations concerned with their competitors within the balance would be unconcerned with America.<sup>128</sup> This conception indicates that, although the national interest changes over time, the national interest of the United States falls into one of the three basic

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<sup>126</sup> Nye J. S., *The American National Interest and Global Public Goods*, (*International Affairs*, Wiley, (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Vol. 78, No.2, April 2002), pp. 233-244. The intention here is to develop a framework using definitions of the national interest from the literature and applying them to the Eighteenth Century experience in the British American colonies.

<sup>127</sup> Morgenthau (1993). Osgood expands on this idea by explaining that the national interest was to be found in establishing the relative weight given by a nation, in its foreign affairs, to ideology and self-interest, see; Osgood R., *Ideals and Self Interest in American Foreign Relations*, (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1953).

<sup>128</sup> Morgenthau (1952), pp. 1-7.

categories of; security, international trade, and the maintenance of international stability through, for example, supporting international institutions. It is the degree to which policy makers are concerned with these three issues that shapes its foreign policy.<sup>129</sup>

This chapter explains that the early American national interest was firmly located in the competition between nations for power, both economic and military. Chapter Two explained that, for the colonies, the origin of national interest lay in their continuing struggle in maintaining government autonomous from British control.<sup>130</sup> It was in the preservation of this independence of government in each of the colonies, that created the union, that led to the war with Britain, and, in pursuit of victory, that caused the union to adopt a foreign policy that mandated engagement with the European balance of power.<sup>131</sup>

### **The Three Conditions for National Interest**

The early national interest is exposed by firstly identifying a common interest of the colonies, by establishing that a compromised view of it was delegated to a representative body, and by demonstrating that any dissent against the compromised view, was neutralised. These are the three conditions that had to be fulfilled for there to have been a national interest at this time and are developed below, and subsequently applied to the colonial situation from circa. 1774.

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<sup>129</sup> Nuechterlein D. E. *United States National Interests in a Changing World*, (University Press of Kentucky: Kentucky, 1973).

<sup>130</sup> For an explanation of this autonomous government as arising by virtue of distance which prevented "incorporation" into Parliamentary authority, see; Green J. P., *The Constitutional Origins of the American Revolution*, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2011), p. 74. For the idea that autonomy became more entrenched after the end of the Seven Years War, see; Green J.P. (ed.), *Negotiated Authorities, Essays in Colonial Political and Constitutional History*, (University Press of Virginia: Virginia, 1994), pp.178-179. For the continuing conflict between Parliament and the desire of the assemblies for autonomy, see; Middleton R., *Colonial America, A History, 1607-1760*, (Blackwell: Oxford, 1992), p. 324. Self-government as the right of the original colonists had, according to Lutz, its origin not just in European constitutional tradition, but in colonial charters, compacts, traditions, agreements, ordinances and oaths, see; Lutz (1992).

<sup>131</sup> Essay by Morgan E. S. *Colonial Ideas of Parliamentary Power, 1764-1766*, in Greene (1968), p.153., explains this autonomy to have arisen in some parts of the thirteen colonies by 1765 as the 1763 Stamp Act had the effect of causing some colonies to regard themselves as totally autonomous of Britain and Parliament, albeit recognising the King as sovereign.

## Interest

The idea that interest is the object of foreign policy was given voice by Charles Evans Hughes, President Calvin Coolidge's Secretary of State between 1921 and 1925. Hughes explained foreign affairs as being "*practical conceptions of national interest arising from some immediate exigency or standing out vividly in historical perspective*".<sup>132</sup> In other words, engagement in foreign affairs involves the implementation of policy in the national interest, an interest which might be located in present day concerns, have its origin in the past, or both.<sup>133</sup> The historian, Charles A. Beard, better known for his conception of the economic origin of the American Constitution, traces this view of national interest from the Founding Fathers to at least the first quarter of the twentieth century. Beard quotes Navy Admiral and historian, Alfred T. Mahan, to support Hughes' view. According to Mahan, "*self-interest is not only a legitimate but a fundamental cause for national policy*".<sup>134</sup> Inherent in these related definitions are therefore two important ideas.

Firstly, the inextricable link between foreign policies and national interest, which are associated such that the very *raison d'être* for the former as a strategy for foreign engagement, is the promotion and defence of the national interest, and that self-interest is a legitimate cause for engagement in foreign affairs. The word legitimate can have several connotations, but two stand out most vividly in the colonial history. There is legitimacy given by the acceptance of self-interest by a broad section of the political community in each colony,

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<sup>132</sup> Quoted in Beard A. C., *The Idea of National Interest*. (Macmillan Company: New York, 1934)

<sup>133</sup> The national interest is also the common interest, compromising all factional and minority concerns to the greater good, see; Grotius H. *The Rights of War and Peace*, (Elibron Classics: London, 2005), p. 285.

<sup>134</sup> Beard C. A. *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*. (The Free Press: London, 1986). For Mahan, the national interest was in strong overseas trade connections which had to be protected and promoted by a strong maritime presence, see; Rofe J.S., *Under the Influence of Mahan, Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt and Their Understanding of American National Interest*, (*Diplomacy & Statecraft*, December 2008, Vol. 19 Issue 4), pp.732-745. Beard is considered a controversial self-interest of a merchant and land owning elite, as opposed to in the disinterested actions of a founding group dedicated to republican ideals of liberty, self-government and entrepreneurial advancement, see; McCorkle P., *The Historian as Intellectual: Charles Beard and the Constitution Reconsidered*, (*The American Journal of Legal History*, , Vol. 28, No. 4, October 1984), pp. 314-363.

which is explored further below. There is also legitimacy by virtue of the law of nations, in other words, once the colonies had created a union and declared it sovereign, it had the same rights as any other nation to declare a national interest because there was a community with shared interests. Secondly, there is the identification of two possible roots of national interest. One which arises from immediate or topical concerns, such as a security imperative, and the second which has historical origins that manifest in the present day. The long experience of local government that the colonists were eager to defend in 1774, is an illustration of interest in an historical context. It was this interest in maintaining autonomy of government in each colony that was delegated to a representative Congress.

The question that remains is whether the word *national* had meaning at this time given the separation of the colonies. Ultimately, interest could only be described as being nationally accepted when state sovereignty had been compromised by the Constitution. Before then, the essential value of the concept of *national* was in its demonstration of the degree to which all colonies were prepared to accept Congressional representation, and therefore to compromise their individual demands. This compromise was not accepted because it was for the common good i.e. in the *national* interest, but because it represented the only viable option for each colony, given the circumstances. The colonies were too weak to take on Great Britain individually, this is why they were, to a surprisingly high degree, prepared to accept joint representation of common grievances. Therefore, even if there was no nation as such, *prima facie*, a necessary condition for a national interest, there was pan-colonial consensus. Hence, it is accurate to think of national interest at this time as the shared interest.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Kraus M., *Intercolonial Aspects of American Culture on the Eve of the Revolution, With Special Reference to the Northern Towns*, (Octagon: New York, 1972), p.14. Kraus helpfully explains that, for example, the colonies shared a “*common fund of experiences*”, in dealing with London.



## Representation

The political community of the British American colonies created by virtue of this shared interest, expressed its desires through a Continental Congress, the representative of their common voice.<sup>136</sup> This was a surprising outcome because the colonies had been independent of each other, and whilst they had maintained a connection with London, there was very little in the way of a relationship between them.<sup>137</sup> However, any intercolonial conflict that did exist was essentially benign, demonstrated by the way that boundary disputes were prosecuted, their cooperation in trade, and the innocuous nature of intercolonial prejudice.<sup>138</sup>

For example, boundary disputes were postponed until after the end of the Revolutionary War, hence for example, the dispute between Pennsylvania and Virginia to the area in what is present day Pittsburgh, was not finally resolved until 1780.<sup>139</sup> Boundary disputes were generally confined to correspondence between state legislatures, and ultimately referred to the Privy Council, they did not extend to civil war.<sup>140</sup> Indeed, boundary disputes did not affect

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<sup>136</sup> Burchill S., *The National Interest in International Relations Theory* (Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2010) pp 11-29. See also, Morgan E.S., and Morgan H. M., *The Stamp Act Crisis, Prologue to Revolution*, (The University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 1995), pp. 306-307., in which the authors locate the roots of national interest, as described above, with the 1763 Stamp Act Congress during which colonists came together to protest the placing of duty on all manner of items including newspapers. See also, Jilson C. and Wilson R. K., *Congressional Dynamics, Structure, Coordination and Choice in the First American Congress, 1774-1789*, (Stanford University Press: Stanford, 1994), pp. 290-291, in which the authors explain this common interest as starting on the eve of the Revolution, and persisting until at least 1786, despite sectional differences based on state sovereignty (that is, states' rights).

<sup>137</sup> The clearest explication of this point is made by Greene J. P. *Peripheries and Centre. Constitutional Development in the Extended Politics of the British Empire and the United States 1607-1788*. (University of Georgia Press: Georgia, 1986). See also Black (2010), pp. 3 and 7., who explains the concentration of English power over the individual colonies in terms of a legal authority exercised by an imperial power, similar to that expressed by other European nations, one aspect of which was the control over colonial trade by use of legislation that restricted exports to British, that is not American, owned ships, by use of the Navigation Acts.

<sup>138</sup> Nevins A., *The American States During and after the Revolution 1775 to 1789*. (Augustus M Kelley: New York, 1969). pp 1, 2, 47, 49. Nevins explains that the colonies were very different from each other in a variety of ways, for example, the structure and types of their government (Pennsylvania's legislature, for example, comprised only one chamber), in their demographic (the people of Massachusetts were more similar in racial terms than other colonies), in the degree of their patriot versus loyalist sentiment (New York comprised greater numbers of loyalists). Also in their desire to adopt the complaint against the British made by the other colonies (for example Georgia adopted the patriot cause much later and Nevins attributes this to a variety of factors, including the danger faced by the existence of 10,000 Indian tribesmen on its Western border which required British protection, and the bounties that the colony received from Great Britain for the production of silk and indigo). However, see Rakove (1979), p.142-143., who explains that intercolonial conflict extended to conflicts between settlers, between Quakers and Connecticuters over the Wyoming Valley, and between militia of different colonies sent to support other colonies.

<sup>139</sup> See; Ward (1971), pp. 204-223., and also; Potter J. E. *The Pennsylvania and Virginia Boundary Controversy*, (*The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 38, No. 4, 1914), pp. 411-412. Similar disputes were prosecuted between Connecticut and Pennsylvania concerning rights to the Wyoming Valley, see; Force Archive, Volume 1, pp. 261-262.

<sup>140</sup> Force Archive. Volume 1. pp. 251- 261. Perhaps not surprisingly, the inhabitants of the disputed areas also attempted to have their voice heard, attempting to choose one colonial master over another on grounds, for example, of the expensive cost of justice

cooperation in other areas especially when matters such as ownership of western lands or trade were concerned.<sup>141</sup> The intercolonial trade conflicts that existed, were caused by tariff laws passed by those colonies that operated one of the seven major ports through which all trade passed.<sup>142</sup> However, trade legislation also had the aim of protecting against inferior products from other colonies, protection of the currency from counterfeiters, and maintaining the quality of colonial produce. Virginia, for example, passed an act in October 1705 forbidding the importation of tobacco from Carolina “*or parts without the Capes*” so as to prevent “*inconveniencies and disadvantages*” to the Virginian trade.<sup>143</sup>

However by 1778, when the conflict with Great Britain was underway, little encouragement was needed for the adoption of laws empowering a state Governor to provide assistance to

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in Pennsylvania compared to that in Virginia; Force Archive, Volume 1, p. 276. A letter signed by 587 inhabitants settled on the Ohio River described the “*mild, easy and equitable government of Virginia*” compared to that of Pennsylvania.

<sup>141</sup> *Instructions to James Tilgham et. al.*, Force Archive. Volume 1. p. 279. These gentlemen comprised a committee appointed by John Penn tasked with meeting Lord Dunmore, Governor of Virginia, and negotiating rights to the Ohio territory with him. However, cooperation, did not extend to the adoption of intercolonial collaborative agenda when disputes were appealed to the Privy Council in London, see Varga N., *Robert Charles. New York Agent, 1748-1770*, (*The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series Vol. 18 No. 2, April 1961), pp. 211-235. One reason being for this with few, albeit significant exceptions, the colonies were unable to see a common interest in the initiatives addressed in London by the agents of other colonies and therefore little reason to adopt a coordinated response. Colonial agents would represent all manner of issues including boundary and land disputes, they would support or oppose legislation that affected the colonies and tried to promote, to avoid the Royal veto, laws passed in the colonies. Until about the middle of the 1750s, the agents did not act in concert and indeed often re-enacted intercolonial disputes in London see; Kammen M. G., *A Rope of Sand. The Colonial Agents, British Politics and the American Revolution*, (Cornell University Press: New York, 1968), p.13. A vivid illustration of the continuation of intercolonial conflict by proxy is that which led New York to reinvigorate its London agency, which until around 1748 had been allowed to lapse. Newly appointed agent, Robert Charles, was instructed by the New York legislature to oppose a law passed in New Jersey which purported to settle a boundary dispute, clearly in its own favour. This situation would not be unusual given the profile of many of the agents as indigenous Englishmen without colonial connections of business and family, see; Kaplan L. S. *Colonies into Nation. American Diplomacy 1763-1801*. (The Macmillan Company: New York, 1972.) pp. 10-13. See also; Ward H. M., *Unite or Die, Intercolony Relations, 1690-1763*, (Kennikat Press: New York, 1971), p. 204.

<sup>142</sup> Nevins (1964), p. 556. The major dependencies included all imports into the lower south through Charleston, South Carolina and of the upper south through Baltimore and Philadelphia.

<sup>143</sup> Hening. *Volume III*. October 1705. p. 203. Reference to the word “*Capes*” is to Cape Charles and Cape Henry, the entry points into the Chesapeake Bay. Such legislative action continued as late as 1758 with the passage of an act imposing duties on liquor imported overland from Pennsylvania, see; *Bacon’s Laws of Maryland, 1758 Session of Assembly. Volume 75*, <http://aomol.msa.maryland.gov/000001/000075/html/>, p. 567. In the same year, a bill was passed by Maryland on 13<sup>th</sup> May, prohibiting the copying of the bills of credit of Virginia, Pennsylvania and New-York and using them as a means of payment in Maryland, see; *Bacon’s Laws of Maryland, 1758 Session of Assembly. Volume 75*, <http://aomol.msa.maryland.gov/000001/000075/html/>, p. 565. Further measures, albeit few, were in the nature of protective legislation. For example, the October 1765 law that prevented the “*clandestine transportation of bad and unmerchantable [sic] tobacco from this colony to the provinces of North Carolina and Maryland*”; based on a review of *Hening Statutes at Large*. See; Hening W. W. (ed.), *Hening Statutes at Large*, Volume VIII, (Franklin Press: Virginia, 1819), Chapter. XVIII. *An act for amending the Staple of Tobacco, and for preventing frauds in his majesty’s customs*. p. 69. By prohibiting the bulk sale of poor quality tobacco not only was the reputation of the Virginian trade protected, so too were neighbouring colonial consumers who might inadvertently purchase substandard goods and thereby suffer a financial loss. Between 1776 and 1781 there were few further laws respecting imposts not just because of the War, but also because of the general Anti-British feeling against this type of law, being similar to the series of Navigation Acts imposed by the British; Hill W., *The First Stages of the Tariff Policy of the United States*. (American Economic Association: Baltimore, 1893). pp. 39-41.

“sister” colonies, such as the Virginia law of October 1778 authorising the deployment of the militia in aid of South Carolina.<sup>144</sup> Such cooperation existed despite pre-War discriminatory legislation that had attempted to restrict the spread and influence of Quakers, Catholics, and Jews.<sup>145</sup> Prejudice on the grounds of religion had extended to the founding fathers, and for example, James Madison expressed his personal dislike of Quakers in 1775 when he complained that they “*are the only people with us who refuse to accede to the Continental association...*”<sup>146</sup> Similarly, Jefferson, on visiting the Maryland assembly building in 1766 commented on the Speaker’s yellowing wig, comparing the session to a meeting of Virginian planters.<sup>147</sup> Virginians generally regarded themselves as superior to other colonies by virtue of being the oldest and the largest of the colonies.<sup>148</sup> Despite these differences, and although the colonies were not unified in any sense, they did share the common characteristic of local government autonomous of Britain.<sup>149</sup> Hence, representation of the mutual interest through Congress was accepted by each colony because they were prepared to place their common interests ahead of their differences, and prepared for decisions, such as that to mobilise a Continental Army, to be binding on them all.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Hening. *Volume X. Chapter V.* (Franklin Press, Virginia, 1819). An act to extend the powers of the Governour [sic] and Council. p. 477.

<sup>145</sup> For example, laws were passed by Virginia in March 1756 prohibiting the free movement of papists and for them to be disarmed in order to prevent the rise of Catholicism in that colony, a concern which took great importance at the outbreak of the Seven Years War; Hening. *Volume VII. Chapter IV, An Act for disarming Papists, and reputed Papists, refusing to take the oaths to the government.* p. 35.

<sup>146</sup> William Bradford. *Jr. Virginia, Orange County, January 20, 1775*, Hunt G. (ed.). *Writings of James Madison. Volume I. 1769-1783.* (Library of Liberty: New York, 1900). p. 28. Prejudice was not, however confined to religion, it extended to stereotypical views of the inhabitants of the different colonies. Washington, for example, regarded New Englanders as being an “*exceedingly dirty and nasty people*” referring also to accounts of their alleged cowardice in the field, and general unreliability.

<sup>147</sup> Meacham J., *Thomas Jefferson. The Art of Power.* (New York: Random House, 2012). p. 38.

<sup>148</sup> For example, the so called Frankford Advice given to a small group of patriots by the physician Benjamin Rush, shortly before the meeting of the First Continental Congress in September 1774, advised the Massachusetts contingent to be circumspect in the way that they approached the Congress. Philadelphian delegates were known to be against independence and the Virginians considered themselves the oldest and most populace of the colonies and in a position to therefore take the lead in the proceedings. The Massachusetts delegates were advised to stay in the background and allow the Virginians to suggest and develop any “*bold measures*”, see; *ibid* Meacham (2012), pp. 101-102.

<sup>149</sup> Bourke (2015), p. 457. Burke described this autonomy as having arisen by virtue of a tacit acceptance by colonists that there was a trade-off between liberty and commercial control, that is, the Americans had early accepted the British right to tax in exchange for letting them have their liberty in America.

<sup>150</sup> The creation of, and support for, a Continental Army in particular was important to the development of the national character of the union that was willing to fight for its belief in liberty, see; Royster C., *A Revolutionary People at War, The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783*, (The University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 1979), p.3. According to Morgenthau, the common interest was the “*surest of bonds between states*”, in other words what concerned them all, bound them closer together than they were otherwise, quoted in; Gustafson L. S. (ed.), *Thucydides’ Theory of International Relations, A Lasting Possession*, (Louisiana State University Press: Baton Rouge, 2000), p.240.

Important to the idea of there being this community, is that it had interests distinct from [other] foreign nations, and that these interests were articulated through Congressional leadership.<sup>151</sup> The political community declared itself sovereign, and thereby created the circumstances in which a representative Congress claimed ownership of the national interest and created a foreign policy to prosecute it.<sup>152</sup>

Beard explains that a representative body directs foreign policy in the national interest, as opposed to on any other ground, as a consequence of its *locus* as the agent of the people and not as a principal acting in its own right, a view he also attributes to Mahan.<sup>153</sup> Inherent in this agency arrangement, is the idea that there had to be a compromise of the separate interests of the colonies in order to permit their coherent articulation into a set of common policy goals. Therefore, interest bound the government to the people, other than what Beard terms an insignificant minority. The representative body presented a united front, neutralising opposing political parties and blocs, in support of what emerged as a dominant view of interest. A single front was clearly a necessity, if diplomats were to be credible in international negotiations and not be constantly subject to the ridicule of foreign diplomats that they did not fully represent a nation.

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<sup>151</sup> Sharp J. R., *American Politics in the Early Republic, The New Nation in Crisis*, (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1993), p. 19., explains that this interest was the core "*principle*" that all of the states had in common. Rakove (1979), p. 262, explains, however, that the fault lines in this community came to the fore as the War for Independence was coming to an end. Rakove explains that, whereas non-conciliation with Britain and military support from France was critical to the interest of all the states, i.e. in securing independence, discussions over the nature of what the peace terms would be, exposed sectional interests (for example, New England's desire to protect its fishing rights set against the need of the south for a quick end to the war), hence national interest became harder to define as the War came to end. See also; Sharp J. R., *American Politics in the Early Republic, The New Nation in Crisis*, (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1993), p. 19., in which the author describes interest as having as its focus, some "*principle*" that all of the states had in common.

<sup>152</sup> The framework for this analysis is based on Werner L., *Ideology, Interests and Foreign Policy* (*International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 14 No 1, March 1970) pp. 1-31.

<sup>153</sup> Beard (1934).

### Neutralisation of Dissent

The idea of shared interest implies a high degree of unanimity of colonial inhabitants in the drive for independence that is clearly not the case given that up to a fifth of colonists are generally described as being loyalists, a greater number when compounded with those who wished for some sort of accommodation, for example, American representation in an Anglo American Parliament.<sup>154</sup> For there to have been a legitimate delegation of responsibility for the national interest to Congress, minority descent had to be effectively silenced, such that the common interest of the colonies was free to be accepted as the shared goal of them all. It was resolution of the conflict between two competing groups, the radicals and the conservatives, that neutralised the dissent of the latter, creating the circumstances for a declaration of independence.<sup>155</sup>

This chapter goes on to demonstrate that the three conditions for national interest described above had been met on the eve of the Revolution.

### The First Condition of National Interest: A Common Colonial Interest

The autonomous government that each of the colonies wished to protect was generally established in the written precedent of the founding charters that provided for the formation of representative assemblies albeit subject to royal oversight.<sup>156</sup> Whilst, for example, Spanish

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<sup>154</sup> Jasanoff Maya. *Liberty's Exiles. The Loss of America and the Remaking of the British Empire*. (Harper Press: London, 2011). p 8. Jasanoff cites figures of between a fifth and a third of colonists as being loyal to King George III based on various sources including estimates given by John Adams in a letter written in 1815. The lower estimate is supported by Smith P. H.. *The American Loyalists: Notes on their Organisation and Numerical Strength. William and Mary Quarterly*. Third Series. Vol. XXV. 1968. pp 269-270. Smith quotes a figure of 19.8% of the white population as being loyal to the Crown. For a discussion of the motivations of loyalists, including to some extent Indian Tribes such as the Six Nations of the Iroquois, and their role in the Revolutionary War, see Moore (1984). Loyalty is attributed to a variety of factors such as "the natural condition" of British American colonists given their belief in their rights as Englishmen, their belief in the Crown as the "established authority", and their desire to benefit from the security and opportunities afforded by membership of the British Empire.

<sup>155</sup> Thucydides explains that national interest is an aggregate of all sectional interests, and where there is a conflict between national and sectional, the former prevails, quoted in; Clinton W.D., *The Two Faces of National Interest*, (Louisiana State University Press: Baton Rouge, 1994).

<sup>156</sup> It had been a fundamental precept of early colonisation that each traveller to the New World would have a say in the governance of the colony thus formed. See for example, Caffrey K. *The Mayflower* (Rowman and Littlefield, New York, 2014). p. 45. See also, Mann C. C., 1493, *How Europe's Discovery of the America's Revolutionised Trade, Ecology, and Life on Earth*, (Grant: London, 2011), pp. 55. The author explains that, although funded privately, English settlement of the North American continent by

American colonisation is said to have generated great intellectual discussion, literature, and analysis on the “*responsibility of one society to intervene in the internal affairs*” of another, historians suggest that British colonisation of the North American continent did not generate much in the way of a national “*debate about its legitimacy*”.<sup>157</sup> The difference is partly attributed to the growth of the Spanish university system which encouraged discussion and debate.<sup>158</sup>

For British American colonies, the founding documents set out the most basic of the right of the settlers to govern themselves.<sup>159</sup> Those for the 1609 Jamestown colony, illustrate the form of government that was to become common to other colonies.<sup>160</sup> Both the companies established by the First Charter of Virginia, required that a local council be formed comprising thirteen individuals that would “*govern and order all matters and causes, which shall arise, grow, or happen, to or within the same several colonies*”.<sup>161</sup> The council was to be supported

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private companies, “*strengthened*” representation as a “*check on rulers’ excesses*”, see for example, the Charter of Georgia 1732 - [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/ga01.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/ga01.asp). The Georgia Charter of 1732, confers freedom on its inhabitants similar to those in earlier charters. It states that “*the persons which shall happen to be born within the said province, and every of their children and posterity, shall have and enjoy all liberties, franchises and immunities of free denizens and natural born subjects, within any of our dominions, to all intents and purposes, as if abiding and born within this our kingdom of Great-Britain, or any other of our dominions*”. See also, Lutz (1998), pp. xx.-xxi.

<sup>157</sup> English colonisation of America in the late sixteenth century, was influenced by European rivalry, and the desire for economic autonomy, i.e. economic self-reliance, given the European competition, see; Jernegan M. W., *The American Colonies 1492-1750*, (Frederick Ungar Publishing Co: New York, 1959), p. 16 – 19.

<sup>158</sup> Essay by Muldoon J. entitled *Discovery Grant Charter Conquest or Purchase. John Adams on the Legal Basis for English Possession of North America*, in; Tomlin C. L. and Mann B. H. (eds.), *The Many Legalities of Early America*. (University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 2001). p. 25.

<sup>159</sup> Rabushka A., *Taxation in Colonial America* (Princeton University Press: New Jersey, 2008), p. 36. Rabushka states that “*many of the provisions in the Virginia charters were standard in this [i.e. the 1620 Charter of New England] and subsequent royal charters*” supporting this proposition at least for Royal charters. Although the literature generally accepts that the original charters were sometimes badly drafted, on the whole sufficient numbers of charters did confer the rights of Englishmen on the colonists that it may be generally accepted that the Crown did intend to confer this right on all British colonists.

<sup>160</sup> See for example, “*10 December 1606, Orders for the Council of Virginia*” in; Barbour P. L. (ed.), *The Jamestown Voyages Under the First Charter, 1606-1609, Volume I*, (Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 45-54,.

<sup>161</sup> Charter of Virginia of 10<sup>th</sup> April 1606 - [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th\\_century/va01.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/va01.asp). See also; Flynn C. A., *American Constitutional Thought: Colonial Charters and Early State Constitutions* (Woodrow Wilson Department of Politics Graduate Student Conference, Virginia, April 7, 2011), at <http://www.virginia.edu/politics/system/files/Flynn.pdf>. Flynn, in describing Thomas Jefferson’s discussion of the constitution of Virginia in his *Thirteenth Query*, for example, describes how Jefferson locates the lineage of constitutional and therefore free thought in colonial Royal charters and not, for example, in the federal or state constitution. Flynn convincingly states that “*these charters transcend ordinary law and elevate common statute to that of the fundamental and “unalienable.”*” See also; the First Charter of Virginia; April 10, 1606, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th\\_century/va01.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/va01.asp), which states that “*all and every Persons being our Subjects, which shall dwell and inhabit within every or any of the said several Colonies and Plantations, and every of their children, which shall happen to be born within any of the Limits and Precincts of the said several Colonies and Plantations, shall HAVE [sic] and enjoy all Liberties, Franchises, and Immunities, within any of our other Dominions, to all Intents and Purposes, as if they had been abiding and born, within this our Realm of England, or any other of our said Dominions*”.

by a local assembly chosen from landowners which, with the Governor, represented the earliest form of colonial government.<sup>162</sup> The colonist's rights as an Englishman rooted his belief in participatory government.<sup>163</sup>

Early charter governments expanded into more representative institutions on the basis of wider suffrage, and with greater powers.<sup>164</sup> In Massachusetts, for example, the newly elected assembly was described as a reforming body prosecuting the Indian wars more efficiently and addressing governmental corruption.<sup>165</sup> Expansion was led by the demands of ordinary colonists to have a greater say in the way that their lives were being governed. However, Parliament continued to attempt collective government of the New England colonies, including the use of the 1684 writ of *quo warranto* issued by King Charles II, which revoked the Royal charter granted to the Massachusetts Bay Company and appointed a Royal governor to oversee its transition to direct control by the Crown.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Aubrey J., *An Historical and Critical Essay on the Declaration of Independence*, (TJ Griffiths Printer: New York, 1891). The thirteen colonies that came into existence at the time of America's drive for independence were of three different types based on the type of governmental structure that the King sought to bestow on the founding individuals. Under the royal or provincial government, the authority of the Crown was delegated to a governor who was in turn supported by a council which constituted the governor's cabinet. The governor was authorised to convene a local assembly comprised of individuals within a relatively narrow franchise – on the whole plantation owners and owners of the most perfect interest in land called socage i.e. freeholders. The proprietary governments conferred privileges on one or more Proprietaries. These Proprietaries were granted both rights in the soil and the right to govern. The Proprietaries assumed the role of the Crown and appointed a governor who was in turn supported by the council and local assembly. The Charter governments were corporations chartered by way of a grant from the Crown. The persons to whom the grants were made were also granted the right in the soil and the charter companies appointed the governor, council and local assemblies following elections and were therefore more democratic than the Royal governments.

<sup>163</sup> Maier P. *The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States*. (Bantam Classics: New York, 1998) p. 56. It is not entirely coincidental that the most significant expression of the colonists' belief, the 1776 Declaration of Independence, specifically referred to the King's arbitrary abolition of "*the free system of English Laws*" that the colonists saw as the guarantor of their freedoms. The fact that the rights of equality expounded by the Declaration were at odds with the treatment of say, slaves in American society was reconciled in the mind of Noah Webster, creator of the American Dictionary of the English Language in the mid eighteenth century. According to Webster, these relationships, between employed and employee, slave and slave owner, even child and parent were integral to a well ordered society and their removal by way of an interpretation of the Declaration that all men are created equal would simply "*derange ...the order of society*", see; Kendall J., *The Forgotten Founding Father, Noah Webster's Obsession and the Creation of an American Culture*, (Berkley Books: New York, 2010), p. 367.

<sup>164</sup> Brown R. E., *Democracy in Colonial Massachusetts*, (*The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 25 No. 3, September 1952), pp. 291-313. The open franchise referred to in the literature is some ways a misnomer. Brown explains for example that in the 1691 Charter of Massachusetts Bay

the franchise was far from open requiring property ownership to the value of at least £40. However, he then goes on to illustrate the point that sufficient numbers of male residents qualified so as to permit fairly democratic and therefore representative democracy in this and therefore other colonies.

<sup>165</sup> Andrews C. M. *The American Nation: A History Volume 5, Colonial Self Government. 1652-1689*. (Harper Brothers Publishers: New York and London, 1904). p. 42.

<sup>166</sup> Rabushka (2008) pp 89-125. The writ of *quo warranto* was a royal prerogative enshrined in English Law permitting the Monarch to forfeit any privilege, or office that had been "*usurped*" by a third party.

The use of the writ arose because of a badly drafted original Massachusetts Bay Company charter, failing as it did, to prevent the stockholders from relocating the place of business of the corporation from England to America. A lapse in drafting was taken by the colonists as specifically excluding the right of the British government to exercise powers over any colony established under the charter. Hence, a legal loop hole enabled the Puritan leadership to transform the colony into a “*self-governing commonwealth*” thereby purporting to take it out of the purview of Parliamentary control.<sup>167</sup> A dispute in 1682 over which body, the general council or Parliament, had the power to enforce the Navigation Acts led the Crown to forfeit the charter and exercise more direct British control through the office of the newly appointed governor, Sir Edmund Andros. As will be described later, control over a governor did not assure control over colonial affairs.<sup>168</sup>

Similarly, a bill introduced in 1701 in Parliament to render them void, recognised that proprietary and chartered corporations awarded the colonists an unacceptably high degree of autonomy and independence. The bill would assert the more direct control that would be afforded by royal government, causing the proprietaries to “*forfeit their peculiar political privileges and turn over the administration of their colonies to royal governors*”.<sup>169</sup> The clear aim of preventing independent representative government from fully forming without the involvement of Parliament, was defeated as was a subsequent bill presented in 1706. Defeat was attributed to a combination of lobbying by William Penn, Proprietary of the Pennsylvania colony, with a vested interest in the land and Whig dissent based on ideological differences

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<sup>167</sup> Karr R. D., *The Missing Clause: Myth and the Massachusetts Bay Charter of 1629*, (*The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 77 No. 1, March 2004), pp. 89-107. Karr speculates in this paper whether there was a conspiracy of sorts, possibly involving a royal official, to provide this loop hole but fails to conclude on the evidence that this was actually the case.

<sup>168</sup> Dickerson O. M., *American Colonial Government 1696-1765, A study of the British Board of Trade in its relation to the American Colonies, Political, Industrial, Administrative*, (The Arthur H Clark Company: Ohio, 1912). According to Dickerson, the subcommittee of the Privy Council was responsible for colonial administration and took steps to exercise more direct control leading, as explained, to the forfeiture of the Massachusetts Bay Charter. The sub-committee of the Privy Council was replaced by Board of Trade on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1696 which then took responsibility for all colonial matters until Independence.

<sup>169</sup> Olson A. G., *William Penn, Parliament and Proprietary Government*, (*The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series Vol. 18 No. 2, April 1961), pp. 176-195.



with their royalist Tory opponents. Whig defence of colonial rights was also influenced by the fact that some were merchants with monopolies made lucrative under the mercantilist trading system and therefore did not wish to see the Royal Prerogative take precedence over commercial considerations.<sup>170</sup> It is ironic therefore that the very mercantilist system under which Britain sought to exercise its control over colonial trade contributed to the defeat of legislation which could have allowed Britain to take a tighter control over colonial government.

While charters formed the essential foundation of autonomous government under which the colonial legislature was able to make laws independent of Parliamentary purview, autonomous government was shaped within the permissive environment of what, is commonly referred to as, the *era of salutary neglect*.<sup>171</sup> During the early eighteenth century, colonial legislatures had become accustomed to a relationship with Britain which gave them wide latitude, founded in the imperial desire to minimise the risk of adversely affecting the economic benefits of the relationship. This *laissez faire* attitude to the colonies arose because in the early years of colonisation, they were not sufficiently economically valuable to warrant much attention from British policy makers. When the colonial economies did begin to generate an important two-way trade with Great Britain, the emphasis was on control over this trade by way of the Navigation Acts, to which see further below, and not on oversight of their legislative actions. A relaxed approach to governance therefore allowed the colonies to develop their own assembly governments modelled on that of the British but to a large degree independent of it.

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<sup>170</sup> *Ibid*, Olson (1961). The Tories and the Whigs, the two main British political parties of the time, had opposing views on the right of the Crown to assert itself. The Tories, being on the whole landed gentry with close ties to the aristocracy, favoured defence of the royal prerogative whilst the Whigs, described as being “*the party of chartered rights and freedom for dissent*”, favoured far looser control of the colonies by Parliament.

<sup>171</sup> See also Moore (1984), p. 41. Moore explains that the writ of the Church of England, the official Church of Great Britain with the King at its head, failed to run in any of the thirteen colonies, and that this, together with the separate colonial press, existence of cultural and scientific societies, created a high degree of separation from Britain and therefore contributed to a lack of control by the latter.

Anglo Irish statesman and pro-American member of the Whig faction in the Commons, Edmund Burke's appeal to the Commons many years later, offered an insight into how the policy of benign neglect had operated.<sup>172</sup> Burke described the half a million pounds sterling of British trade exports in 1775 to the American continent "*being equal to what this great commercial nation, England, carried on at the beginning of this century with the whole world*". Pointing out that the colonies now accounted for more than one third of the whole value of English exports, he explained that the value of the colonies as trading partners, and "*the spirit .....[of their] enterprising employment*", was not unconnected to loose British government. Burke concluded that "*..... I know that the Colonies ..... are not squeezed into this happy form by the constraints of watchful and suspicious government, but ... through a wise and salutary neglect*".<sup>173</sup> This situation, he explained as the Seven Years war came to an end, should be allowed to continue by way of a compromise between the colonial desire for continued direct representation in decisions concerning their affairs and the British need for revenue.<sup>174</sup>

Eighteenth century mercantile policies therefore habituated the colonists into expecting little governmental interference from Britain, and contributed to a shift in power away from Britain to colonial assemblies.<sup>175</sup> Since Britain sought to promote economic growth through governmental control over commercial transactions with its colonies, legislation to manage their internal affairs was not a priority, leaving scope in law making to the local assemblies.<sup>176</sup> An analysis of the 1752 session of the Virginia House of Burgesses distinctly illustrates the

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<sup>172</sup> Henretta (1972), p. 381

<sup>173</sup> Burke E. *Speeches and Letters on American Affairs*. (J.M. Dent & Sons: London, Reprint 1961). p. 88.

<sup>174</sup> Dowell S. (ed.), *A History of Taxes in England: From the Earliest Times to the Year 1885. Vol 2. Taxation from the Civil War to the Present Day*. Second Edition. (Longmans Green and Company: London, 1888). p.453. The cost of the Seven Years' war was put at £82.6m which added £59.6m to the national debt.

<sup>175</sup> Appleby J. O., *Economic Thought and Ideology in Seventeenth Century England*, (Figuroa Press: New Jersey, 1978), pp 99.

<sup>176</sup> Pincus S., *Rethinking Mercantilism: Political Economy, the British Empire and the Atlantic World in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, (*The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series Vol. 69 No. 1, January 2012). pp.3– 35. Although the colonies played an important role within the mercantile system, Britain "*expected the colonists to be self-supporting*" a consequence of which was that the interests of the colonies were seen to be subordinate to those of Britain.

degree of legislative independence that was therefore achieved. Throughout the session, the Assembly's resolutions were in the nature of decisions governing all aspects of colonial life.<sup>177</sup> The settlement of land disputes, the passage of legislation concerning the building of bridges, and laws to determine the correct measure by which to record imported Madeira wine. These legislative initiatives point to both the creation and regulation, of an order suitable to colonial economic conditions.<sup>178</sup>

The laissez faire approach to control of the colonial legislature described by Burke, can be illustrated by reference to important components of it, namely, the colonial refusal to accept the feudal quitrents system as a mechanism for restricting land rights, and the ineffectiveness of the Board of Trade.

### **The Quitrent as a Feudal System of Control**

The Crown's control over the land by requiring the occupier to pay a quitrent, had been enshrined in founding charters to ensure that Britain would reap cash benefits from its colonies.<sup>179</sup> It operated by commuting into a periodic payment, English medieval feudal obligations on occupants of land.<sup>180</sup> Payment of the quitrent was to acknowledge the King's sole right of ownership of the land, an inferior title in which was transferred to the payer. Responsibility to pay the quitrent, enabled successive monarchs that had granted colonial charters, to export an ancient institution of land ownership directly into colonial America,

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<sup>177</sup> Mcllwaine H. R. (ed.), *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia 1752-1755, 1756-1758*. (Virginia Council, Virginia, 1909). pp.37-97

<sup>178</sup> Giesecke A. A. *American Commercial Legislation Before 1789*. (D. Appleton and Company: New York, 1910). pp 74-76. The measure pertaining wine in particular is an example of the need to "raise or preserve the reputation of the commodities in the foreign market" and is an example of the Inspection Laws passed by the legislature and therefore of the economic imperative of this colony.

<sup>179</sup> See for example, the Charter of Maryland 1632 – see [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th\\_century/ma01.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/ma01.asp).

<sup>180</sup> See Grob G. N. and Billias G. A. (eds.), *Interpretations of American History, Patterns and Perspectives, Volume I to 1887*, (Macmillan: New York, 1992), p. 13., for an explanation of the rejection of feudalism from colonial times.

allowing them to retain superior rights in the land.<sup>181</sup> The system failed in America because the colonists refused to accept that they should be forced to account for land that they themselves had worked and taken the risks in settling.<sup>182</sup> Hence, by the commencement of the Revolution, of the total rent roll due from all of the colonies, only around half had been collected in cash.

A comprehensive study of the operation of the quitrent system in the American colonies by historian Beverley Bond, explains that *“the attempt to enforce the quit-rents, in face of the local opposition to such external exploitation, was really an important phase of the larger question of the extent to which British control might be carried, in opposition to the forces that favoured the development of local self-dependence.”*<sup>183</sup> Hence, the failed quitrent system was only one element in a wider resistance to outside superintendence. Another aspect was a failure of British policy which placed emphasis on trade at the expense of governance.

### **The Board of Trade as an Instrument of Colonial Government**

American trade was important to Great Britain to ensure a favourable balance of payments with which to finance the importation of manufactured goods.<sup>184</sup> The massive increase in international trade and wealth in the first half of the eighteenth century, caused by huge population increases, only made this objective more compelling.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> The charters do not always explicitly refer to quitrents but rather to the “power and authority” to “receive, enjoy and to have” the rents. For example, see The Charter of New England 1620 – [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th\\_century/mass01.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/mass01.asp).

<sup>182</sup> See Burstein A. and Isenberg N., *Madison and Jefferson*, (Random House: New York 2013), p. 30, in which the authors argue that the “conquerors”, i.e. the colonists, obtained ownership rights in the land.

<sup>183</sup> Bond B.W., *The Quitrent System in the American Colonies*, (Yale University Press: Connecticut, 1918)

<sup>184</sup> Breen T.H. *The Marketplace of Revolution. How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence*. (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2004), pp 61, 97, 117. Breen explains that by 1773 the colonies were purchasing around 26% of all manufactured goods produced in Great Britain. This huge dependence on British manufactured goods placed a high burden on colonists because the value of this demand was often not matched by the value of demand for American goods and raw materials causing a chronic imbalance of payments. British merchants often extended large lines of credit to their important American clients in order to permit the trade to continue. For the importance of credit to the American trade, see; Mann B. H., *Republic of Debtors, Bankruptcy in the Age of American Independence*, (Harvard University Press: Cambridge Mass.,2002), pp. 35-36.

<sup>185</sup> Galenson D. W. *The Cambridge Economic History of the United States. Volume 1. The Colonial Era. Chapter 4: The Settlement and Growth of the Colonies: Population, Labor, and Economic Development*. (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1996.), p 190. Galenson refers to studies comparing per capita wealth in Maryland in 1700 with that in the southern colonies in 1774. Adjusted real “wealth per wealth holder” is seen to be 49.8% higher. Part of the increase may be explained by the increase in import of slaves during the eighteenth century which would have led to an increase in wealth but, clearly, not wealth holders.

British trade policy in the eighteenth century was very firmly rooted in the ideas of mercantilism and the accumulation of specie.<sup>186</sup> Typical of European economic policy, the value of commerce dictated tight governmental control over the domestic economy and of colonial trade, and there was a strong link between political and economic power.<sup>187</sup> An increase in the colonial trade was helped in no small part by the growth of British manufacturing which required outlets in overseas markets.<sup>188</sup> Hence, control of the colonies became less important than was maximising their commercial value, a policy change that occurred in 1696, when responsibility for colonial possessions was moved from the Privy Council to the Board of Trade.<sup>189</sup> The Board's founding documents made no direct reference to governance of the colonies, but instead gave it the responsibility of maximising the acquisition of raw materials and of encouraging the export of British manufactured goods.

The historian Oliver Morton Dickerson in a comprehensive study of the Board explains, referring to the debates that took place in the House of Commons during its formation, that *“the whole question of proper government for the colonies was considered a matter of minor importance that alone would not have precipitated the discussion in the House of Commons”*.

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<sup>186</sup> See Barth J., *Reconstructing Mercantilism: Consensus and Conflict in British Imperial Economy in the Seventeenth Century and Eighteenth Century*, (*William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Series, 73, No. 2, April 2016). pp. 257 – 290.

<sup>187</sup> Gilbert F., *The English Background of American Isolationism in the Eighteenth Century*, (*The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series Vol 1 No 2, April 1944) pp 138 to 160. See also essay Harris B., *War, Empire, and the National Interest in Mid Eighteenth Century Britain* in; Flavell J. and Conway S. (eds.), *Britain and America Go to War, The Impact of War and Warfare in Anglo-America, 1754-1815*, (University Press of Florida: Tampa, 2004), pp. 13-41. Harris argues that colonial possessions represented primarily a contribution to *“British wealth and strength”*, hence expansion by acquisition of territory represented not imperialism *per se*, but a means of securing the nation state *vis a vis*, other European states.

<sup>188</sup> Clark V. S., *A History of Manufactures in the United States 1607 to 1860*. (Carnegie Institution: Washington D.C., 1916). Clark in this comprehensive study of manufacturing in the colonies explains that this increase in British exports to the American colonies was brought on by the expansion of manufacturing in centres such as London and Birmingham.

<sup>189</sup> Egerton H. E. *The Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Privy Council in Its Relations with the Colonies* (*Journal of Comparative Legislation and International Law*, Third Series, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1925), pp. 1-16. The Privy Council's involvement arose as a result of the failure of the thirteen man English based committees that were required, in founding charters, to be maintained as a *“mirror image”* of the thirteen-man council resident in the colonies. The First Virginia Charter for example stated that the thirteen-man board based in England was to *“have the superior managing and direction only of and for all matters that shall or may concern the government as well of the said several Colonies”*. See also; Sainty J C. *Office Holders in Modern Britain; Volume 3: Officials of the Board of Trade 1660 to 1870*, (Institute of Historical Research: London, 1974) pp. 28-37. The Board of Trade was created under a May 1696 Commission under the Great Seal of the Privy Council. The colonies had been under the direct control of the Privy Council and in 1675 the entire control of trade and foreign plantations was transferred to a sub-committee of the Privy Council, called the Committee of Trade and Plantations, which expanded into the independent Board of Trade albeit with many *ex-officio* members from the Privy Council as members of the oversight board.

The government of the colonies was not the principal function of the new organ of central control, “*the most important duty of the Board was to make the colonies commercially profitable to the mother country*”.<sup>190</sup> In other words, commerce took priority over superintendence, a policy that was supported by the lobbying of British merchants and their desire for the American market for British manufactured goods.<sup>191</sup> Hence, while the colonies as markets for goods increased in importance, it was their trade that was being controlled, not their government. Whilst mercantilist thinking dictated strong governance as the basis for achievement of commercial aims, British policy had turned this idea on its head.<sup>192</sup>

Therefore, ironically what created the permissive environment for expansion of colonial representative government, was a British policy that emphasised the benefits of commerce.<sup>193</sup>

To underpin this conclusion, British policy is regarded as having been reactive to developments such as the demand for tobacco, or when colonies took on a strategic importance beyond their economic value.<sup>194</sup> Such a situation developed with the Dutch pre-eminence in the international trade and their attempts at dominance of the sea that led to passage of the 1651 Navigation Act, requiring colonial goods to be sent to British ports in British owned ships.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Dickerson O. M., *American Colonial Government 1696-1765, A study of the British Board of Trade in its relation to the American Colonies, Political, Industrial, Administrative.* (The Arthur H Clark Company: Ohio, 1912)

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid*, Dickerson (1912), p. 301. Policy development based on the common interest of the Crown and the merchant classes, is one of the first illustrations of the dominance of private interest groups in governmental policy, see also; Nettles C., *British Mercantilism and the Economic Development of the Thirteen Colonies*, (*The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 12 No. 2, Spring, 1952), pp.105-114.

<sup>192</sup> Wallerstein I., *Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World Economy, 1600-1750*, (*University of California Press: California*, 2011), p. 241, explains that by 1775 around a third of British ships were built in the British North American colonies, that underlies their importance to Britain.

<sup>193</sup> Giesecke (1910), pp 10-11. The acts of trade and navigation were the few legislative acts of Parliament in relation to the colonies.

<sup>194</sup> Nettles (1952), p. 109.

<sup>195</sup> See Jensen M., *The Founding of a Nation, A History of the American Revolution, 1763-1776*, (*Hackett Publishing Company: Indianapolis*, 2004), p. 20., who explains that control of the trade was by way of the Navigation Acts, which restricted imports and exports to and from America to British owned ships, while permitting autonomous government in each colony. See also, Gipson L. H., *The Coming of the Revolution, 1763 to 1775*. (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1954), and; Andrews C. M., *The American Nation: A History Volume 5, Colonial Self Government. 1652-1689.* (*Harper Brothers Publishers: New York*, 1904). The early twentieth century economist Gustav Schmoller, however, places the Act firmly within the more general objectives of British policy aimed at “*state building*” primarily through increasing the strength of the merchant and Royal navies, quoted in; Farnell J.E. *The Navigation Act of 1651, the First Dutch War, and the London Merchant Community*, (*The Economic History Review, New Series*, Vol. 16 No. 3, 1964), pp. 439-454.

That the Navigation Acts acted as mechanisms of control and influence over trade was clear from the comments of the Speaker of the House of Commons when presenting the 1660 Navigation Bill to the King.<sup>196</sup> The Speaker explained that the act; “*will enable your Majesty to give the law to foreign princes abroad....[and]..enlarge your Majesty's dominions*”.<sup>197</sup> Thus the aim was to control trade to ensure that the British writ wherever that trade was carried on. It was Lord North, British Prime Minister from 1770 to 1782, who later recognised the unintended consequences of this policy and how, “*this limited view gave rise to commercial restrictions which provided a perpetual cause of irritation and dissension*” between the colonies and Britain. In other words, that the colonists wanted not just to govern themselves, but to control their own trade with Europe.<sup>198</sup>

### **The Expansion of Representative Assembly**

Against the backdrop of a colonial refusal to recognise land restrictions, a loose control of them by the Board of Trade, and because of their benign neglect, the colonies were able to expand representative assembly.<sup>199</sup> Expansion of local power depended on resolving the conflict of interest between the colonial Governor’s duty to the Crown and his duty to the colonies, and secondly settlement of a civil list.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Ashley W. J. *The Commercial Legislation of England and the American Colonies, 1660-1760*, (*The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 14 No. 1, November 1899), pp. 1-29. The Act of 1651 listed the so called “*enumerated articles*” being commodities produced in the colonies which could be shipped only to England and as other products became of economic importance the list was expanded. The Navigation Acts developed over the years culminating in the Act of 1764 which extended the list of the enumerated articles to include rice, molasses, raw silk etc. The Acts, by restricting trade between Britain and her colonies to ships of which the “*owner, the captain, and the majority of sailors were Englishmen or colonials*” sought to create a British monopoly over the colonial trade. The monopoly assured that the duties, freight and trade revenues from colonial trade all passed through British ports and that Britain’s role as a transfer centre for re-exports to the rest of Europe was conducted solely in British ships even when, say, Dutch freight rates, were cheaper

<sup>197</sup> Mclean A. C., *The American Nation: A History Volume 5, Colonial Self Government. 1652-1689* (Harper Brothers Publishers: New York, 1904). p. 14.

<sup>198</sup> Lord North. *Lord North, the Prime Minister: A Personal Memoir*, (*The North American Review*, Vol. 177 No. 561, August 1903), pp. 260-277.

<sup>199</sup> See Moore C., *The Loyalists, Revolution, Exile, Settlement* (McClelland & Stewart Inc: Toronto, 1984) who links the development of autonomous government in, for example New York, Boston, and New Hampshire to the consequences of British attempts at taxation after the end of the Seven Years’ War in 1763.

<sup>200</sup> The Second Charter of Virginia; May 23, 1609 states “*to such Governors, Officers, and Ministers, as shall be by our said Council constituted and appointed..... from thence, have full and absolute Power and Authority to correct, punish, pardon, govern, and rule all such the Subjects of Us, ..... So always as the said Statutes, Ordinances and Proceedings as near as conveniently may be, be agreeable to the Laws, Statutes, Government, and Policy of this our Realm of England*”, see [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th\\_century/va02.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/va02.asp). Moore (1984), p. 57 locates this expansion of Colonial Assembly power in the

The Governor represented the Royal power by proxy, and the laws of the colony were to be subject to veto by him, and approval by Parliament.<sup>201</sup> Between 1696 and 1776, more than four hundred laws were vetoed, primarily because they purported to take away the Royal prerogative. Amounting to less than one law per colony per annum, demonstrates how local law making had become.<sup>202</sup> Illustrative of the primary cause of vetoes is Governor Gabriel Johnston's request in October 1736 to repeal the North Carolina Biennial Act of 1715, which was deemed unacceptable because of its provision for biennial meetings, and hence to limit the Governor's power to prorogue the assembly as he saw fit.<sup>203</sup>

Similarly, the Maryland Legislative Assembly proposed a bill in 1639 to expand its power similar to that of the House of Commons but it which failed to pass over the veto of the Governor. However, around 1640, based on continued attempts at encroachments by the Assembly, a general agreement was reached between Governor and Assembly to accept all bills unless specifically objectionable.<sup>204</sup> Assembly government also flourished in colonies in which there was no original founding charter due to the lobbying by locals of the Crown, such as in the case of New York. Taken over from Dutch control in 1664, Governor Edmund Andros in 1674 firstly refused the request on the basis that it would "*prove dangerous .....*

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effects of the Tea Party and describes the attempts of the Assembly to effectively "*thwart*" the power of the Royal Governor, and *vice versa*.

<sup>201</sup> For example the Maryland Charter of 1632, clause VII, describes the nature of local assembly contemplated as such "*make and enact laws of what kind soever [sic] according to their sound discretions*" ... "*with the advice, assent and approbation of the freemen of the same province*", see; [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th\\_century/ma01.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/ma01.asp). See also for example Clause VII Charter of Maryland 1632, Whilst colonial founding documents provided the local assemblies with the power to "*regulate the internal affairs of the colonies in pursuance of such instructions as should be issued to them under the sign manual and privy seal of the King*", a royal veto over local legislation, meant that colonial laws were not to be "*repugnant or contrary, but, agreeable to the laws, statutes, customs and rights*" of Great Britain.

<sup>202</sup> Dickerson (1912). p. 227.

<sup>203</sup> <http://www.constitution.org/primarydocuments>; "*it shall be lawful for the freemen of the respective precincts ... to meet the first Tuesday in September every two years*". The 1696 Commission giving rise to the Board of Trade specifically provided for the Senior Commissioner to refer such matters to the "*Attorney or Solicitor General*" for their advice

<sup>204</sup> Herbert L. O. *The American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century*. Volume II. *The Chartered Colonies. Beginnings of Self Government*. (Macmillan: London, 1904). p. 77.



*and....disturb the peace of the province”*.<sup>205</sup> The Duke capitulated in the spring of 1682 providing for an assembly, subject to the veto and prorogation power of the Governor.

Secondly, tensions between colony and Parliament are apparent in the latter's attempts to settle a civil list, similar to that established in Britain after the end of the 1688 Glorious Revolution. An important part of the Parliamentary assumption of the public finance, it was seen by the British therefore as simply the appropriate function of a self-funding colony, and expected that appropriations would be made to create a permanent civil list to meet the salaries of governors and other royal officers. The individual colonies however reacted in contrary ways illustrating the underlying struggle for power. The four southern colonies made limited gains in making governors dependent upon the assembly for their salaries in order better to control them. They however resisted attempts to make available a *permanent* revenue to meet the cost for fear of emboldening the governor who, unconcerned for his income, would fail to support assembly initiatives.<sup>206</sup> In other colonies, assemblies refused outright to accept responsibility for meeting the costs of unwanted and deemed unnecessary royal officers. An interest in maintaining peace in the colonies, and an unwillingness to commit British troops to compel compliance, handed the colonies a tacit victory when the Board of Trade refused to refer a failure to take responsibility for the salary of Governor Shute of Massachusetts Bay, to Parliament.<sup>207</sup> Customs officers responsible for collection of import duties, however were to be paid by Parliament, emphasising the importance of trade over governance.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Osgood (1953), pp 81-163

<sup>206</sup> Greene J. P. *The Quest for Power. The Lower House of Assembly in the Southern Royal Colonies 1689 to 1776*. (University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 1972). p. 358

<sup>207</sup> Henretta (1972), pp.61–93.

<sup>208</sup> Rabushka (2008), p. 310.

Ultimately therefore the settlement of and responsibility for a civil list is not the issue, but it is rather the degree to which the local assemblies were to use the matter as the basis for a power struggle with the Board. The primacy that arose in the colonial assemblies by virtue of their passing laws that governed the lives of inhabitants and in the ongoing and largely successful tug of war with the British ensured their place as the “*predominant political authority*”.<sup>209</sup> The demand for taxation receipts was however too strong given the huge budget deficits left after the Seven Years War and this single focus of British policy brought into sharp relief problems of government of the colonies as a whole that had hitherto been allowed, as a result of casual governance, to go unresolved.<sup>210</sup> This is addressed under the second condition of national interest below.

### **The Development of Colonial Autonomy**

Two counters can however be made to the above argument that colonial legislative independence had been achieved. Firstly, since many of the decisions of the assembly were juridical in nature, it is possible to view their actions as a whole as being in the nature of a judicial authority as opposed to a self-determining power that “*would shape the future*” of the colonies, hence distinguishing colonial government from Parliamentary government.<sup>211</sup> However, this view understates the true nature of colonial decision making since it disguises the fact that ensuring justice amongst inhabitants is a natural consequence of government. The logic of Emer de Vattel explains and supports this view. Justice, in de Vattel’s view, is a principal duty of a nation and “*the nation would therefore neglect her duty to herself and deceive the individuals if she did not seriously endeavour to make the strictest justice prevail*”.<sup>212</sup> This is not to suggest that a colony was in any sense equivalent to a nation, but

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<sup>209</sup> Henretta (1972), p. 317

<sup>210</sup> Griffith S. B. II. *The War for American Independence*. (University of Illinois Press: Chicago, 2002). pp 7-10.

<sup>211</sup> Isaac R., *The Transformation of Virginia 1740 -1790*. (The University of North Carolina Press: North Carolina,1982), p.135.

<sup>212</sup> Haakonssen (2008), pp.185-186.

rather to say that, like a national government, the legislative assemblies played a dual role, both as judiciary and a power that moulded colonial society.

However, the existence of Parliament as a separate, external government, also willing and able to exert itself as a *shaping power* does complicate this position. Therefore, the second argument against colonial self-determination is that the power to shape the colonies as separate entities and as a whole, actually resided in Parliament.

Whilst it is true that laws could also originate in the colonial governor as the representative of Parliament, and that legislation passed in the assemblies was subject to his veto, for pragmatic reasons it was perfectly logical for the assemblies to be permitted the latitude to make wide ranging decisions. The Virginia General Assembly as early as 1619, for example, resolved that a message be issued to the Crown pleading for laws passed in the colony to be allowed to stand. A local assembly had to be given the right to legislate without the fear of being overruled, for the simple reason that “*otherwise this people would in short time grow so insolent as they would shake off all government and there would be no living among them*”.<sup>213</sup> In a time when communication between America and London could take several weeks or months, it was not only impractical to adopt measures which were essentially interim and subject to veto.

Credibility of the whole assembly as an authority would be in question if citizens felt that legislative acts were only advisory until ratified if at all, sometime in the future by Parliament.

Maintenance of local legislative integrity was clearly important if the local population was to accept decisions made by the assembly. Assemblies were therefore concerned to ensure that their assumption of power remained inviolate even as against protests from their own citizens.

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<sup>213</sup> Mcllwaine H. R. (ed.), *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1619-1658*, (Virginia Council: Virginia, 1909), p.16.

An illustration is provided by the pyrrhic victory of the Virginian clergy in its struggle against the Twopenny Act of 1758 which limited salaries and was ultimately appealed to the Privy Council in England.<sup>214</sup> The Assembly refused to accept the ruling leaving the plaintiffs with the option only of issuing an unsuccessful suit in Virginia.<sup>215</sup>

Self-determination therefore sprang from failures in British policy towards its colonies due to an over emphasis on the control of colonial trade. An absence of a responsibility for the management of the minutiae of colonial existence may also be located in the original British settlements of the early seventeenth century. Unlike say Spanish settlers in Central and South America who encountered more organised indigenous populations that necessitated formal institutions of control, the eastern seaboard of America was populated with a much more fragmented native population obviating the need for the implementation of formal control structures.<sup>216</sup> Either way, colonists had become habituated to conclude that membership of a British empire did not involve any great interference in their internal affairs but only in management of their external commerce. In any case, international commerce benefited colonial economies by providing an organised market for their raw materials, and currency with which to purchase British manufactured goods.

This focus on commerce over governance established the groundwork of resistance to any future attempt at meddling in internal colonial affairs. Fortified by a decades long struggle with

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<sup>214</sup> Knollenberg B. *Origin of the American Revolution. 1759 – 1766*. (Liberty Fund: Indianapolis, 1962). pp 43-53. The dispute arose as a result of a severe drought which severely reduced the tobacco crop. Tobacco was the principle means of payment through the mechanism of the tobacco notes. A tobacco note was a document certifying the ownership of the bearer to a hogshead of tobacco of a certain quality held in a public warehouse. Since the price of tobacco rose significantly, more than doubling, the legislature passed a law prohibiting the "liquidation of obligations" above two pence per hundred pounds of tobacco thereby greatly reducing the value of the tobacco payments due to the clergy.

<sup>215</sup> Isaac. pp 145-146

<sup>216</sup> Pincus S., *Rethinking Mercantilism: Political Economy, the British Empire and the Atlantic World in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, (*The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series Vol. 69 No. 1, January 2012). pp 29-30.

the British Board of Trade, the principle that local matters were to be determined locally was well established by 1774.

## **The Second Condition of National Interest: Representation**

### **The Catalyst for Action**

It was passage of the so called 1774 Coercive legislation aimed at reining in the excesses primarily of the Massachusetts Bay colony, that created the circumstances for greater colonial cohesion and convinced a vocal minority in each colony that action had to be taken to protect autonomous government. Central to effective intercolonial cooperation was the establishment of reliable lines of inter and intracolony lines of communication which developed to an unprecedented level, and became formalised by the creation of Committees of Correspondence in each colony had evolved with a remarkable degree of rapidity at the parish, village and town level. The Committees successfully managed any intracolony dissent, by use of violence, intimidation, and denunciation in the popular press. The Committees also provide one of the earliest illustrations of compromise, which has been such a feature of subsequent American political development.

Although colonial cooperation was a necessary condition for the colonial rebellion, it is not necessary for the purposes of this argument to explore alternative views of the causes of the American Revolution.<sup>217</sup> It is sufficient to state that unity of purpose across the colonies arose

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<sup>217</sup> Greene (1968), pp.17–74. Complex factors identified by Greene in the introduction to this series of essays that, in 1968, sought to reassess the causes of the Revolution comprised (i) the nature of the colonial relationship with Britain, (ii) the Revolution as a social movement (iii) taxation and legislative causes of estrangement with Great Britain (iv) the attitudes of the British and the loyalists in the colonies (v) the consequences of the Revolution as a force for encouraging the development of a democratising movement in the colonies. (vi) an interpretation based on the 1787 constitutional convention as being one of essentially economic ends and (vii) the meaning of the Revolution to its participants i.e. as being one of protecting individual liberties from the encroachment of both individual dictators and, what was perceived to be, the dictatorial tendencies of, even so called representative, government. Indeed, destruction of tea in the Boston harbour was not an isolated incident and was replicated up and down the eastern seaboard in at least ten different colonies from Philadelphia to New York and from Edenton, North Carolina to Greenwich: New Jersey, see; Cummins J., *Ten Tea Parties. Patriotic Protests That History Forgot*, (Quirk Books: Philadelphia, 2012).

from the aftereffects of the Boston Tea Party. The destruction of the East India tea in December 1773 led to the punitive Boston Port Act, the first of the Coercives, imposing collective punishment on all Bostonians, not just the perpetrators.<sup>218</sup> An analysis of Committee correspondence, set out below, makes clear that it was the closure of the Boston Port that caused the greatest irritation in the colonies. This section, to explain the process by which the common interest of the colonies in maintaining autonomous government, came to be adopted on a pan-colonial basis, describes the role of the Committees in providing formal means for information exchange, for coordinated action, and their role in the formation of extra-legal forms of government, parallel to existing assemblies, and ultimately to delegate power to Congress.

Disenfranchisement of traditional governmental authority in each colony, in favour of popular action, permitted separate interests to be declared as shared interests. The popular will however, was far from the prevalent will of the people since, not only were there loyalists to contend with, there were proto-patriots, and those who, whilst accepting that some sort of confrontation was inevitable, did not desire independence.

The so called American, or [Peter] Force, Archives, describe the phenomenon that was the Committees, and illustrates such a degree of intercolonial agreement on the general terms of how resistance to British legislative attack might be framed, that one might be forgiven for

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<sup>218</sup> The Boston Port Act may be found at; [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/boston\\_port\\_act.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/boston_port_act.asp). Accessed 17th August 2012

suspecting some bias in it.<sup>219</sup> However, research indicates that Force was unstinting in his efforts to obtain any and all publications that throw light on the period.<sup>220</sup>

One of the other valuable narratives of the evolution of the Committees was provided by Collins in 1901.<sup>221</sup> He referred to early American historian Jared Sparks' explanation of the circumstances that allowed the Committees to flourish.<sup>222</sup> Sparks attributed the growth of the Committees to what became the plainly accepted truth that the Committee system was to promote the popular will, not just that of a governing elite. Critical to the Committees was what Sparks described as a "*sympathetic nuclei*" in each geographical area which promoted adoption of the Committee system.<sup>223</sup> The system permitted intracolonial discourse with those in the largest towns, the standing Committees, to which the regions reported and with whom they shared intelligence.<sup>224</sup> Committees were instructed to correspond with the Boston Committee and all other sister colonies.<sup>225</sup> Communication evolved from province to county, representing local interests to the Committees of other colonies.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Spofford A. R., *The Life and Labors of Peter Force, Mayor of Washington*, (Records of the Columbia Historical Society Vol. 2: Washington D.C., 1899), pp.219-235, Force, who was a publisher and Mayor of Washington, was an avid collector of Revolutionary era pamphlets, letters, articles and documents. He published the *Archive*, which covers the period from 1771 to 1776, in the years between 1837 to 1853. Research into his life indicates that he was not attracted by the idea of painting the Revolution in any particularly good light. On the contrary that he was interested in obtaining a complete record of the era as was possible given the very large number of documents produced during that period. He has been described as "*untiring in his efforts to secure complete and unbroken files of all the Washington newspapers. These were carefully laid in piles day by day, after such perusal as he chose to give them, and the mass of journals thus accumulated for thirty years or upward filled the large basement of his house nearly full. His file of the printed "Army orders" issued by the War Department was a miracle of completeness, and it was secured only by the same untiring vigilance which he applied to all matters connected with the increase of his library.*"

<sup>220</sup> Spofford (1899), p.226. It is said that "*every volume which he added to his richly laden shelves was added with a purpose. Every pamphlet, hand-bill, or news paper [sic] was hailed as it contributed to throw some light upon the history or politics of the past or to illustrate some character in the long picture-gallery of departed American worthies.*"

<sup>221</sup> Collins E. D., *Committees of Correspondence of the American Revolution*, (Annual Report of the American Historical Association Volume 1: Bartox Landing VT, 1901), pp.243–271.

<sup>222</sup> Sparks J. *The Life of Gouverneur Morris*. Volume I. (Gray and Bowen, Boston, 1832).

<sup>223</sup> Collins (1901). p. 248.

<sup>224</sup> *Proceedings of the convention of for the province of Pennsylvania*. January 23<sup>rd</sup> 1775. Force Archive. p. 1172.

<sup>225</sup> *Notice to the Publick* [sic]. Boston. January 20<sup>th</sup> 1775. Force Archive. Volume I. p.1172. The Boston committee, under Samuel Adams, was forced to deny a claim that had begun to circulate that the committee members were all to be paid six shillings in order to participate on the Committee. Clearly intended as a slur on members designed to give the impression that they were involved in revolutionary activities purely for pecuniary advantage.

<sup>226</sup> *Letter from unknown source*. Philadelphia. 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1774. Force Archive. Volume I. pp. 441-442.

Hence, in May 1774 the New York Committee resolved that a sub-committee of it be appointed to draft and circulate a letter to the different counties, acquainting them with the fact of its creation and appointment of its members, and inviting them to form their own Committees to correspond on “*matters relative to the purposes for which they are appointed*”.<sup>227</sup> Therefore, the Committee system allowed important information to be communicated across the evolving union expressing the dissatisfaction of the people at the local level and securing popular support for Continental action.<sup>228</sup> However, whilst there was broad agreement between colonies, there was by no means unanimity on all matters. Hence for example, in July 1774 the South Carolina delegates were granted more limited powers than those entrusted to their northern counterparts, who had been given the initiative to decide a range of matters. If southern powers were limited, it was argued, these delegates could simply refuse to acquiesce to northern demands, citing the need to refer back to their appointing Committees.<sup>229</sup>

Similarly, South Carolinian delegates were in the position of having to comply with the wishes of Virginia, owing to the latter being in a position to control the former’s imports of goods through its ports. Hence at a meeting of the representatives of the various regional Committees in January 1775, it was made clear why the South Carolina delegates at the First Congress had no choice but to accept, that it should adopt 1763 as the fixed point from which all grievances with the British arose. There was disagreement in 1774 between those, who wished to draw the complaint before 1763, and those that wished to see this year as the essential focal point for their demands of Great Britain. Virginians regarded the distinction as

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<sup>227</sup> Force Archive. Volume I. pp. 299-300.

<sup>228</sup> *Sussex County (New Jersey) Resolutions. 16<sup>th</sup> July 1774*, Force Archive. Fourth Series. Volume I. pp. 593-594. Although a resolution in favour of the Continental Association’s Non Importation Agreement, this resolution begins with protestations of a “*true and faithful allegiance to George the Third*”, demonstrating the degree to which there was still loyalty to the Crown.

<sup>229</sup> Force Archive. Volume I. p. 534.



crucial since the complaint could then be laid fully at the feet of King George III, crowned in 1760, whereas a longer period might complicate the essence of the American complaint by involving other monarchs.<sup>230</sup>

There were also differences in the credentials presented to Congress by the delegates from each colony.<sup>231</sup> No specific instructions were given to the delegates of New York and New Jersey, so as to limit their room for manoeuvre and exercise of discretion in any vote on Congressional initiatives. Instructions for the Maryland delegates were “*to effect one general plan of conduct ..... for the relief of Boston and the preservation of American liberty*”. However, these differences were essentially benign, hence, the Connecticut contingent wished “*to consult and advise on proper measures for advancing the best good of the Colonies*”.<sup>232</sup>

There were more serious differences later in the South Carolina provincial session concerning a draft of a proposed Continental non-importation and exportation agreement which attempted to preclude the sale of rice to Europe. It was reported that the words led to such a clamour that it created an “*alarming disunion throughout the whole Colony*”. Despite discussions of creating compensation schemes to address the consequences of the exception, alarm only died away when a vote was taken to remove the offending article.<sup>233</sup>

### **Cohesion and the Predominating Grassroots View**

Despite these differences, a description of the separate colonies as *the United Colonies* began to appear by 1775.<sup>234</sup> It represents, the rapidly developing shared vision, articulated initially in

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<sup>230</sup> *Proceedings of the South Carolina Provincial Congress*. 11<sup>th</sup> January 1775. Force. Volume I, pp. 1110-1112.

<sup>231</sup> JCC. Volume I. 1774, pp.15-16.

<sup>232</sup> JCC, Volume I, 1774, p. 18.

<sup>233</sup> *Proceedings of the South Carolina Provincial Congress*. 11<sup>th</sup> January 1775, Force Archive, Volume I, pp.1110-1112.

<sup>234</sup> Nevins (1969), p. 47. Georgia, the newest of the thirteen colonies was not a member of these United Colonies. Not only was it the most isolated colony, it had the smallest population. Two factors prevented revolutionary agitators from taking a hold in the colony. The first was military, there were some 10,000 British soldiers along its border. The second was economic, the British had

a desire amongst most to return to the situation as it existed before 1763.<sup>235</sup> Union evolved as word spread of the struggles of Massachusetts.<sup>236</sup> By the time that the First Continental Congress had been summoned, it was clear that there was agreement that something had to be done about British encroachments. Each of the delegates from the eleven colonies in attendance, was asked to present their credentials illustrating the wide degree to which their objectives were, *prima facie*, in agreement. New Hampshire delegates, for example, were empowered to devise measures aimed at extricating “*the Colonies from their present difficulties*” with the ultimate objective of returning them to the “*peace, harmony and mutual confidence*” which they enjoyed prior to the difficulties.<sup>237</sup> However, this confidence required an Anglo American relationship that did not superintend commerce, nor local government. Hence, although emanating from Boston’s predicament, the Committees had drawn their grievances far wider and now questioned the very right of Parliament to exercise any form of control over them.<sup>238</sup>

Committee correspondence illustrates how rapidly hitherto disparate colonies had developed this shared approach to the relationship with Britain.<sup>239</sup> In April 1775, Mathew Tilgham,

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encouraged the development of manufacturers through the payment of bounties making it difficult for revolutionary ideas to find recruits. According to Edmund Morgan, the term United States was substituted for United Colonies, by the Declaration of Independence, see Morgan E. S., *The Birth of the Republic, 1763-1789*, (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2013), p. 103. See also the reference in; *A Speech to the Six Confederate Nations, Mohawks, Oneidas, Tuscarroras, Onondagas, Cayugas, Senecas from the Twelve United Colonies convened in Council at Philadelphia. July 13<sup>th</sup> 1775*. pp. 54 – 60. The Continental Congress at this time comprised twelve colonies, excluding the colony of Georgia.

<sup>235</sup> Rhodehamel J. (ed.), *The American Revolution. Writings from the War of Independence*. (The Library of America: New York, 2001). *Letter of John Adams to Abigail Adams. July 1776*. p. 124. Adams placed the precise year at which the difficulties arose with Great Britain at nearer 1761, the year in which the disputes over writs of assistance were argued in colonial courts. However much of the correspondence with the Force Archives points to a general acceptance that the end of the Seven Years was the real turning point in British American affairs. A watershed moment, the end of the war led to a more concerted attempt to tax the colonies and to reign them in.

<sup>236</sup> *Committee of Freehold (Monmouth County, New Jersey. March 14<sup>th</sup> 1775*, Force Archive. Volume II. p. 131. Towns and villages that failed to form committees in compliance with the instructions of the province were declared as enemies of not only “*true freedom*”, a reference to the patriot cause, but ironically as enemies to “*their King and Country*” from whom all relations would be severed. The reference to King represents the view at this particular juncture that violations of colonial freedoms were driven by a rapacious Parliament, not by the Crown, even though a schedule of charges in the 1776 Declaration of Independence were aimed at the King.

<sup>237</sup> JCC, Volume I, pp.15–24.

<sup>238</sup> Force Archive. Volume II, p. 295.

<sup>239</sup> *Observations on the War in Carolina*, Rhodehamel (2001), p. 752. This account of the conquest of Charlestown provides a view of some of the underling realities of the situation. Gray talks of the loyalist element as being around one third of the total who, Whig and Tory alike, seemed to “*vie with each other*” to prove their loyalty to the King.

Chairman of the Committee for the province of Annapolis, Maryland expressed the desire for “*the union which has so remarkably taken place throughout the colonies*” to acquire “*greater firmness, if possible*”. In other words, to solidify around agreed political objectives.<sup>240</sup> Union had been made a reality because of the acceptance that what separated them, was far less important than the one thing that they all desired, that is a desire to protect governmental autonomy.<sup>241</sup> The separate colonies were prepared to overlook their quarrels because what was important was a joint response to the Coercives generally, and subjugation of the Bay colony particularly which it was feared would eventually affect them all.<sup>242</sup> Jefferson described this effect when he explained that the struggle which led to the Revolution began in each colony “*whenever the encroachment was presented to it*”.<sup>243</sup> Jefferson’s sense was therefore that the *perception* of encroachment was sufficient to generate the necessary impetus for communication, not that actual British interference in the colony’s affairs was needed.<sup>244</sup>

### **Facets of Pan Colonial Cooperation at the Outset of the Revolution**

Georgia was a late addition to the Congress, as explained above mainly because of a fear that the British troops situated on its border might be used against the population.<sup>245</sup> However by December 1774 it was significantly reconciled to the patriot cause and had committed to send donations of rice to the inhabitants of Boston.<sup>246</sup> Colonial cohesiveness had evolved to such an extent by April 1775 that the Massachusetts Bay colony was able to send requisitions to

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<sup>240</sup> *Letter from Mathew Tilghman to William Ellery*, Force Archive. Volume II. pp.381– 382.

<sup>241</sup> *Debate on a Bill to Restrain The Trade &c of the Northern Colonies. The House of Commons. Friday February 10<sup>th</sup> 1775*. Force Archive. Volume I. pp. 1622–1634. British parliamentarians recognised the potentially damaging effects of the Boston Port Bill in extending a rebellion that could otherwise be contained within Boston. Sir George Saville expressed this concern when he described how a neighbouring colony was being punished by virtue of its location, a third because doing nothing would let it escape and a fourth in order to “*square*” the ministry’s plan.

<sup>242</sup> Force Archive. Volume I. p. 304. Indeed, the colonies expressed outright support for Boston on the basis that the “*injury is general, the mode taken for redress ought to be commensurate*”. These sentiments expressed in a letter from the committee of Connecticut to that of Boston made the case for a continental congress.

<sup>243</sup> Malone D. *Jefferson and His Time, Jefferson the Virginian*, (Little Brown: Boston, 1948), p 135.

<sup>244</sup> Ward (1971). p. 4.

<sup>245</sup> *Association entered into by forty-five of the Deputies assembled in Provincial Congress at Savannah in Georgia on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1775*. The colony adopted the non-importation agreement of the continental congress in early 1775, Force Archive, Volume I, pp.1157-1158.

<sup>246</sup> Force Archive, Volume I, p.1034.

Connecticut, Rhode Island and New Hampshire for a New England regional army to defend against British incursion.<sup>247</sup> Although by 1775 the colonies had begun to recognise the importance of popular support, it was important that it not be purchased by way of armed force used against colonial citizens. Hence the Maryland Committee in April 1775 explicitly contradicted reports circulating in Baltimore that it had given instructions for the killing of loyalists, which had led to the latter carrying private arms.<sup>248</sup> Reports may have been corrected in order to maintain civil obedience and to prevent intracolony war. Similarly, a dispute between Connecticut and Pennsylvania over jurisdiction over commonly claimed land, led the Committee for Connecticut and for Pennsylvania to issue similar instructions to their citizens encouraging them to maintain peace and order to avoid disruption to the unity thus far achieved.<sup>249</sup>

Hence a letter from the Committee in Charlestown, South Carolina in March 1775 to its opposite number in New York asking it to reconsider its objection to the Continental Association, the pan colonial agreement to stop British imports, pointed to the former's desire that the Association would unite town and colony to create "*one compact regularly organised body*".<sup>250</sup> Similar sentiments arose within other colonies. Instructions from the inhabitants of Cumberland County, Virginia to their delegates to the Virginia provincial convention explicitly commented on the need for "*unanimity, firmness and joint efforts of all the Colonies*" and to ensure that efforts are directed at compromising the interests of the colony with the common safety of all of the colonies, integral to which was the need to establish a trade between them.<sup>251</sup> Hence bounties were granted to encourage manufacturing in items as diverse as

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<sup>247</sup> *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress. Concord. 8<sup>th</sup> April 1775*, Force Archive, Volume I, p.1358.

<sup>248</sup> It is however true that many loyalists' estates were confiscated during the Revolutionary War, see for example Jameson J. F., *The America Revolution Considered as a Social Movement*, (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1926), pp.40-72

<sup>249</sup> *Letter of Congress Delegates to Zebulon Butler*. Philadelphia August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1775, Force Archive, Volume III, pp. 10-11.

<sup>250</sup> *Letter from Charlestown, South Carolina, to the New York, Committee*, 1<sup>st</sup> March 1775, Force Archive, Volume II. p.2.

<sup>251</sup> *Instructions from the Freeholders of Cumberland County, Virginia to John Mayo and William Fleming*, Force Archive, Volume II, p. 3.

men's and women's stockings at a variety of price points to meet the entire needs of the colonies.<sup>252</sup> The granting of bounties was funded in whole or in part by way of subscriptions from inhabitants of towns and villages for the common good and indeed as an example to other counties.<sup>253</sup> Vain attempts by the British to prohibit intercolonial trade by the passage of bills restricting trade to Britain, Ireland and the West Indies demonstrate the desperation with which the colonial compact was being viewed in London.<sup>254</sup>

The cooperative actions described briefly above, are an early indication of not only cooperation but of an acceptance of a colonial surrender of power to Congress which in turn reinforced the cohesion now developing by way of Congressional resolves, communicated across the union, and binding on the colonies.

### **The Colonial Surrender of Power to Congress**

In order to encourage cohesion, the First Continental Congress resolved in October 1774 that each county, town and city should appoint enforcement committees [that is, in addition to the Committees of Correspondence referred to above] with the sole purpose of ensuring that all persons "*touched*" by the Association but failing to comply with it should be named in county gazettes and thereby condemned by their fellow citizens.<sup>255</sup> Some counties took it upon themselves to go further and break off dealings with those who attempted to violate the Association.<sup>256</sup> Other colonies straightforwardly denounced those that were seeking to profit from the suffering of the people as a result of the non-importation agreement.<sup>257</sup> However, some colonial regions disagreed with the growing anti-British sentiment and, whilst not

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<sup>252</sup> *Essex County (Virginia) Committee Minute*. Force Archive, Volume II, pp. 13 – 14.

<sup>253</sup> *Chowan County (North Carolina) Committee*, 4<sup>th</sup> March 1775, Force Archive, Volume II, pp. 30-31.

<sup>254</sup> *Extract of a Letter from London to a Gentleman in Philadelphia*, March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1775, Force Archive, Volume II, pp.25-26.

<sup>255</sup> Force Archive, Volume I. p. 916.

<sup>256</sup> *Cumberland County New Jersey Committee Minute*. 6<sup>th</sup> March 1775, Force Archive, Volume II, p.34

<sup>257</sup> *Meeting of the Brentwood, Hampshire Committee*. February 9<sup>th</sup> 1775, Force Archive, p.1222.

forming themselves into competing committees, did nevertheless meet and resolve against the Association, professing loyalty to the Crown.<sup>258</sup> Dissenting towns were dealt with in a similar fashion to dissenting individuals, they were condemned in meetings, were resolved against, and ultimately gazetted.<sup>259</sup> A meeting of loyalists, for example, in the town of Marshfield, Massachusetts held in February 1775 was roundly condemned by a meeting of sixty-four patriots held on the same day. Deriding the meeting as “*craftily drawn*” and not representing the will of the people in the town, patriots pointed to the lack of notice given and the passage of an earlier bill allowing for an increase in the number of Tories in the town.<sup>260</sup> Similarly, Committees took steps to ensure that the patriot position was presented in the most favourable light. When a report was published in New York in March 1775 that the Committee had failed to agree to the appointment of delegates to the Continental Congress, the publisher James Rivington was immediately censured. Rivington agreed not to rely in future on the “*common report*” of events as “*sufficient authority*” of the proceedings of the Committee. The complaint being that the report potentially exposed the Committee members to the “*resentment of their constituents*”, or more correctly that it showed discord in the patriot position.<sup>261</sup>

Similarly, in August of 1775 the New York Committee was forced to compel the attendance of a Mr Archer before it to answer the charge that he had maliciously reported that Congress had resolved for independence. Specifically charged with attempting to create dissension in the colonies by making this report, it is clear that there continued to be a high degree of apprehension amongst some that Congress might be seen to be pushing too far, for too much,

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<sup>258</sup> Resolution of a Meeting of the Town of Ridgefield, Connecticut. 30<sup>th</sup> January 1775, Force Archive, Volume I.

<sup>259</sup> *Fairfield County, Connecticut Resolutions*. 14<sup>th</sup> February 1775, Force Archive, Volume I, pp.1236– 1237.

<sup>260</sup> *Protest of sixty four of the inhabitants of Marshfield against the proceedings of the Town Meeting held there on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1775*. Force Archive, Volume I, p.1249.

<sup>261</sup> *Committee Chamber. New York. March 13<sup>th</sup> 1775*, Force Archive, Volume II, p. 50.

and far too rapidly. This is not to say that there was wholesale disagreement between colonies rather than a more deliberate approach would be needed.<sup>262</sup> As late therefore as September 1775, provincial Committees were insisting on an attestation of loyalty to the King whilst maintaining the position that Parliament had no right to tax them.<sup>263</sup>

Whilst this section has demonstrated the high degree of cohesion achieved by 1775, it disguises the underlying tension in the individual colonies between radicals in favour of action, and conservatives concerned with a more deliberate compromise with Britain.<sup>264</sup> The next section will explain how it was a radical minority that was responsible for creating the union of common interests by neutralising this conservative dissent.<sup>265</sup>

### **The Third Condition of National Interest: Neutralisation of Dissent**

Patriots were effectively in two camps, the conservatives who wished to leverage colonial cohesion as the basis for negotiating an Anglo American reconciliation, and the radicals, who intended to use the fact of cohesion to assert rights of self-determination and then independence. This radical conservative difference, is explained in two studies, in terms of pre-existing conflicts within the colonies.<sup>266</sup> The first deals with the development of the revolutionary movement in Pennsylvania and identifies the radicals as religious and lower middle class groups, and the conservatives as the mercantile group.<sup>267</sup> The other study

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<sup>262</sup> *Minute of the New York Committee, August 4<sup>th</sup> 1775*, Force Archive, Volume II, pp.20-21.

<sup>263</sup> *Proceedings of the Provincial Congress of North Carolina 1775*, Force Archive, Volume III, pp.205-212.

<sup>264</sup> For discussions of the differences in approach, between the various factions in the colonies, as to how to resolve the problem represented by the Coercives, see O'Neill T. (ed.), *The American Revolution, Opposing Viewpoints*, (Greenhaven Press: San Diego, 1992), pp.96-150.

<sup>265</sup> Nevis (1969). p. 15.

<sup>266</sup> Greene (1987). pp. 2 to 74. The argument that the Revolution was essentially the uprising of the lower classes is provided at pp.9-10. A series of essays, this publication explains how many of the earlier conceptions of the causes of the Revolution, such as the belief that it concerned a "struggle for liberty" (the Whig conception), that it arose from British attempts to improve management of the colonies after their refusals to cooperate with the British during the Seven Years War (the Imperial conception) and that it arose from the desire from the American under classes for freedom from domination from the upper classes (the Progressive conception) have been superseded by a view that it was primarily about establishing a constitutional guarantee of freedom from oppression from both the British and from domestic government.

<sup>267</sup> Lincoln C. H. *The Revolutionary Movement in Pennsylvania 1760 – 1776*, (University of Philadelphia Press: Philadelphia, 1901).

considers the development of political parties in New York in the same period and essentially mirrors the former experience by identifying the conservatives as the landowners as against the radical, underprivileged classes.<sup>268</sup> The progressive interpretation of these studies explains that the privileged classes, whilst initially supporting the radicals soon realised that their interests would be subsumed to those of wider society, and so favoured an accommodation with Great Britain.<sup>269</sup> Accommodation might involve a return to the situation as it had been in 1763 before Parliament attempted to tax the colonies to pay down the Seven Years War debt. Alternatively, it might involve American representation in Parliament or even an Anglo-American Parliament comprising representatives from each colony, and from the Commons. According to these studies, it was only a consideration of the impact of commercial restrictions on colonial trade, including the monopoly imposed by the Tea Act, and the possibility that the southern colonies might not have to pay their large debts to British merchants and lenders in the event of independence, that encouraged some conservatives to join radical lines.<sup>270</sup> Further, it was the radical domination of the Committee system that provided an effective channel for Revolution as opposed to accommodation.<sup>271</sup>

A Congressional debate, summarised by John Adams, that took place in September 1774 on the best grounds for seeking redress, gives an insight into the nature of the disagreement between the factions in Congress. Some pro-British delegates had questioned the right of the colonists to form constitutional government, that is the original charter assemblies, on grounds that successive monarchs did not have the power to grant founding charters, or on

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<sup>268</sup> Becker C. L. *History of Political Parties in the Province of New York 1760 - 1776*. (Madison: Wisconsin, 1909).

<sup>269</sup> Force Archive, Volume I. p.1036. The evolution of the conservative radical split appears to have been noticed in London in December 1774. An unknown Englishman writing to someone unknown in New York complained that the colonists as a general body appeared to have hardened their position from one demanding, effectively, an end to Parliament's attempts to tax the colonies internally to attempting to dent the right of Parliament's supremacy more generally.

<sup>270</sup> Schlesinger A. M., *The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution 1763 - 1776*. (Beard Books: New York, 1918).

<sup>271</sup> The Committees of Correspondence are said to have been effective on their formation due in the main to the "town meetings.....clergy....[and]....newspapers" that had laid the foundation for cooperation, see; Galvin J. R., *The Minute Men, The First Fight: Myths and Realities of the American Revolution*, (Potomac Books: Washington D.C., 2006), p.3.



the ground that the colonies were only entities subsidiary to the Crown and not otherwise independent of it.<sup>272</sup> Pennsylvanian member of Congress Joseph Galloway, however simply argued for a return to the status quo ante, on the ground that the differences between colonies were so significant and the peace between them so fragile, that a civil war was inevitable without a strong British superintendence to maintain authority.<sup>273</sup> He explained that conflict was “... *only suppressed by the authority of the Parent State [Great Britain] and should that authority be weakened or annulled, many subjects of unsettled disputes....must involve us in all the horrors of civil war.*”<sup>274</sup> There was therefore a strong reason to reach a compromise with Britain.<sup>275</sup>

What is clear is that, whilst this point of view had support, it was the vocal, impassioned and often violent radical minority that ensured that its aims would ultimately win out. An indication that dissent was effectively silenced by these radicals was explained in a post-War 1780 publication produced by Galloway. He explained how a violent faction had taken control in most colonies, and obtained representation in Congress. According to Galloway, “*at this time the republican [the patriots intent on independence] faction in Congress had provided a mob, ready to execute their secret orders. The cruel practice of tarring and feathering had been long since introduced. This lessened the firmness of some of the loyalists [which included conservatives], the vote was put and carried. Two of the dissenting members presumed to offer their protest against it in writing, which was negatived [sic]. They next insisted that the tender of their protest: and its negative should be entered on the minutes this was also rejected. By this treasonable vote the foundation of military resistance throughout America was effectually*

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<sup>272</sup> TWJA, Volume II, p. 370.

<sup>273</sup> References to civil war are to conflict between loyalists (acting on behalf of a British Army) and patriots in each state, see; Phillips K., 1775, *A Good Year for Revolution*, (Viking, New York, 2012), pp.418-419.

<sup>274</sup> G. Wilkie. *Historical and political reflections on the rise and progress of the American rebellion*, (Printed for G Wilkie: London, 1780), p.78.

<sup>275</sup> Nevins (1969). pp. 15-16. Also see; JCC, Volume I, 1774, p. 43.

*laid.*"<sup>276</sup> What started out as a simple desire for redress of colonial grievances, therefore gave way in the face of the rise of the movement for independence.

The conservative versus radical position is further exposed by John Dickinson, a Pennsylvania politician, in an April 1775 letter to Massachusetts London agent Arthur Lee. Giving an impression of an underlying current of disagreement and discord amongst the patriots it implies a similar sense of unease between the colonists.<sup>277</sup> "*Why have we rashly been declared rebels*", Dickinson asked, "*why have directions been sent to disarm us?*". Dickinson's letter reveals his deep felt desire to avoid a break with the British when he went on to describe how little scope he believed there now was for "*men who think as I do*" to appeal to his fellow countrymen.<sup>278</sup> Dickinson had argued robustly against the British right to tax the colonies.<sup>279</sup> However, there was, for him, a difference between denying revenue raising powers to the British and an all-out desire for a break. Dickinson's so called *Olive Branch Petition* of July 1775 to King George III, adopted by the First Continental Congress, declared his heartfelt wish to be reconciled with the mother country as against the position being adopted by some of his fellow delegates.<sup>280</sup>

Jefferson's description of voting on the Olive Branch Petition casts further light on the radical, conservative difference. On passage in Congress, Jefferson explained that Dickinson objected to the use of the word Congress.<sup>281</sup> The inclusion of this idea would inflame British opinion with its connotations of the earlier so called Stamp Act Congress of 1764 and its association

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<sup>276</sup> Force Archive. Volume II. p.69

<sup>277</sup> Faragher J. M., *The Encyclopaedia of Colonial and Revolutionary America*. (Sachem Publishing Associates Inc: New York, 1990).

<sup>278</sup> Rhodehamel (2001). pp. 21-24.

<sup>279</sup> McDonald F. (ed.). *Empire and Nation. Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania. John Dickinson. Letters from the Federal Farmer. Richard Henry Lee*. Second Edition. (Liberty Fund: Indianapolis, 1999).

<sup>280</sup> JCC, *Volume II*. 10<sup>th</sup> May to 20<sup>th</sup> September 1775, p.128.

<sup>281</sup> Bergh A. E. (ed.). *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson. Memorial Edition. Volume I*. (The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association: Washington D.C., 1907), p.17.

with resistance. Consequently, its inclusion by the radicals was intended to give a clear message of defiance.

This conception of radicalism versus conservatism was apparent in every colony and manifested itself as a split in the patriotic movement and not as a distinction between royalist and patriot. Dickinson was therefore not in a minority. In any case, the royalist position had been silenced by threats of tarring and feathering or gazetting, and therefore shaming into compliance.<sup>282</sup>

### Conclusion

The common interest of the colonies was in their long held belief in the right to self-determination. Liberal British mercantilist policies had emphasised the control of their international commerce at the expense of superintendence, leaving colonists with a greater sense of their independence.<sup>283</sup> This is very much a counter intuitive outcome given the central control of trade, and therefore the implication of governance more generally, that is dictated by mercantilism, and it simply encouraged the colonists to think of themselves as governmentally independent.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> Galloway J., Historical and political reflections on the rise and progress of the American rebellion. (Printed for the Author: London, 1780). p. 69. See also; Paige L. R. *History of Cambridge Massachusetts. 1630-1877. With a Genealogical Register.* (H. O. Houghton and Company: Boston, 1877). pp.137-138. Intimidation as a means of imposing the will of a faction was not new to the revolutionary period. As early as 1765 there were stories of a "violent outbreak of popular fury" which had led to the hanging in effigy of the Boston Distributor of Stamps and of persons breaking into his home and destroying part of his furniture in order to prevent adoption of the Stamp Act of 1763. The Committees were however, not committed to punishment alone, and often tried to convert a loyalist to the American cause, see for example Maier P., *From Resistance to Revolution, Colonial radicals and the development of American opposition to Britain, 1765 -1776*, (Random House: New York, 1974), p. 282.

<sup>283</sup> Crowley John E. *The Privileges of Independence. Neomercantilism and the American Revolution.* (The John Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1993). p. 17. The liberalism of the British mercantilist policy is well made by Governor Stephen Hopkins of Rhode Island in "Essay on the Trade of the Northern Colonies". Hopkins makes this point by comparing the failure of the Spanish Empire to increase its wealth from trade as being due to "the want of a free commerce" which "has checked their navigation, hindered their increase of shipping, and kept them poor". The point being that, as Crowley puts it, an enlightened commercial policy would bring wealth to the metropolis.

<sup>284</sup> Crowley (1993), p.2. Crowley's discussion of what might be termed a purist approach to mercantilism describes how the benefits of colonial trade can only be achieved through a high degree of control and "scrupulous attention to regulation" to prevent colonies from becoming "national liabilities as opposed to imperial assets". Crowley is referring to the potential for the colonies to become a competing manufacturing base as opposed to an essentially underdeveloped agri -economy. In this sense at least British policies were constructed according to strict principles of mercantilist thought even if there was a distinct lack of a serious attention to detail.

British policy since the early part of the eighteenth century, had encouraged trade because securing northern colonial manufactured lumber products for naval stores was crucial to Great Britain's naval advantage, and the colonies were purchasers of British manufactured goods.<sup>285</sup> An increase in the productive colonial population through immigration, would only be supportive of this fact.<sup>286</sup> The populations in the thirteen colonies almost doubled to just under one million by around 1740 and to almost three million by 1780.<sup>287</sup> Growth in trade as a result of population increases was in turn directly related to an abundance of cheap land to newly arriving immigrants and therefore the facility to drive economic growth from their own labours, or ability to secure productive work as indentured servants.<sup>288</sup> The practice of granting a fixed allotment of land, known as a headright started in Virginia as early as 1609 and continued until 1777.<sup>289</sup> Headright allocations were closely tied to profitable economic activity because a man could become relatively wealthy in a short time, and was therefore incentivised to productivity.<sup>290</sup>

A developing and thriving agrarian economy provided further support for a benign British approach to government since, without the threat of a manufacturing base which might threaten domestic merchants, all that was required of a trade policy was the regulation

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<sup>285</sup> McLachlan J. O. *Trade and Peace with Old Spain 1667 – 1750*. (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1940). p. 4. And see also, Astrom S. E. *From Stockholm to St Petersburg*. Studia Historica II. (Finnish Historical Society: Helsinki, 1662). p. 15.

<sup>286</sup> Hansen M. L. *The Atlantic Migration 1607 – 1860*. (Harvard University Press: Cambridge MA, 1945), pp. 48-50. The lack of enthusiasm amongst the English is attributed to both industrial expansion which created work in Great Britain and also a general reduction in religious persecution. Hansen goes on to explain that the Act of Union of 1707 was instrumental in encouraging Scottish emigration as the Scots sought to take advantage of their membership of the empire and its potential for individual wealth creation. German Swiss emigration arose from similar attempts by their respective governments to address sectarian issues.

<sup>287</sup> Montanus Colonel P. D., *A Failed Counterinsurgency Strategy: The British Southern Campaign 1780 to 1781: Are there lessons for today?* (U.S. Army War College: Pennsylvania, 2005). p. 23.

<sup>288</sup> Isaac (1982). p 133.

<sup>289</sup> Engal (1975). pp. 191-222.

<sup>290</sup> Galenson (1996). p 138.

exports of raw materials.<sup>291</sup> Hence, as late as 1770 the majority of colonial exports, almost three million pounds, were agricultural, hunting products or derivatives thereof.<sup>292</sup>

A vibrant two-way flow of trade was insufficient to cause the British to impose tighter restraints over colonial freedoms. Whilst important for the supply of raw materials and a market for manufactured goods, the colonies were not considered a sufficiently valuable pawn in the wider European power struggle over control of international trade.<sup>293</sup> Further, British *laissez faire* policy was supported by the realities of colonial manufacturing, since the unavailability of skilled labour and capital in the northern colonies mitigated against the development of a colonial manufacturing base competitive to that of the large British cities.<sup>294</sup> Thus the risks of a competitive manufacturing economy emerging and in turn causing a rupture in British policy was minimal.<sup>295</sup>

In conclusion, autonomous government was easily achieved because the British were preoccupied with grander trade strategy within which the colonies were bit players.<sup>296</sup> The

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<sup>291</sup> Rabushka (2008). p 443.

<sup>292</sup> *Historical Statistics of the United States Colonial Times to 1970*, Chapter Z, (US Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census: Washington, 1975). p.1184.

<sup>293</sup> Harper L., *Mercantilism and the American Revolution*, (*Canadian Historical Review* XXIII, 1942), pp.1-15

<sup>294</sup> Galenson (1996). p. 192. Although the study referred to by the author; Mathias P. and Postan M.M. (eds.), *Capital Formation in Great Britain Cambridge Economic History of Europe. Vol. VII.* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1979,p.83 places American per capita wealth at less than one third of that of the British citizen it was conjectured by Mathias and Postan that this might have been due to the income being greater in the colonies but that there was a lower per capita wealth as a result, *inter alia*, of lower relative land values. See also; Egnal M., *The Economic Development of the Thirteen Continental Colonies, 1720 to 1775*, (*The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series Vol. 32 No. 2, April 1975), pp.191-222.

<sup>295</sup> Bruchey S., *The Roots of American Economic Growth 1607 – 1861.* (Harper and Row: New York, 1965). pp.6-8. For example, trade legislation was aimed at protecting the British hat manufacturing trade and encouraging the importation of non-French and Spanish molasses, see; Giesecke (1910). pp 60-85. The primary means of encouraging colonial manufacture or production was by way of the granting, by assemblies, of “bounties” on certain goods. For example, the manufacture of linen and sail cloth in the northern colonies and the production of hemp and flax were granted the payment of bounties. Bounties, when encouraged by governors, were sometimes to achieve the dual result of ensuring sufficient earnings to meet payments to Britain and yet in so doing to discourage production that might interfere with British manufacturing. The granting of bounties became keener in the period 1765 to 1776 as a reaction to the attempts by the British to exert greater influence over what the colonies were permitted to produce. On the whole those items that did not compete with British manufacturers. In response to Parliament’s Boston Port Bill of 1774, the collective punishment of Bostonians following the Tea Party, as well as the passage of legislation forbidding importation of British goods, bounties were granted to encourage the high quality production of articles that might otherwise have been imported from Britain. For instance a Maryland law granting “eight thousand pounds of tobacco .....for the best manufactured pieces of linen”.

<sup>296</sup> Breen (2004), pp.196-199. Although beyond the scope of this thesis, it is apparent that the colonists, as large scale consumers of British manufactured goods, realised the power they therefore held in the British empire by virtue of their purchasing power. Ultimately this would be exercised, according to the author, by their willingness between 1774 and 1775 to adopt non-importation

point is made succinctly in the literature, “*as long as what the colonists did increased the taxable trade of the Empire, mercantilists were content. When what the colonists were doing somehow competed with metropolitan businessmen, capitalists were not happy.*”<sup>297</sup> Against this backdrop, there was little sense of *community, common voice and subrogation of interests* amongst colonies taken together hence John Adams’ assertion that the central problem of the American Revolution was how to ensure that all *thirteen clocks strike at the same time.*<sup>298</sup> In other words, how to ensure concerted colonial effort.

The wholesale change in British policy attempted after the end of the Seven Years War created the circumstances that would ultimately give rise to this community of interests. The goal of the policy, within a new legislative framework, was to claw back the gains made by the colonies by focussing on two key objectives.<sup>299</sup> The first was the aim of raising revenue to pay for the war effort and the ongoing defence of the colonies. Given the huge cash contributions made during the War under the direction of Prime Minister William Pitt, it was considered only fair that the colonies should now be made to repay their debt to the mother country.<sup>300</sup> The second, was to implement a wide ranging scheme of tax compliance which would have the dual effect of enabling Parliament to exert control.<sup>301</sup> Ironically therefore, it was British actions

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agreements refusing to purchase goods from Britain until it agreed to reverse its attempts to tax the colonies. Amongst the first examples of the power of consumer boycotts.

<sup>297</sup> McCusker J. J. *The Cambridge Economic History of the United States, Volume 1: The Colonial Era. Chapter Title 8: British Mercantilist Policies and the American Colonies*, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1996). p 362.

<sup>298</sup> TWJA, Volume 10, p. 283.

<sup>299</sup> Chorlton T. P. *The First American Republic 1774 – 1789. The First Fourteen American Presidents before Washington*. (Author House: Indianapolis, 2011.), pp xxv - xxvi. Policies implemented to achieve these objectives are viewed as a “*series of disastrous blunders*” in which the British “*seriously miscalculated*” the impact that their policies would have on the Americans. The author quotes a tax differential between the British citizen and an American colonist of some 25 shillings per head annually a fact that appears to driven Parliament on with its taxation policies even as against fierce resistance.

<sup>300</sup> *Pitt to the Governors of Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire, Connecticut, , Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey Whitehall Dec- 30th 1757 and Pitt to Governors of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina and North Carolina, Whitehall, 30th December 1757*. Kimball G. S. *Correspondence of William Pitt When Secretary of State with Colonial Governors and Military and Naval Commissioners in America*. Volume 1. (Macmillan: London, 1906). Pitt explained that “*that strong Recommendations will be made to Parliament in their Session next Year, to grant a proper Compensation for such Expences [sic] .....according as the active Vigour and strenuous Efforts of the respective Provinces shall justly appear to merit.*” Pitts’ promise came not as an expression of British largess but in response to the realities faced by the British military in the colonies. A refusal to provide soldiers with shelter, provisions and finance placed colonial assemblies on a collision course with British commanders. Pitts’s offer was therefore intended to appease the locals by reimbursing them for the costs of meeting the logistical needs of their defenders.

<sup>301</sup> There is considerable cause for believing that the British intended to habituate colonists into paying taxes that would be used for wider purposes than simply the payment for the defence of the colonies. The British believed that the colonists should get

that created the political environment within the colonies that caused the hitherto separate colonies into a cooperative union that acted together in a representative Congress.

This chapter has demonstrated that American foreign policy had at its root, a practical design for a national interest which could trace its origin to the early founding charters that assured local representation and self-determination. There were no competing domestic interests in this design, since any dissent had for all practical purposes been eliminated by the start of the Revolution. The competing visions of the radicals and the conservatives of what was in the interests of the disparate colonies had been compromised into one discernible pan-colonial, later pan-state, interest.

The inevitable conflict with Britain over what was in the interests of the union, independence as opposed to containment within the British empire, caused Congress to assert itself in foreign affairs. Chapter Three explains that Congress and by delegation, its plenipotentiaries, who were by definition vested with the power to shape policy, determined immediately that foreign policy would involve an active participation in the balance of power. Chapter Three begins by explaining that, although there was now agreement across the colonies, what was missing was a will to act as one nation. Congress, through its actions created the necessary will to act.

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used to paying tax if they were to enjoy the rights of Englishmen and used the argument of virtual representation in Parliament to advance their argument. In other words, the colonists were represented in Parliament by virtue of being citizens of the Empire. They did not need to be physically represented by their agents, for example.

### 3. Chapter Three: Balance of Power Thinking in the War Years

#### Congress as the Unifying Force

Congress was the unifying force that by its “*resolves and proclamations*” strengthened the union of the states and the cohesion between its members, for example by creating the Continental Army.<sup>302</sup> Cohesion, for John Adams, required not just an assertive Congress, but a strong figurehead with the reputation of General Washington. Adams expressed the belief that that the earnestness with which the original colonies had come together because of their shared interest, would be cemented into a closer union of states with the appointment of the General as commander of the army.<sup>303</sup> The historian Jeremy Black explains that the creation of the Continental Army was therefore not only a military, but a unifying political act and one that would secure for the union, recognition and support from foreign powers. Its creation took military decision-making away from the colonial legislatures, by delegating to Congress control over the state militia.<sup>304</sup> Hence the impression was created of a single nation, in control of armed forces, and able to take military action in its national interest. Such a situation was different from the much looser arrangements that had existed between 1757 and 1763 during the Seven Years War when colonial militia had been deployed, as explained in Chapter Two, in support of other colonies in a more *ad hoc* manner by order of local legislatures.

In many ways therefore, cohesion was brought about as a result of the control of Congress, the one political body that represented all the states.<sup>305</sup> The interstate concordance thereby

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<sup>302</sup> Henderson J. *Party Politics and the Continental Congress*. (University Press of America: Maryland, 1974). p.1. The author takes this view when he says that the Congress transformed “*a disjointed colonial resistance into a reasonably cohesive colonial revolution.*”

<sup>303</sup> *Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams. June 1775*. Rhodehamel (2001), p. 32. By 1773 there were at least eighty committees in Massachusetts alone sufficient to form the basis of a colonial federation.

<sup>304</sup> Black (2010). p. 141.

<sup>305</sup> It is fairly accurate to describe the former British American colonies as *states* with effect from around 1775 because of the generally representative extra-legal committees of correspondence that took over from colonial era representative assemblies that have been described more particularly in Chapter Two, and then representing a union *qua* collective security arrangement with effect generally from 1776 when Congress directed the various former colonies to create their own constitutions. For a



brought about, was the pre-condition for a foreign policy for two reasons. Firstly, it eliminated the security risk inherent in the union as it entered into conflict with Britain, for the reason that “a basically cohesive community will remain reasonably united in a period of adversity while one containing divisive elements will fragment”.<sup>306</sup> Colonial fragmentation could create the circumstances for foreign powers to break up the union, along trading lines. As an example, the Virginian delegation was fully aware of this risk when discussing, in 1774, the non-exportation of goods to Britain. Hence the Virginia delegation had agreed to South Carolina’s request to exclude rice and indigo from the ban since they were important to the latter’s economy and expedient in its local politics.<sup>307</sup>

Secondly, the most important foreign policy act of the early Republic, that of securing the French alliance, depended on there being confidence that the Revolution was capable of succeeding given well known differences across the states. The French foreign ministry feared that the Revolution was simply the consequence of a fractious element in the union that had gained the upper hand in the states and driven them inexorably down the road to revolution. As explained in Chapter One, according to a late nineteenth century historian, William Gordon, before the French would provide support they had to be assured that the conflict was more than just the work of a minority that had somehow subsumed any dissent. This realisation was

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description of what the author refers to as “the assumption of power” by the former colonies, see Adams W. P. (translated by Kimber R et al.), *The First American Constitutions. Republican Ideology and the Making of the State Constitutions in the Revolutionary Era*, (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers: Oxford, 2001), in respectively pp.25–46, and pp.47-60. For the opposing viewpoint to the idea that the colonies shared a common interest, see Savelle M., *The Origins of American Diplomacy, 1492 – 1763* (Macmillan: New York, 1967) quoted in Deconde A, *Historians, the War of American Independence, and the Persistence of the Exceptionalist Ideal*. (The International History Review. Vol. 5 No.3, August 1983), pp.399-430. Savelle explains that the colonies had by 1776, become a people sharing a “common culture”. However, in contradistinction to Savelle, see Ammerman D., *In the Common Cause. American Response to the Coercive Acts of 1774*, (University Press of Virginia: Charlottesville, 1974). p. 89. Ammerman explains that a common culture as such is not entirely accurate given that it was a radical majority in the First Continental Congress that silenced the dissenting minority that, for example, forced adoption of the Continental Association. For an analysis of the radicals and conservatives see Chapter Two. It is a central argument of this thesis that the colonies shared a common interest by 1776.

<sup>306</sup> Hoffman R., (et. al.), (eds.), *An Uncivil War, The Southern Backcountry During the American Revolution*, (The University Press of Virginia: Virginia, 1985), p. xii.

<sup>307</sup> JCC. 1774-1789. Volume I. p. 52.

identified in the success of the Continental Army after the 1777 battle of Saratoga.<sup>308</sup>

According to one account of the scene “*when the news of the Saratoga convention reached France, [it was accepted that it].... was not owing to a faction, a few leading men that had gotten into power*” but that there was a national resolve and support for victory.<sup>309</sup>

Congress demonstrated the necessary resolve, as the one coherent, ostensibly representative voice, and creator of a homogenous foreign policy, that is, one representative of all of the states. It appointed plenipotentiaries who concentrated their efforts on the international aspects of the Revolution, on the consequences of diplomatic activity, and on treaty making.<sup>310</sup> By the very definition of their delegation as plenipotentiaries, they were vested with the power to shape foreign policy, based on the realities they discovered in the European nations they visited.

The ideology that would underpin the shaping of policy was created by a Congressional committee and called the 1776 Model Treaty, the framework that articulated the founding principle that America was to remain separated from the political affairs of Europe. A key principle of separation was that the nation would seek military supplies but not military ties. However, beneath this basic expression of its foreign policy ideology, lay the one fundamental fact that, even the objective of non-military support, required exploitation of the French rivalry

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<sup>308</sup> Murphy (1982), p. 258. The author explains that George III was advised of the 6<sup>th</sup> February 1778 Franco American treaties, soon after they were signed, by way of a diplomatic note. The British reacted to the loss at Saratoga by considering a reconciliation with the colonies in order to prevent an Anglo French war, which only allowed the Americans to take advantage of European rivalries in order to secure French support, see; Thomas P. D. G., *Lord North*, (Allen Lane: London, 1976), p.108.

<sup>309</sup> Gordon (1788), p.96.

<sup>310</sup> For considerations of the importance of diplomacy, see Wharton F. (ed.), *The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States*. Volume I. pp 263 and 289 referred to in Deconde A., *Historians, the War of American Independence, and the Persistence of the Exceptionalist Ideal*, (*The International History Review*, Vol. 5 No. 3, August 1983). pp. 399 to 430. See also Horsman R. *The Diplomacy of the New Republic, 1776 to 1815*, (Harlan Davidson Inc.: Illinois, 1985), pp.14-15. This is also the general theme of Perkins J. B. *France in the American Revolution*, (Houghton Mifflin and Company: Boston, 1911), and of Schiff. S. *A Great Improvisation. Franklin, France and the Birth of America*, (Henry Holt and Company: New York, 2005), the latter placing success in winning French support for American War aims firmly with Franklin and his diplomacy. See the definition of plenipotentiaries in the Meriam Wester Dictionary as not “*just....an agent to deal with foreign affairs but one having full power to act on the behalf of his or her country and government*”, in <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/plenipotentiary> accessed 14th February 2017.

with Britain. Since rivalry arose because of a French desire to re-balance against Great Britain, American foreign policy would involve participation in the European equilibrium from the start.

### **Ideology and Realism**

There were two features that would be important elements of this, an internationalist American foreign policy. Firstly, that the ideology of its desire for political separation, would be combined with the pragmatism dictated by its military weakness, and secondly, that those ideological considerations would be regarded as long-term considerations, and therefore traded off against short term expediencies.

Firstly then, it was common some two hundred years later in the twentieth century, to think of American foreign affairs in terms of idealism or realism.<sup>311</sup> However, this chapter will explain that Americans in the early period did not regard realism and idealism as mutually exclusive concepts, but were in the unique situation of being able to blend them into one coherent approach to foreign engagement, with a moving weight between the two depending on international conditions.<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> See for example, Hendrickson D. G. *The Lost World of the American Founding*, (University Press of Kansas: Kansas, 2003), p. 169; Gilbert (1961), p.136, in which Gilbert makes this point and also equates ideology with a quest for freedom, and realism with a quest for gain; For a more recent discussion of the confluence of idealism and realism in US foreign policy as respectively security and justice, see Nijman J. *Madeleine Albright and the Geopolitics of Europe* (*GeoJournal*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 46: 267-278, 1998). For further discussions of realism as a concern about security, and idealism as a concern with optimism and cooperation, see Wright Q. *Review: Realism and Idealism in International Politics* (*World Politics*, Vol. 5 No. 1, October 1952), pp.116-128. For discussions of different forms of realism see Ross A. L. and Posen B. R. *Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy*, (*International Security*, Vol. 21 No. 3, Winter 1996-1997), pp.5-53, in which the authors talk of maximal realism (that is, primacy of a nation as the optimal position) and minimal realism (engagement with the balance of power by engagement of non-hegemonic nations).

<sup>312</sup> For ideas of the interaction of realism with idealism (but not blending the two concepts into policy) see (i) a discussion of how modern US Presidents alternate between idealism and realism in their rhetoric in order to gain *political* advantage, Bostdorff D. M. and Goldzwig S. R. *Idealism and Pragmatism in American Foreign Policy Rhetoric: The Case of John F. Kennedy and Vietnam* (*Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 24 No. 3, Conduct of Foreign Policy, Summer, 1994), pp.515-530), (ii) a discussion of the more direct interaction of idealism and realism in American foreign affairs in Land D.G. and Russell G. *The Ethics of Power in American Diplomacy: The Statecraft of John Quincy Adams* (*The Review of Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Vol. 52 No. 1, Winter 1990), pp.3-31, in which the authors argue that Adams considered the application of American power (a policy of realism in support of security aims) would result in idealistic outcomes such as the eventual elimination of European "*colonial claims*" and hence of the pernicious effects of imperialism; and (iii) For what appears to be a confluence of realism with idealism described as "*higher realism*", and illustrated by reference to Woodrow Wilson's involvement in the First World War and also, related to this, as "*both the unconscious pursuit of a (global) balance of power and [creation] of a new international order*", see Dunne M. *US Foreign Relations in the Twentieth Century: From World Power to Global Hegemony*, (*International Affairs*, Royal Institute of International

Hence, the idealistic desire for political distance from Europe and its old ways that had, for American statesmen, guaranteed only centuries of war, was combined with a realistic assessment of how Americans could take advantage of the weakness that was inherent in the European framework. In other words, these men accepted the fundamental ideological premise that there should be no political arrangement with European nations. However this would be subject to the overriding principle that manipulation of European rivalries, was a wholly logical and pragmatic choice in the national interest.<sup>313</sup>

This point that the ideology of political separation from European affairs would be compromised if the national interest demanded it is illustrated in the first period in the free trade goal of the Model Treaty which mandated that America would only demand military supplies and loans from foreign nations. However, by the end of 1776, Congress recognised that without both French and Spanish military involvement, the nation could not win independence and there was therefore a *volte face* with Congress readily embracing a French alliance.<sup>314</sup> Hence, whilst non-commitment would continue to be the theme of foreign policy, it gave way temporarily to realism.

The second feature of an internationalist foreign policy, was that long term ideological concerns were sacrificed for short term expediency based on the reality of the international

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Affairs, Vol. 76 No. 1, January 2000), pp.25-40, (iv) for a discussion of a concept of blending which explains that *rich and militarily strong* nations are able to combine realism and idealism, see Kupchan. C. *The End of the American Era: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-first Century* (Alfred Knopf: New York, 2003) p.37.

<sup>313</sup> However, see Dull (1975), p.328. The author takes the view that American diplomats achieved little but happened to be more passive participants in the unravelling of events in 1778.

<sup>314</sup> For the Model Treaty as the basis for no political connections, see Le Feber W. *The American Age. U.S. Foreign Policy At Home and Abroad, 1750 to the Present*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, (W. W. Norton and Company: New York, 1994), pp.23-24. For the Model Treaty as the basis of free trade, see Matson C.D. and Onuf P. S. *A Union of Interests. Political and Economic Thought in Revolutionary America* (University Press of Kansas: Kansas, 1990), pp.34-37. Matson and Onuf explain that Franklin and Adams explained that free trade would encourage reciprocity and hence discourage political entanglement. This comment speaks also to the idea of economic interdependence which, as explained in Chapter One, was an aspect of the idea of universalism in American foreign affairs. See also Wood G. C., *Congressional Control of Foreign Relations During the American Revolution, 1774-1789*, (H. Ray Haas & Co: Pennsylvania, 1919), p.63, who explains that the so called radicals in Congress objected to direct French military aid since it would make America subject to the guidance of France in all matters related to its foreign affairs.

situation and America's position in it.<sup>315</sup> Therefore, in the War for Independence, Americans became habituated in seeking alliances, although not always successfully, despite their ideological fear of commitment, and not even a fear and dislike of Catholicism could divert Congressional attention from the goal of alliance creation.<sup>316</sup> As France adopted hard balancing strategies of naval build up and American alliance creation to reinstate the European equilibrium with Britain, American statesmen willingly involved themselves in European rivalries. They sought a France alliance, with its potential for long term military consequences that could outlast War aims, because it was the most pragmatic choice given the precarious American military situation.<sup>317</sup> An uncompromising and hard headed pursuit of interest, even if it involved dispensing with ideology, formed the underlying assumption of policy. This is because American statesmen of this period did not have the luxury of being able to take a long term perspective on extant policy choices. National interest demanded that short run considerations only inform policy commitments, at the expense of the long run consequences for a Republic that prided itself on its ideological differences with Europe. An example of such

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<sup>315</sup> Later, the system of separation of powers in the Constitution would be regarded as an attempt by the Framers to force deliberate, and therefore long term, consideration of foreign affairs even at the expense of short term expediency, see; Dumbrell J., *American Foreign Policy, Carter to Clinton*, (Macmillan: London, 1997), p. 9.

<sup>316</sup> This fear was brought into sharp focus just before the War by passage of the Quebec Act of 1774; Coupland R. *The Quebec Act: A Study in Statesmanship*. (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1968). The author attributes the Act not to any desire by Parliament to affect the colonies since, it is suggested in this thesis, Parliament was concerned more with raising revenues from the colonies through taxation and legislation for their better control. The author suggests that the Act had as its sole aim the prevention of the development of any independence movement amongst the sixty-five thousand odd Catholics in the Quebec province of Canada by addressing what were perceived to be French Canadian demands, free practice of the Catholic faith, the right to use of the French language and the application of the French legal system. The Act in fact does not go further than providing for the free practice of the Catholic faith. A copy of the Act can be found at [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/quebec\\_act\\_1774.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/quebec_act_1774.asp) (accessed 8th June 2014). Parliament's explicit permissiveness in the practice of Catholicism in Canada with the Quebec Act of 1774 was viewed as a threat by colonists who feared that it would be used as a way of keeping the colonies in check. One way in which the interests of the colonists might be threatened is by restricting their ability to expand westwards beyond the so called 1763 Proclamation Line, that which separated Indian lands from colonial lands, see; Jennings F. (ed.), *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy, An Interdisciplinary Guide to the Treaties of the Six Nations and Their League*, (Syracuse University Press: New York, 1985), p. 57.

<sup>317</sup> However, a pragmatic approach to foreign affairs in 1778 did not involve balancing between Britain and France, according to Arthur Lee, commissioner to Spain and France, "*France has done us substantial benefits. Great Britain substantial injuries. France offers to guaranty our sovereignty, and universal freedom of Commerce. Great Britain condescends to accept of our submission and to monopolise our commerce.....I do not comprehend how there can be a mind so debased, or an understanding so perverted, as to balance between them*", *To the Committee of Foreign Affairs*, Paris, February 28th, 1778, DCAR, Volume II, p. 138. This idea of "restraint" in American foreign policy given; (i) the weakness of the American military, and, (ii) a limited understanding of balance of power, and (iii) and no "proper analysis of ...[national interest]", is at the centre of what is called soft realism or "greater patience...[and]....more expert diplomacy" in handling foreign policy, see; Combs. J. A., *The History of American Foreign Policy, Volume II, Since 1990*, (Alfred P. Knopf: New York, 1986), p. vii.

an unintended consequence was that the 1778 French Treaty would, in 1793, leave open the risk of an unwanted American involvement in a European war involving France and Britain.<sup>318</sup> This trade-off between long term ideological considerations against more important short run national objectives, was more an attribute of an emerging and weak nation than it was of established strong nations. For example, the French and the Spanish worried that the American states, so valuable to their short term interests, could in the longer term become a liability to them, and therefore current policy should provide for such an eventuality. Worries were grounded, not least, in a fear of the inevitability of westward American expansion which for the French represented a growing *imperium*, and for the Spanish a threat to their North American colonial system.<sup>319</sup> Fear caused each member of this, the Family Compact, to soft balance America through binding strategies. The French hoped that the terms of their alliance with America together with reciprocal trade agreements, would be sufficient to bind America to a close association with France.<sup>320</sup> For their part, the Spanish refused to offer America a treaty of alliance even as Congress offered valuable concessions, in the hope of being able to contain the emerging nation within the geography of the original thirteen states.

The argument of this Chapter proceeds by demonstrating that French motivations in supporting Independence lay firmly in the consequences of the Seven Years War that ended in 1763. The French defeat and expulsion from the North American continent in 1763, was the French incentive to re-balance against Britain adopting the hard balancing strategies of alliance building, which relied on an American willingness to participate in the equilibrium, and naval

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<sup>318</sup> Chapter Four explains the rationale adopted in 1793 to justify withdrawal from the mutual defence terms of the 1778 Treaty.

<sup>319</sup> Philips P. C. *The West in the Diplomacy of the American Revolution* Hardcover (Russell & Russell: New York, 1913). See also Faragher (1998).

<sup>320</sup> For a discussion of the French desire to retain America as a post War "*client state*" see Watson J.S. *The Reign of George III, 1760 – 1815* in Clark G. (ed.), *The Oxford History of England Volume XII* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1985) pp. 253-255.

build up to achieve parity of forces.<sup>321</sup> Against the backdrop of this, the traditional approach to the hard balancing of a balance member, is exposed the soft balancing approach of both France and Spain in an effort to restrain American growth. Whilst soft balancing does not alone explain an American participation in the equilibrium, it nevertheless does demonstrate, through analysis of the efforts of American Commissioners to resist its effects, the importance of America to the balance. Nowhere was participation by exploitation of rivalries more apparent than in c. 1782, when preliminaries of peace were being negotiated by American Commissioners with the British, leveraging the fact of the French alliance in an effort to secure peace and Independence. This is explored later in this Chapter.

### **French Motivation in Supporting Independence**

Whilst America's military weakness left it with no alternative but to seek foreign support, in many ways France was not the obvious choice.<sup>322</sup> There were two reasons for this, firstly, the British American colonists had been important participants in the Seven Years' War that had expelled the French from the North American continent, and hence were not obvious bedfellows, and secondly because of the general American distrust of Catholicism.<sup>323</sup> Despite

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<sup>321</sup> Black (2010) p. 155, explains that French entry into the War "*pushed naval considerations to the forefront*", and therefore concentrated the War, as far as the British were concerned, in Europe. Black therefore provides support for the argument that French entry significantly altered British strategic thinking, a consequence clearly contemplated by American policy makers.

<sup>322</sup> See for example, Drake J. D. *The Nation's Nature. How Continental Presumptions Gave Rise to the United States of America*, (University of Virginia Press: Virginia, 2011). pp.172-173, and; Bowman A. H. *The Struggle for Neutrality. Franco-American Diplomacy During the Federalist Era*. (The University of Tennessee Press: Knoxville, 1974), pp. 4 to 5. See also Black (2004), pp. 105-106, who describes the fear of France and Spain as early as 1775 that the Anglo American dispute could entangle the Bourbon nations, whilst trying to weaken British "*economic and political strength*" to their benefit, because the British might seek a conciliation with their colonies in order to then focus military and naval attention on the European conflict.

<sup>323</sup> For discussions of anti-Catholicism, its origins before the Glorious Revolution and in the colonial and early republican periods see; Stanwood O. *The Empire Reformed. English America in the Age of the Glorious Revolution*. (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 2011), and; Blumenthal H. *France and the United States. Their Diplomatic Relations, 1789 – 1914*. (The University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 1970), and Coupland (1925). For a discussion of the support of Irish Catholicism for the British in putting down the American rebellion, see Calder A. *Revolutionary Empire. The Rise of the English Speaking Empires from the Fifteenth Century to the 1780s*. (Random House: London, 1998). pp.499-500. For discussions of the surprising intervention of the Bourbon nations in the Revolutionary War, see Mapp. P. W. *The Revolutionary War and Europe's Great Powers*, in OHAR, pp.311-326. Mapp refers to the more general point that historians have placed too much emphasis on the diplomatic prowess of the Americans in winning a French alliance and less on the motivations caused by the problems faced by the French and Spanish after the end of the Seven Years War. See also; Scott. H. M. *Religion and Realpolitik: The Due De Choiseul, the Bourbon Family Compact, and the Attack on the Society of Jesus, 1758-1775*, (*The International History Review*, Vol. 25, No. 1, March 2003), pp.37-62., who explains that Catholic support for America is even more surprising given that the Seven Years War was effectively a war of protestant nations (Great Britain and Prussia) against a Catholic concert involving Austria, France and Spain.

these worries, it was John Adams, even before independence had entered the lexicon of the different colonial representatives to the First Continental Congress, who identified three considerations that would be central to American foreign policy. Firstly, that the trade boycott of Britain, the 1774 Continental Association, would lead to a conflict that could only be prosecuted with the assistance of France and Spain. Secondly, that American and French interests would not be in a perfect alignment.<sup>324</sup> Hence, that there was a risk, that if the result of any Anglo American conflict was deadlock, France might conclude that partition of the American union amongst the European powers, with some subject to Catholic monarchical rule, might serve French interests.<sup>325</sup> Thirdly, that France would be motivated, above any consideration of religious differences or past sleights, in its overriding desire to rebalance the European equilibrium and to weaken Britain.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> It was Samuel Adams who, in 1779, had reluctantly recognised that no foreign nation would assist America out of any motive other than in its own selfish interest, and that “*disinterested motives...in support of the common rights of mankind*”, were not what generally drove foreign policy, see; Henderson (1974), pp.210-211. Adams was, determined that America was to be seen as an equal partner in the French treaty, an indication of his understanding of the French national interest which underpinned the French alliance, see Stoll I., *Samuel Adams, A Life*, (Free Press: New York, 2008), p.198.

<sup>325</sup> See Ferling J. *John Adams. A Life*. (Oxford University Press, 1992). The reality of the concern that France might participate in a European strategy aimed at partition of the American union, or a more general carving up of North America and Canada between the European powers, is explained in Tearle D. *Barings Bank, William Bingham and the Rise of the American Nation. A Transatlantic Relationship from the Revolutionary War through the Louisiana Purchase*, (McFarland and Co: North Carolina, 2010) pp.62-67 and is based on Morgan E. S. *Benjamin Franklin*, (New Haven: Connecticut, 2002), and Auger H. *The Secret War of Independence*, (Duell, Sloan, and Pearce: New York, 1955). See also; Ferling J., *Almost A Miracle, The American Victory in the War of Independence*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007), p.71.

<sup>326</sup> Brewer J., *The Sinews of Power, War, Money and the English state, 1688-1783*, (Unwin Hyman: London, 1989), pp. 173-175. See for example, Blumenthal (1970). pp 172 to 173, for an alternative view. Blumenthal explains that France wished to exercise control over America, in order to prevent it from becoming “*too independent*” and strong, and that a consideration of French policy might have been to regain territories lost during the Seven Years’ War. This fear of underlying French motivations was a reason given by loyalists in America for opposing the Franco American alliance, see for example Davidson P. *Propaganda and the American Revolution. 1763 – 1783*, (The University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 1941) pp.317-320, and pp. 377-380. For the point of view that the French objective of obtaining a future alliance partner willing to counterbalance the power of Great Britain but that this strategy largely failed because of America’s resistance to being brought into the equilibrium and also because Britain rapidly recovered after the end of the War, see Dirpalen. A., *The European Polity: Biography of an Idea*, (*The Journal of Politics*, 10:4, 1948), pp.712-733. From the British perspective, the concern was not necessarily with alteration of the balance of power, but also the possibility of a French universal monarchy, Tucker R.W. and Hendrickson D.C., *The Fall of the First British Empire, Origins of the War of American Independence*, (The John Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1982), pp. 30-32. For the point of view that French motivations, within the balance of power framework, had been apparent as early as 1759 when the French Statesman, Due de Choiseul expressed a desire to restrain further British American colonial growth, see; Hatton R. and Anderson M.S., *Studies in Diplomatic History, Essays in Memory of David Bayne Horn*, (Archon Books: New York, 1970), pp.194-195. For a discussion of a French desire to weaken Britain, see; *ibid*, Augur (1955), p. 302., in which the author explains that even during the War, the French and Spanish pursued their own aim of weakening Britain, not that of winning America its independence. See also; See Savelle M. *The American Balance of Power and European Diplomacy, 1773 – 1778* in Morris R. B. *The Era of the American Revolution* (Harper and Row: London, 1939). Savelle sets out a thesis that explains the importance of the British American colonies, throughout the early and middle parts of the eighteenth century, to the European balance of power and indeed that the basis of wars in this period, such as the War of Jenkins Ear, were fought in maintenance and expansion of the European equilibrium. Savelle concludes this essay by supporting the argument that French motivation in the War for Independence was to re-establish the European equilibrium.



The nature of this, the French interest was located in the consequences of the Paris Peace Treaty of 1763 that brought the Seven Years War to an end.<sup>327</sup> Having been weakened at the conclusion of the Seven Years War, the French were determined to reinstate the equilibrium.<sup>328</sup> The peace had left a residual cause of dispute with Great Britain caused for example, by the existence of a British Commissioner in Dunkirk tasked with preventing French reinforcement, and the continued harassment of French fishermen in Newfoundland.<sup>329</sup> Charles Gravier, Comte de Vergennes, Minister of Foreign Affairs was firmly committed to return what was termed “*the alliance system*”, back to its sense of equilibrium.<sup>330</sup> French foreign and domestic affairs at this time were heavily influenced by Vergennes, who exerted greater influence on Louis XVI than did any other statesman of the day, as a member of a body of advisors comprising a council which enabled the King to exercise his power of the body of state.<sup>331</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> See for example Price M. *The Court Nobility and the Origins of the French Revolution*, and Savage G. *Foreign Policy and Political Cultures in Later Eighteenth Century France*, two essays in Scott H. et al (eds.), *Cultures of Power in Europe during the Long Eighteenth Century*. (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2007). However, for an alternative point of view see Hutson J. H. *The Partition Treaty and the Declaration of American Independence*, (*The Journal of American History*, Vol. 58, No. 4, March 1972), pp.877-896. Hutson's theory that the reason that the Americans declared Independence when they did, in July 1776, was to forestall a British French Spanish arrangement to partition the colonies, leads to a conclusion that the American statesmen enticed France into an alliance as opposed to the French being driven by motivations of rebalancing. This was one of the options that was discussed by Adam Smith, author of the *Wealth of Nations*, as being available to British politicians when faced with the rebellion, quoted in; Skinner A. S. *Adam Smith and the American Revolution*, (*Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 2/3, Spring - Summer 1977), pp.75-87.

<sup>328</sup> For a survey of archives that shed light on balance of power thinking in the eighteenth century see; Black (1983), pp. 55-61. For a discussion of alternative French motivations in joining the War, such as a territorial gain, commerce, and revenge, see Corwin E. S. *The French Objective in the American Revolution*, (*The American Historical Review*, Vol. 21, No. 1, October 1915), pp.33-61. For an alternative view, that is that the Americans specifically rejected European balance of power politics, see Argura T. *The American Revolution and the Origin of American Foreign Policy*, (*American Studies International*, Vol. 15, No. 2, Winter 1976), pp.35-42. See also *Letter from Comte de Vergennes to Chevalier de la Luzerne. Versailles. 5<sup>th</sup> February 1780. TEN I. p. 22*. The French Foreign Minister asked his diplomat to make it clear to the Americans that rather than look to conquer new territory they should aim to secure their own territory and to be cured “*of the mania for conquering foreign provinces*”. In this letter, the Minister also makes it clear that the French objectives in supporting America are not to open a market for the luxury “*manufactories*” of France but rather to achieve a “*diminution of the excessive power of England and of procuring...direct commerce .....which furnishes the materials necessary or useful to Europe*”.

<sup>329</sup> Dull (1975), p. 4.

<sup>330</sup> Black (2010). p.155. According to Black “*the French Foreign Minister sought to humble Britain's colonial and maritime position and thus restore France's international influence. The war in North America took second place for the British, below the struggle for France, which itself centred on security of waters.*”. For an alternative point of view, see; Scott H. M. *The Importance of Bourbon Naval Reconstruction to the Strategy of Choiseul after the Seven Years' War*, (*The International History Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, January 1979), pp.17-35, Scott explains that a post Seven Years War naval build up and the desire for “*revenge*” was tempered to a degree by pacifistic tendencies.

<sup>331</sup> Murphy (1982), p. 211. Vergennes had over thirty-five years' experience in international affairs and diplomacy by the time he became French Foreign Minister in 1774. However, having spent so long in France's diplomatic service in foreign courts he was almost totally ignorant of French domestic affairs. It is generally agreed that Vergennes' lack of knowledge and expertise in French

Vergennes' in turn was influenced, in a desire to force a rapprochement with Great Britain based on equality, by the 1772 partition by Austria, Russia and Prussia, of Poland, a long-time ally of France, together with France's 1763 humiliation in North America, including the loss of French Canada.<sup>332</sup> To achieve a rebalancing on the basis of parity, required France to "*take from her [Britain] a share of her strength... her monopoly of American trade markets*" in order to weaken her.<sup>333</sup> In reaching this conclusion Vergennes, in common with many statesmen of the day, was influenced by two ideas of mercantilism. Firstly, that it represented an international zero sum game, hence that depriving a nation of its trade links meant weakening it on the assumption that it could not replace the lost trade. Secondly, that world trade and military strength were inextricably linked and therefore that depriving Britain of her colonies meant weakening her militarily within the European equilibrium, whilst strengthening France because of the consequently more favourable trade links to America.<sup>334</sup>

Therefore, although not a believer that the cost of keeping and maintaining colonies was economically viable especially since treaty making could provide whatever trade benefits were available, Vergennes nevertheless recognised that the weakening of Britain inevitably required attacking its colonial trade.<sup>335</sup> These considerations underpinned a French resolve by July 1775 on some involvement with the American cause. An agent, Achard de Bonvouloir, was therefore sent to America to report on conditions in the British American colonies and to advise Congress of French support.<sup>336</sup> Bonvouloir's report, a proposal for supporting the Americans,

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domestic affairs not to mention his "*professional and class bias*" which "*subordinated even the most serious domestic problems to foreign affairs*" allowed him to ignore the effect on French finances of a war in America and his pre occupation with France within the European setting. For Vergennes' influence on domestic affairs see Dull (1975), p.6.

<sup>332</sup> This analysis is from; Murphy (1982), p. 213. Vergennes regarded the partition of Poland as of particular concern to France since Poland had been "*a long time protégé of France*".

<sup>333</sup> Dull (1975). pp. 7-11.

<sup>334</sup> Dull (1975). p. 38.

<sup>335</sup> Murphy (1982). p. 256. See also See Savelle (1939), who argues that the colonies were important not only as sources of raw materials but also as an integral aspect of the European balance of power.

<sup>336</sup> Dull (1975). p. 30.

led to the writing by Vergennes of what were referred to as *the Considerations* which form the basis for the discussion of the equilibrium issues that follow.<sup>337</sup> Analysis of the Considerations points to the adoption by France of the hard balancing strategies of alliance building and naval rearmament, and the soft balancing of America with the aim of containing it as an emerging threat, by entangling it within a political alliance to forestall its emergence as a post-War hegemonic threat.<sup>338</sup>

### **Hard Balancing in the European Equilibrium: Alliance Building**

Hard balancing by creation of an alliance with America was not without its risks and Vergennes was concerned to ensure that nothing be done to cause an Anglo American rapprochement before full French engagement with the American cause.<sup>339</sup> An accommodation short of independence, would be the worst outcome for France if it came at a time before Britain had incurred significant cost in men and materiel.<sup>340</sup> This is because, far from diminishing Great Britain, it might leave the latter's strength very much intact. Hence, overt assistance to America carried with it certain sensitivities not least because British politicians had already recognised that an America closely aligned to France was not in British interests and attempted from the start to detach America from this alliance.<sup>341</sup> King George III, for example,

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<sup>337</sup> A copy of Vergennes's *Considerations on the Affairs of the English Colonies in America*, dated 12<sup>th</sup> March 1776 may be found at Giunta M. A. (ed.), *Documents of the Emerging Nation. US Foreign Relations. 1775 to 1789*, (National Historical Publications and Records Commission: Washington D.C., 1998), pp.18-24.

<sup>338</sup> Saltzman I. Z. *Securitising Balance of Power Theory: A Polymorphic Reconceptualization*. (Lexington Books: Maryland, 2011). p. xxviii. The author explains "hard balancing is explicit and noticeable grand strategy... soft balancing is ...about the need to forestall ...neutralise...[a] rising or potentially threatening power".

<sup>339</sup> For an alternative point of view see Van Tyne C. H. *Influences which Determined the French Government to Make the Treaty with America, 1778*, (*The American Historical Review*, Vol. 21, No. 3, April 1916), pp. 528-541. Van Tyne explains that France entered the War in 1778 on the side of America because Vergennes decided that war with Great Britain was inevitable and that if France waited beyond 1778, there was a risk of a British American peace which would only embolden Britain in a future conflict with France. Alternatively, see Ross M. *Teaching the Reasons for France's Participation in the American Revolution*, (*The French Review*, Vol. 36, No. 5, April 1963), pp. 491-498, in which the author argues that "while American agents Franklin, Deane, and Lee were striving to convince Louis XVI to come to the aid of their country, they did not overlook the opportunity to stress the motive of revenge". For a discussion of the lengths taken by Vergennes to hide from the British, France's real intentions, see Tearle (2010), pp.56-57.

<sup>340</sup> Giunta (1988), p. 18.

<sup>341</sup> Attempts to reconcile with American citizens continued even after the British Army arrived in the colonies and the war had commenced. Hence, the protection of loyalists and encouragement of what are referred to as "moderates" was an attempt to win "American opinion" generally, see; Fischer D. H., *Washington's Crossing*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2004), p. 78. See also Bourke (2015), p. 449. Bourke explains that the loss of the colonies for the British would represent a loss of economic benefits from trade which would be exploited by other European countries. The implication being that Britain would thereby be weakened.

firmly supported these attempts but, far from desiring a non-aligned America, even after the French alliance became public, he desired American states that were dependent on Britain and, indeed independent of each other.<sup>342</sup> Hence, the King had written to British Lord Chancellor, Edward Thurlow in February 1778 suggesting that the Americans should be detached from France state by state, a divide and rule strategy in response to the balancing approach used by France.<sup>343</sup>

This risk to the French balancing strategy could not be mitigated simply by an immediate entry into the War since it ran the risk of committing to American independence before France was prepared militarily. Indeed, Vergennes worried that Congress was attempting to entice France into giving ever greater aid, before France had sufficiently re-armed, by playing on French fears of an Anglo American compromise.<sup>344</sup> As explained above, before France could overtly support American independence, it had to be sure that the fight had some chance of succeeding, since, premature support for America risked weakening further the French position in the European equilibrium. On the other hand, the opportunity presented to France by the British American conflict should not be lost for want of French support to America.<sup>345</sup> Hence, Congress had to be fortified in its independence aims in the interregnum, until France had sufficiently re-built its navy and was then able to join the War. The *Considerations* therefore proposed a two-part approach. For the first part, France, and its Family Compact ally Spain, should not give away their longer term intentions to the British. Indeed, they should give the impression that “*the intentions of France and Spain are pacific, so that it [Britain] does not fear to embark upon the*

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<sup>342</sup> Black (2010). p. 168. Black explains that the King was determined to continue the War even at the risk of weakening the empire if this meant that the American states would return to the British fold. His wish was for peace to be achieved by negotiating with the individual states thereby maintaining their separation.

<sup>343</sup> Gore-Browne R., *Chancellor Thurlow. The Life and Times of a Great Eighteenth Century Lawyer*. (Hamish Hamilton: London, 1953), p.173.

<sup>344</sup> *Letter from Chevalier de la Luzerne to Comte de Vergennes. Philadelphia 6<sup>th</sup> August 1780*. TEN I. p. 96. The French were aware that some American politicians were trying to encourage the French to provide greater aid and support for America by using the fear that the Americans might otherwise settle a peace with the British.

<sup>345</sup> Giunta (1988), p. 20.

*operations of a brisk and expensive Campaign*".<sup>346</sup> In other words, France wished to encourage a full scale and rapid British mobilisation on the American continent to tie up the British army in a financially costly engagement and thereby to buy time for a French naval build up.<sup>347</sup>

For the second part, American resistance should be fortified by secret French assistance so that their "*courage.....would be sustained*". Vergennes' clearly stated aim was to ensure that the Americans were emboldened in these very early days of the Revolutionary War and did not, for want of confidence in their ability to win against the British, seek conciliation. Such an assessment was based on Vergennes' view that the "*ideas of independence ...are still only germinating indistinctly among them [the Americans]*". It was important for the French that the British be confronted with a resolute American resistance since Britain would then be encouraged to use huge forces on the American continent to subdue the revolt. Hence, the French would only benefit from a weakened Britain, eventually allowing Vergennes to achieve his original objective of a Franco British equilibrium.<sup>348</sup>

It was, however also important for France not to remain ostensibly neutral for too long because of the greater relative weight given by it to one of two possible outcomes of a long war. Whereas on the one hand, a prolonged war might lead to the reduction in the power and resources of both "*victors and the vanquished*" that is America and Britain, and hence the weakness of both nations could only benefit France.<sup>349</sup> On the other hand, a long drawn out War might lead to some sort of conciliation between America and Britain on terms

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<sup>346</sup> Giunta (1988), pp. 22-23.

<sup>347</sup> Roberts A. *Napoleon The Great* (Allen Lane: London, 2014). A similar point is made by Roberts in his description of the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. The author explains that one consideration in Napoleon's sale of this land was to encourage the development of an American military and naval power to rival Britain, hence hoping for the concentration of British forces in a future war against America in the North American continent, and not in Europe.

<sup>348</sup> Giunta (1988), p. 22.

<sup>349</sup> Giunta (1988), p.23.

unfavourable to France.<sup>350</sup> Not only would France therefore have lost the opportunity to achieve equilibrium, it would have failed to demonstrate its willingness to do so by failing to engage Britain on the American continent, in other words, to show resolve. Worse, if they could conquer their former American colonies, the English might use the resources and manpower then available to them, to strengthen their position in Europe. Therefore, Vergennes reasoned that France was obliged to involve herself in the War since “*the English respect only those who can make themselves feared*” and a failure of French involvement might lead the English to believe that the France lacked military or political resolve for fear of the English.<sup>351</sup> In any case, the colonies must not be allowed to fail since this would embolden Great Britain in Europe.

#### **Hard Balancing in the European Equilibrium: Naval Power**

Hence, for France to enter the War, it was critical that it build its naval power in sufficient time to forestall some sort of accommodation, short of independence between Britain and America. Following Louis XVI’s approval of Vergennes’s assessment of the political situation, the latter instructed his secretary, Joseph Mathias Gerard de Rayneval, to prepare a paper, *Reflections*, on how France could assist the colonies.<sup>352</sup> In order to address the above problems, Rayneval set out two approaches to French support for America.<sup>353</sup> Firstly, support would be secret and it would be in the form of barter, mainly American tobacco for French and Spanish arms. The Americans would ship commodities to French ports and in return would carry away arms and ammunition. The French government would not be involved in this trade and a suitable merchant would be identified to carry it out. Similarly, due to the lack of specie in the colonies,

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<sup>350</sup> Harvey R. *A Few Bloody Noses. The Realities and Mythologies of the American Revolution*. (The Overlook Press: New York, 2003). The author speculates that France abandoned its earlier condition that Spain should join it, under the terms of the Family Compact, before France supported American independence because it feared an American British rapprochement.

<sup>351</sup> Giunta (1988), p.23.

<sup>352</sup> A copy of Rayneval’s, *Reflections on the Situation in America*, may be found at Giunta (1998), pp. 24-29.

<sup>353</sup> Giunta (1988), p. 25.

France would also supply other commodities demanded by the Americans in exchange for French goods. This ultimately involved using a sham trading company called Rodriguez Hortalez et Cie.<sup>354</sup>

There would then be an, essentially optimum stage at which France could openly intercede on the side of the Americans. Rayneval made it quite clear that this point of intervention would come at such time as the Americans could demonstrate not resolve but actual success in the War. When this might happen was not spelled out but, since France did not want to *“compromise herself either with the insurgents or with the court of London”*, it would clearly be when a decisive blow had been struck by America. This point might, it was hoped come quite early on in the conflict, because *“if the court [of the King in London] does not have success from the very beginning....one would have to conclude that Great Britain does not have sufficient means to accomplish this task”*, and hence might reach a settlement with America.<sup>355</sup>

The optimum point, accepted by some historians, is that what led to French overt involvement in the War was either Washington’s resounding victory at Saratoga, described above, or that this simply coincided with a sufficiently strong French naval build up. The historian Jonathan Dull, who has written extensively on this period, believes that victory at Saratoga might have convinced the French only that the Americans could destroy armies and win victories in battle against large British field deployments but did not have the resources to win against the main British army. Therefore, according to Dull, what might also have encouraged French support

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<sup>354</sup> See; Bayley R.A., *The National Loans of the United States, July 4<sup>th</sup> 1776 to June 30<sup>th</sup> 1880*, (Government Printing Office: Washington D.C., 1881), pp.5-6. Arms and materiel supplied by France would be paid for with American produce. The sham company in this publication is actually referred to as an *“imaginary”* one, indicating in other words, that the contract was with the French government not with a company, sham or otherwise.

<sup>355</sup> Giunta (1988), p.27.

was the visit from the American Commissioners, who threatened a conciliation with the British if the French did not aid America by way of a treaty.<sup>356</sup>

As far as naval strength was concerned, Vergennes recognised that French naval parity would provide only a transitory advantage over British naval strength since the latter were able to produce ships in volumes far greater than the French could manage. Hence it was necessary for the French, that Spain also enter the War on the side of the Americans since, even if the Spanish navy was not fully engaged, its very presence would be sufficient to decide a conflict between France and England.<sup>357</sup> Ultimately, France gave formal notice to Great Britain of its intentions in March 1778 that not only had the French entered into a treaty with America but also that it had recognised the independence of the United States.<sup>358</sup> For France, however, alliance building and naval build up did not comprise the full gamut of balancing strategies required in engaging the British. It was not simply a question of supporting America, but just as importantly, of containing America as an anticipated threat to French interests, and prospectively to the European balance.

### **Soft Balancing in the European Equilibrium: France**

For the French, an independent republican nation on the North American continent was not in the long term French interest. Albeit outside Europe, it would be expansionist, growing in economic and military strength, a competitor for international trade and continental land, and with dangerous republican ideas.<sup>359</sup> A victorious America would look to conquer foreign trade

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<sup>356</sup> Dull (1975). pp.88-94.

<sup>357</sup> Dull (1975). pp.98-100.

<sup>358</sup> Murphy (1982). p. 258.

<sup>359</sup> For the British, American economic expansion, all other things being equal, would not be an altogether bad thing since a growing American economy would provide demand for British manufactured goods, see; Lefer D., *The Founding Conservatives, How a Group of Unsung American Heroes Saved the American Revolution*, (Sentinel: New York, 2013), p. 258. The Revolution is described by other historians as being of monumental consequence of all of Europe, awakening as it did "political consciousness throughout ...Europe", see; Palmer R. R., *The Age of the Democratic Revolution, A Political History of Europe and America, 1760-1800*, (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2014), p. 139.



markets, particularly seeking outlets for its commodities in the Sugar Islands, and in Spanish colonies on the American continent.<sup>360</sup> Trade ambitions would, however be dwarfed by the American hunger for land, and Rayneval recognised that a victory for the American states would come with a risk for all European powers with colonies in not only north but in the south North American continent which no doubt would become targets for the territorial expansionist tendencies of a newly independent America. Hence, although there would be benefits to France of American independence, it was just as important to have monopolistic access to American trade that would bind the two nations by making them interdependent based on their trading links.<sup>361</sup> Therefore, a binding strategy that kept America close to France through alliance commitments and trade would forestall American predominance.

According to Rayneval's thinking, a binding strategy that effectively constrained America within French treaty commitments, rested on two assumptions. The major assumption was that the early days after independence were the optimum point at which to bind American commerce. This was because a victorious America would initially be too impoverished by war to be in any state to attack the trade and colonies of any other European power. Secondly, the optimistic assumption that Republican forms of government "*rarely have the spirit of conquest*" and chiefly the American colonies would not have the desire to do so since they "*know the pleasures and advantages of commerce .....and industry*".<sup>362</sup> Therefore, that Americans were motivated only by a desire to expand trade.

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<sup>360</sup> Giunta (1988), p.25.

<sup>361</sup> The Marquis de Lafayette was instrumental in opening French markets to American trade not for political reasons but for those associated with his interest in seeing both nations benefit from trade, see Auricchio L., *The Marquis Lafayette Reconsidered*, (Vintage Books, New York, 2014), pp.94-96. See also, Miller, D., *La Fayette, His Extraordinary Life and Legacy*, (iUniverse: Indiana, 2015), p.118 in which the authors points to La Fayette's support for low French import tariffs as indicative of his desire to promote the American trade and French markets for American goods over and above those of Britain. La Fayette was an advocate of free trade and received an attentive audience in Vergennes, who wished to capture the American trade as the basis for restoring French dominance over Britain, see Unger H. G., *La Fayette*, (John Wiley, New York, 2002), pp. 180-181. Aside from trading links, France would also later expect America to be aligned with it in a future Franco British war; Gutzman K. R., *James Madison and the Making of America*, (St Martin's Griffin: New York, 2012), p. 271.

<sup>362</sup> Giunta (1988), p.25.

However, this binding strategy was ultimately doomed to have a limited effect, because Rayneval had failed, at this juncture in early 1776, to appreciate that American Republicanism, whilst rejecting European forms of imperialism, nevertheless embraced continental territorial expansion as its natural right and a feature of its commitment to spreading liberty and freedom.<sup>363</sup> Whether this right to westward expansion is to be found in the original charters of the so called landed states, those that believed that their western boundaries ended at the Pacific, or in the universalism of the Revolution discussed in Chapter One, the French would not, through a binding strategy be able to restrain American ambitions.

Rayneval therefore, failed to place sufficient weight on what might be in the longer term American interest. Additionally, France had no choice, it had to support the Revolution as a bulwark to English power. It is for these reasons that the French considered but then disregarded the possibility of the failure of soft balancing, and therefore the longer term threat to French and Spanish interests in supporting America. French involvement in the War was hence essentially a calculation involving the relative weights to be attributed to the benefits of balancing against Britain as against the consequences to the balance of a strong independent America.

Either way, that America was a participant in the European equilibrium is inferred from a consideration of the three incentives that encouraged France to enter the War on the side of America, all connected with the equilibrium. Firstly, the War would come at much greater cost to Britain than to France because France could count on local [American] support whereas British soldiers were clearly having to manage a long supply line in a hostile country. This

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<sup>363</sup> The right to westward expansion is referred to as the Turner Thesis after the historian Jackson Turner Maine who identified and explored the idea. Relevant discussion is in Chapter One.

would only lead to an increase in the British debt burden, and would make it incapable of being threatening “*particularly to those who are in any degree maritime, as they are most exposed to British encroachment and rapacity*”. Secondly, there were the benefits of trade with America the benefits of which they continually held to prospective allies. However, by all accounts the only nation to benefit significantly therefrom was Britain as trade resumed after the end of the War. Thirdly, as far as America as a reliable ally was concerned, France might one day need American support because of the “*changes to which human affairs are subjected*” and that America would be only too willing to provide that assistance.<sup>364</sup>

However, by 1793, within a decade of Independence, attempts would be made by then President Washington to disengage from the Treaty as it threatened to involve America in an Anglo French war. This provides a vivid illustration of the trade-offs that were being made between the pragmatism of short term interests, and those long run, ostensibly ideologically founded interests. This trade off was possible in foreign policy terms because, from the outset Congress only sought to take advantage of the French belief in its military and naval inferiority to the British and offered its trade as compensation for French support. Hence, to make sense of Congress’ decision, the alliance should be viewed as a deliberate choice to involve America in European balance of power politics for the pragmatic reason that military aid was needed to achieve independence. Although some historians explain that both countries shared the common objective of “*diminishing the power of Great Britain*”, this was not the ultimate aim of America.<sup>365</sup> Congress wished only to take advantage of European superpower rivalries to

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<sup>364</sup> Letter to M. de la Luzerne. Office of Finance. November 3<sup>rd</sup> 1781. DCAR, Volume XII, Correspondence of Robert Morris. p. 3. Although written some three years later, this letter that Robert Morris, commonly referred to as the financier of the American Revolution, sent in 1781 to Anne-César, Chevalier de la Luzerne the French minister to America, articulated what the clear benefits were to France in supporting America. Morris explains that it is clear to the Americans that the objects of French support of America is “*of the last consequence to the commerce of his Majesty’s [King Louis XVI] dominions*” but that the monies advanced to America will enable France to “*derive benefits from a commercial connexion with this country [America], and I hope their Sovereign will always find here a warm friend and a faithful ally, should any of those changes, to which human affairs are subjected, induce him to ask that aid, which he now bestows*”.

<sup>365</sup> Stinchcombe (1969), pp.1-12.

achieve the pan-state interest described in Chapter Two. Congress was not concerned with re-balancing the equilibrium that had existed before the Seven Years War and that had left France subservient to Britain.

Once it had achieved its goal of independence, America wished for trade relationships to be resumed with British merchants and expanded to new trading partners around the world.<sup>366</sup> An alliance with France that went beyond this objective would not be in the American interest given the inequality of the two nations. It was John Adams, possibly for reasons connected with his intense Francophobia, who explained that a reliance on the French Treaty would mean that America would never be secure other than in the terms of it.<sup>367</sup> Inherent in Adams' warning was a fear that an America that was over reliant on a European power, could be forced to compromise the very thing that made it different, its republicanism.

It is submitted that Americans may have felt vulnerable in being too closely aligned to the French for at least three reasons that go to the heart of the differences between monarchies and republics. Firstly, there was the principle, discussed amongst Americans at various times that monarchies when compared to republics, did not act at all times in a national interest *per se*. Therefore, America could be dragged into conflicts which arose because of the whim of a French sovereign and not solely on the cold calculation of national interest. This was a major theme of some of the Federalist Papers published a decade later, and is described in Chapter Four. Secondly, it was not in the interests of the French monarchy to promote republicanism since ideas of liberty and freedom, were incompatible with absolutism and indeed posed a threat to monarchies, encouraging as they did, their citizens to question the established

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<sup>366</sup> For example; De Madariaga I., *Britain, Russia, and the Armed Neutrality of 1780, Sir James Harris's Mission to St Petersburg during the American Revolution*, (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1962), p. 110., the author explains that Catherine the Great of Russia in fact welcomed an independent America free of British restrictions on trade.

<sup>367</sup> *Letter from John Adams to Benjamin Franklin. Amsterdam. August 17<sup>th</sup> 1780.* TEN I. p. 101.

order.<sup>368</sup> Finally, and of more immediate concern, the two nations would be looking for different outcomes as peace was being negotiated. Adams, was profoundly aware of the adverse political consequences of the Treaty. He worried that the French could, in theory at least, dictate future terms of peace with Great Britain including the way in which American Tories or loyalists, some of whom had actually fought on the side of the British, were to be compensated.<sup>369</sup> Worse, because of its commitments under the Family Compact, France would be unlikely to settle a peace with the British until its ally Spain had achieved its war aims. French and Spanish interests were therefore clearly not aligned with those of America.

### **Soft Balancing in the European Equilibrium: Spain**

Spain had entered the War on the side of France because it was obliged to do so under its commitments under the 1761 Family Compact with France. However, Spain was not a natural ally of America and nursed two war aims of its own. Firstly, to regain territory, including Gibraltar, from Britain, and secondly to protect its North American colonies from British influence.<sup>370</sup> Therefore, Spain had an interest in the Revolutionary War but not in American Independence since the expanding states constituted a threat to its North American colonial

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<sup>368</sup> The difference between a constitutional monarchy, such as Britain, and an absolutist one, such as France, is given by Harvey R., *A Few Bloody Noses, The Realities and Mythologies of the American Revolution*, (Overlook Press: New York, 2003), pp. 420-421, as the reason that George III was unable to fight on at the end of the Revolutionary War, because Parliament and “the electorate” would not permit him to do so.

<sup>369</sup> *Letter from John Adams to Robert R. Livingston*. 18<sup>th</sup> November 1782. pp. 677 to 678. TEN I. The people themselves were divided after the War had ended, as to the way in which loyalists should be treated, that is, as enemies to be excluded from society by deportation, or to be reinstated within society given their wealth and business acumen. A key consideration being the difficulty in identifying a true loyalist, as opposed to say, simply those who only sympathised with the American cause but did not support it. See also; Main J. T., *Political Parties Before the Constitution*, (W. W. Norton and Company: New York, 1974), pp. 44-78, and; McCullough D., *John Adams*, (Simon Schuster: New York, 2001), p. 281.

<sup>370</sup> Aiton A.S. *Spanish Colonial Reorganization under the Family Compact*, (*The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 12, No. 3, August 1932), pp. 269-280. The author states that the Spanish and French had resolved as early as 1763 i.e. after the Peace of Paris that brought the Seven Years War to an end, that they must re-build their respective militaries for an inevitable future war with Great Britain. See also Gould e. H. *Entangled Histories, Entangled Worlds: The English-Speaking Atlantic as a Spanish Periphery*, (*The American Historical Review*, Vol. 112, No. 3, June 2007), pp. 764-786, for an analysis of the relative balance of power between Spain and Great Britain in their respective colonial systems on the North American continent. See Beerman E. *The Last Battle of the American Revolution: Yorktown. No, the Bahamas!*. (*The Spanish-American Expedition to Nassau in 1782*), (*The Americas*, Vol. 45, No. 1, July 1988), pp.79-95) for a discussion of the motivations of the Spanish King, who whilst reluctant to wage war against Britain later reconciled himself to his commitments under the Family Compact. See also; Kuethe A. F. and Andrien K. F., *The Spanish Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century, War and the Bourbon Reforms 1713-1796*, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2014), p. 288, in which the authors explain that Comte de Floridablanca, Chief Spanish Minister at the time, was motivated by the desire to promote Spanish interests at the expense of Britain.

system.<sup>371</sup> A fear of American expansion would continue long after the end of the War, in 1786 Spain continued to insist on exclusive rights to the Mississippi and considered forcing an American concession by threatening to withdraw support for the protection of American Mediterranean trade against the Barbary Powers, as well as demanding immediate repayment of Revolutionary War loans.<sup>372</sup>

Spanish concerns with American Independence were located in the demands faced by Congress from frontiersmen who continued to colonise the western territories, their threats to cede from the union, and to form what could be threatening independent states on the Spanish colonial border. For example, the colony of Kentucky, threatened to leave Virginia if Congress was not able to ensure safe navigation of the Mississippi and guarantee the River as a boundary to the United States.<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> For an alternative point of view see, James J. A. *Spanish Influence in the West During the American Revolution*, (*The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 4, No. 2, September 1917), pp. 193-208, the author quotes General Charles Lee of the Virginia Committee of Safety in a letter to the Governor of Louisiana, in which he explained that Spain would be better off with America independent because then Britain would be weakened in its ability to wage war on the Spanish colonies. For other historians, Spain's war aims in joining the Revolutionary War was to end the illicit trade on the banks of the Mississippi which involved British merchants and therefore to have the River freely available to Spanish colonists, see; Arthur P.W. (et al), *The Spanish –American Frontier. 1783 to 1795. The Westward Movement and the Spanish Retreat in the Mississippi Valley* (University of Nebraska Press: Nebraska, 1969), pp. 3-4, and, p.7.

<sup>372</sup> *Don Diego de Gardoqui to John Jay. 25<sup>th</sup> May 1786*. TEN III, pp. 181 to 183. The problem involved the Barbary pirate attacks on American shipping which had afflicted all European powers, requiring them to pay tribute to secure safe passage in the Mediterranean. The Barbary Pirates represented the North African Mediterranean states Tunisia, Algeria and Tripoli, and continued to cause problems until well into the early nineteenth century. The Barbary issue led high insurance premiums, capture and enslavement of American sailors, and the demand for tribute to ensure safe passage, see; *Congressional Resolution Regarding Funding of Barbary Negotiations. 14<sup>th</sup> February 1785*. TEN II, p. 553. In directions to its Ministers to form treaties with the Barbary powers, Congress appropriated \$80,000 from a recent Dutch loan for use as tribute. By February 1786, Congress was considering where it might raise a further pounds sterling hundred and twenty thousand in order to effectively treat with all the Barbary powers. Failure to conclude treaties would lead to a greater cost in fighting a war, losing commerce, and paying higher insurance premiums, see; *John Adams to John Jay. 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1786*, TEN III. pp.104-106. The price to be paid for protecting American shipping was in raising foreign loans with which to pay tributes, and in political alliances, see; *Letter from John Lamb to Thomas Jefferson. 20<sup>th</sup> May 1786*. TEN III, pp. 171-174. The cost of a ransom for 21 sailors, including three captains, and two passengers, was put at just under sixty thousand Spanish milled dollars. What prevented the formation of a European alliance against the Barbary States was the prospect of huge profits for those neutral European nations that stayed out of any conflict with the Barbary States, and absorbed the cost of tribute as a necessary price for conducting trade, leaving others to bear the brunt of naval disputes, see; *Letter from Richard O'Brien, Zaccheus Coffin and Isaac Stephens to Thomas Jefferson. 8<sup>th</sup> June 1786*. TEN III. pp.192-199. Americans suspected that Great Britain had hardened the Dey of Algiers to expect a tribute of fifty thousand dollars as opposed to the three thousand three hundred offered by John Adams.

<sup>373</sup> Stagg (2009). p. 28.

It was for these reasons that, throughout the War as the Americans for reasons of military need, sought a treaty alliance, Spain responded by using all means at its disposal to contain what it deemed was the pernicious influence of republicanism and a fear that it would lead inevitably to westward expansion.<sup>374</sup> Saltzman explains this *neutralising* of an emerging power as a balancing strategy founded it is submitted, in the case of Spain, in its interest in protecting a colonial system that was valuable to its standing in the European equilibrium.<sup>375</sup>

It is for this reason that, in response to American diplomatic initiatives for a Spanish alliance, Spain demanded the exclusive right to navigation of the Mississippi River, that is, to the exclusion of American merchants and western settlers, who relied on it for trade.<sup>376</sup> Such a concession would assure the demarcation of Spanish territories at the River, and hence assure their protection.<sup>377</sup> Fears of encroachment on the Spanish colonies were well founded in the continued expansion west of the thirteen former colonies.<sup>378</sup> A situation exacerbated by the thinly settled Spanish borders, and the creation of Bourbon County by Georgia, which aimed at settling a border dispute with the Indians which almost led to conflict with Spain.<sup>379</sup>

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<sup>374</sup> See for example, Stagg (2009); Morgan E.S. *The Birth of the Republic, 1763 to 1789* (4<sup>th</sup> edition), (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 2013); Jones M.A. *The Limits of Liberty, American History 1607 to 1992* (Second Edition), (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007); Drake (2011); Griffin P., *America's Revolution*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford,, 2013); and Blumenthal (1970). For a discussion of the inevitability of American expansion west even as early as the start of the Seven Years War in 1756, see Hart W. B. *The Unsettled Periphery: The Backcountry on the Eve of the American Revolution*, in OHAR pp. 30 to 46.

<sup>375</sup> Saltzman (2011). p. xxviii. For an alternative point of view, i.e. that the Spanish did not conceive of the threat of an independent America to their colonial system even as late as 1786, see McDonald F., *E Pluribus Unum. The Formation of the American Republic, 1776 – 1790*, (Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston, 1965), pp.81-82. The author explains that the Spanish, more generally for want of analytical rigour in their considerations, failed to perceive of the alternative outcomes of a successful Revolution.

<sup>376</sup> *Instructions to John Jay Continental Congress. Boundaries and Free Navigation of the Mississippi. 17<sup>th</sup> October 1780*, Hunt (1900), p. 82. Jay was to “insist on the navigation of the Mississippi for the Citizens of the United States in common with the subjects of his Catholic Majesty.” Hence, an exclusive right to navigation was not to be conceded.

<sup>377</sup> Murphy (1982), pp.261-264. See also; *Letter from Chevalier de la Luzerne to Comte de Vergennes. Philadelphia 13<sup>th</sup> March 1780*. TEN I. p. 43. This letter explains the River issue in some detail and the disappointment of Congress following capture of the lands that the Americans had sought to sell to land speculators. The Mississippi question continued to plague American Spanish relations throughout the Revolutionary War and was not ultimately settled until Thomas Jefferson negotiated the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.

<sup>378</sup> *Letter from Francois Barbe de Marbois to Comte de Vergennes. 17<sup>th</sup> November 1784*. TEN II, pp. 500-502. The end of 1784 was witnessing an expansion into the Kentucky region which might not only lead to a penetration into Spanish colonies but ultimately also to a demand for unrestricted access to the Mississippi River itself to facilitate American trade

<sup>379</sup> Stagg (2009). pp. 30 to 31.

Congressional willingness to surrender rights to the free navigation of the River despite there being at least three strong grounds upon which the states could claim rights to it, demonstrates its desperation for a Spanish alliance in the short term quest for independence, even at the expense of the longer term consequences for westward continental expansion.<sup>380</sup> The first ground was to be found in the terms of the 1763 Peace Treaty.<sup>381</sup> The French had ceded the Eastern bank of the River to Great Britain in Article Seven of the 1763 Treaty.<sup>382</sup> The Americans adopted the point of view that all the land that was held by the British after the successful conclusion of the Revolutionary War, including that which had been obtained by virtue of the 1763 Treaty, would naturally devolve to America.<sup>383</sup> It was only natural in the optimistic view at this time that independence was inevitable, that navigation rights had already vested in America.

If this proposition was difficult to sustain in the absence of actual victory in the Revolutionary War, the alternative view that seventeenth century colonial charters defined the borders of the thirteen states at least as far as the Western bank of the Mississippi could be relied on instead. In fact, some American statesmen took the view that they had been rather constrained, in the interpretation they placed on their charter rights. Strictly read, it was the

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<sup>380</sup> *Letter from Chevalier de la Luzerne to Comte de Vergennes. Philadelphia 11<sup>th</sup> June 1780.* TEN I. p. 75. In this letter the French also demonstrate their cognisance of the difficulty that an American government will have in governing “*too far flung possessions*”. The French perceived that whilst there was a difference between the states as to whether or not they would support Spanish rights to lands on the east Bank of the Mississippi based on either their geographical distance, i.e. New Jersey, Delaware and Pennsylvania or their stated disinterest as in the case of Maryland, the French believed that sectional interests and disinterestedness would give way to political expediency as the northern states supported the claims to the Mississippi of the southern states in return for, for example, New York’s claim over lands in Canada.

<sup>381</sup> Hunt (1900). p. 82. Congressional instructions to John Jay of 17<sup>th</sup> October 1780 explain that he is to rely on the rights vested by virtue of the 1763 Treaty on the grounds that those territories in any case “*accrued to him [King George III] from the enterprises, the risks, the sacrifices, the expence [sic] in blood and treasure of the present inhabitants and their progenitors*”. Further that “*it is sufficient that by the definitive treaty of Paris 1763 Art. 7 all the territory now claimed by the United States was expressly and irrevocably ceded to the King of G. Britain—and that the United States are in consequence of revolution in their Government entitled to the benefits of that cession*”.

<sup>382</sup> The Paris Peace Treaty 1763 states in Article VII that “*the Most Christian King cedes in full right, and guaranties to his Britannick [sic] Majesty the river and port of the Mobile, and everything which he possesses, or ought to possess, on the left side of the river Mississippi*”. See [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/paris763.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/paris763.asp) (accessed 15th June 2014).

<sup>383</sup> *Francois Barbe de Marbois to Comte de Vergennes. 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1785.* TEN II, pp 560-562. The Spanish suspected that the British had deliberately conceded the Mississippi territory to the Americans, knowing that it did not have the right to do so, in order to create “*a real cause of jealousy and of quarrel*”.



belief of certain delegates to the Continental Congress that the real western boundary of the United States lie at the Pacific Ocean “*through regions till unknown*”.<sup>384</sup> Finally, there was the declaratory right inherent in the 1776 Model Treaty that placed the union as the successor state to Great Britain and consequently the heir to all of its possessions in North America, *viz*, East and West Florida, Canada as well as all the islands near to the North American continent.<sup>385</sup> However, ultimately the states might have little response if Spain were to take by force lands to the Eastern bank of the River, and hence, under the ancient rule of *uti possedetis*, become the possessor by virtue of occupation at the end of hostilities.<sup>386</sup>

In justifying American rights to the Mississippi River, Congress in its letter to its minister to Spain John Jay, made four important points that explain why Spanish diplomats had good cause to be concerned that Americans had expansionist tendencies. Firstly, Congress was concerned to ensure that the westward boundary of the United States be determined in a clear and unequivocal a way as possible to avoid future disputes, hence its insistence that the river was “*a more natural, more distinguishable and more precise boundary*”. Secondly the fertile land on the banks of the river could not be ceded to the Spanish since this would only encourage Spanish settlement and thus an “*interruption of that harmony which it is so much to the interest and wish of both*”. Hence Congress wished to contain Spanish colonial expansion. Thirdly, given the charter rights of states, Congress, by giving up these rights would excite “*discussions [with the states and]..... embarrass the public councils of the United States and give advantage to the common enemy*. In other words, although Congress was making a *prima facie* case for stability within its state system, it also did not wish to prevent frontier settlements which were already well underway at this time. This was apparent from the fourth

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<sup>384</sup> *Letter of Chevalier de la Luzerne to Comte de Vergennes. 11<sup>th</sup> February 1780. TEN I, pp. 27-33.*

<sup>385</sup> Stagg (2009), pp.14-15.

<sup>386</sup> *Letter of Chevalier de la Luzerne to Comte de Vergennes. 11<sup>th</sup> June 1780. TEN I, pp. 74-78.*

consideration, viz that the territories were occupied by Americans who could not be “*subjected to a foreign jurisdiction without manifest violation of the common rights of mankind*”. Such a violation of the rights of frontiersmen would pose a threat of rebellion to the existing American states.<sup>387</sup>

Notwithstanding the American belief in its rights to the River, John Jay’s secretary William Carmichael, was instructed to present himself in Madrid to the Spanish Minister Don Jose de Galvez to seek a Spanish alliance and war loans in exchange for exclusivity of navigation.<sup>388</sup> Carmichael was to make much of the French alliance to encourage the belief in the Minister of an American victory, but not so much as to give the impression that Americans were guided by the French because this might cause de Galvez to conclude that Spain could indirectly exert influence. Jay, in an effort to demonstrate an American resolve and to forestall a fear of an early Anglo American rapprochement, instructed his secretary to mention the “*cruelties of the enemy*”, to demonstrate a lack of any emotional attachment to Britain.<sup>389</sup>

However, the Spanish Minister was not to be so easily convinced and, in an illustration of Spanish unwillingness to encourage independence, demanded that the Spanish King “*should be exactly informed of the civil and military state of the American Provinces*” before Spain should contemplate recognition of America and indeed before it should enter into an alliance. This should include not only details of American military dispositions but also of the political

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<sup>387</sup> Hunt (1900). pp. 85-90.

<sup>388</sup> In the belief of American rights, American negotiations with the Spanish during the years 1775 to 1782 offered to cede rights over land on both banks of the River as well as exclusive rights of access over it. Anne-Cesar Luzerne, French Minister to America, expressed what was probably the view of many European diplomats, that the Americans had an arrogant and unrealistic view of their political and military situation even at the height of the Revolutionary War. He described it “*a strange delusion to think that the thirteen States, which are unable to drive the enemy from their own territory, would be capable of making conquests from him*”. The Americans were, however, taking a realistic view of their situation and, in common with any military and economically weak power, trying to make the best of the hand dealt to them by offering territorial concessions in exchange for a military alliance, see; *Letter of Chevalier de la Luzerne to Comte de Vergennes. 18<sup>th</sup> March 1780.* TEN I, pp. 49 to 52. However, also see; *Letter from James Madison to Edmund Pendleton. 5<sup>th</sup> December 1780*Hunt (1900), p.107. Congress was resigned early on that it would not receive cash from Spain on account of its “*finances & credit being scarcely adequate to her own necessities*”.

<sup>389</sup> *John Jay’s instructions to William Carmichael. Cadis 27<sup>th</sup> January 1780.* TEN I. p. 17.

climate in each of the states, in particular public opinion and whether “*there is any powerful party in favor [sic] of England*”.<sup>390</sup> Spanish equivocation demonstrated its unwillingness to encourage independence for fear of permitting a similar outcome in its colonies, cloaked within a desire not to recognise an independent America before it had won actual independence.<sup>391</sup>

A Spanish treaty would ultimately prove elusive, although financial aid would not and would continue until 1780 as negotiations over navigation rights continued.<sup>392</sup> However, by 1782 as peace and independence came into sharper focus, and the preliminaries of peace were being worked out by American Peace Commissioners, Congress instructed its minister, John Jay, not to progress further negotiations on terms that involved any surrender of navigation rights.<sup>393</sup> Therefore, whilst American offers to cede rights over the River had been predicated on condition of a Spanish alliance, as the benefit of such an alliance fell away, the offer was withdrawn.<sup>394</sup>

In many ways therefore, a Spanish refusal to treat with America represents the success of soft balancing in the sense that, as far as the Spanish North American colonial system was concerned, a refusal to negotiate over the River, protected the system from American expansion. The above analysis also underlines the pragmatic approach of American statesmen of the period. Whereas it was not in the long term interest of the union for there to be a

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<sup>390</sup> *Conde de Floridablanca's Questions for John Jay. Pardo. 9<sup>th</sup> March 1780.* TEN I. p. 41.

<sup>391</sup> *Letter from Don Juan de Miralles to Don Jose de Galvez. Philadelphia 1<sup>st</sup> February 1780.* TEN I. p. 19. The Spanish diplomat responsible for the Spanish Indies also reported that the Americans had offered to capture San Augustin de la Florida on behalf of the Spanish and hand it to them.

<sup>392</sup> *Notes of John Jay's Conference with James Gardoqui and Don Bernardo del Camp. 3<sup>rd</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> September 1780.* TEN I, pp.108-113. See also; (i) *Letter from Don Juan de Miralles to Don Jose de Galvez. Philadelphia. 24<sup>th</sup> January 1780.* TEN I. p. 13., and (ii) *Notes of John Jay's Conference with James Gardoqui and Don Bernardo del Campo. September 3<sup>rd</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> 1780.* TEN I. p. 109.

<sup>393</sup> *Congressional Resolution. 7<sup>th</sup> August 1782.* TEN I, p. 504.. This instruction was confirmed by Congress on 3rd June 1784, see; *Congressional Resolution and Order. 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1784.* TEN II, p. 384

<sup>394</sup> *Congressional Resolution Approving John Jay's Conduct in Spain. 30<sup>th</sup> April 1782.* TEN I, pp.366-367.

surrender of navigation rights over the River, short term expediency demanded its compromise in favour of what was immediately important to the union, its survival.

### **America as a Balance Participant in the Second Period**

Survival of the union would be ensured in the second period by virtue of a judicious exploitation of Franco-British rivalries. As the preliminaries of a peace were being worked out, the 1778 Treaty was being used as a lever to secure concessions from Britain. Hence, whilst the 1778 Treaty had provided that America could not seek a peace separate from France, a provision strongly supported by Congress, American Commissioners negotiated peace preliminaries, one year before the Paris Peace Treaty of 1783 that brought the War to an end, independently of the French with the threat of an ever closer union with France.<sup>395</sup>

American Commissioners tried to rationalise this tactic of exploiting rivalries through separate negotiation despite American commitments under the 1778 Treaty.<sup>396</sup> For example, Benjamin Franklin, Ambassador to France (1778 to 1785), suggested the approach to be the most efficient way in which to establish a general peace since issues that might otherwise be entwined could be kept separate.<sup>397</sup> One such unintended consequence of an alliance with France was that America might never achieve its independence until Britain had handed back Gibraltar to Spain. Americans were keenly aware that France's relationship with Spain under the Family Compact, would always influence the former to respect and support Spain's demands for the borders of its North American continental possessions to be delimited at the

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<sup>395</sup> *Letter from Comte de Vergennes to Chevalier de la Luzerne*. 9<sup>th</sup> March 1781. TEN I, pp. 152 to 155. Some early signs of the French concern that the Americans would negotiate separately or in a way that was contrary to French interests can be found in this letter in which the French Minister expresses his concerns about John Adams' rigidity, arrogance and obstinacy.

<sup>396</sup> John Jay and John Adams were particularly exercised by a suspicion that the French would be unreliable, self-interested and capricious in negotiations that were directed and guided by French negotiators, hence they expected Vergennes not to complain lest he confirm their suspicions, quoted in; Morgan E. S. *Benjamin Franklin*, (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2002), p. 289.

<sup>397</sup> *Letter from Richard Oswald to Lord Shelburne*. 9<sup>th</sup> June 1782. TEN I. p. 427. However, the French, anxious to control proceedings are said to have "bribed" members of Congress to direct American Commissioners to submit themselves to French guidance in the negotiations, see; Hallahan W. H., *The Day the Revolution Ended, 19<sup>th</sup> October 1781*, (John Wiley and Sons: New York, 2004), pp.259-260.

east bank of the Mississippi River.<sup>398</sup> It was for this reason that, for example, Franklin expressed a desire to separate America from European superpower concerns.

What are known as the Rayneval Shelburne talks that took place in 1782, provide further evidence of the conflicts in the interests of the French and American demands in peace negotiations. Rayneval in talks with First Lord of the Treasury, Lord Shelburne, made clear that the French not only supported Spanish claims to the boundary but also opposed American claims to fish off the Grand Bank.<sup>399</sup>

Despite Franklyn's desire to separate America from European concerns, American Commissioners in the negotiations attempted to re-build relations with Britain within a framework that did not sever Franco-American ties, since this might deprive America of its bargaining strength. If the Commissioners were to be successful, they must first overcome, what this thesis refers to as the *obstacle of credibility*, that threatened future national prestige.

Success in overcoming the obstacle of credibility required the American Commissioners to balance American interests, against the risk of appearing to the world as an unreliable ally by virtue of violating the strict terms of the French treaty. Vergennes, recognised the American predicament and expressed the hope that this one truism would convince Congress not to seek to end the War without recourse to the French. In a letter to Luzerne in early 1782, Vergennes explained that the French should have nothing to fear because if the Americans made a separate peace with Great Britain, they would be "*branded a perfidious nation from their debut in the political world, and they would sooner or later suffer the penalty*".<sup>400</sup>

Vergennes therefore reasoned that since the Americans had entered into the political alliance,

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<sup>398</sup> Letter from Charles Thomson's Notes of Debates. 8<sup>th</sup> August 1782. TEN I. pp. 512 to 519.

<sup>399</sup> The Rayneval-Shelburne Talks, TEN I. pp. 554 to 556.

<sup>400</sup> Letter of Comte de Vergennes to Chevalier de la Luzerne. 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1782. TEN I., pp. 317-319.

they would have little choice but to adhere as strictly as possible to the terms and spirit of it.<sup>401</sup>

Failure to do so would have left America without the credibility it needed as it inevitably sought post-War treaties, and importantly would leave the union vulnerable, in the event of post-War British armed conflict without the prospect of a strong foreign ally. This is why successive British parliaments in turn throughout the War, and particularly as peace negotiations were underway, continued to seek ways in which to detach the Americans from their French alliance.<sup>402</sup>

To overcome the obstacle of credibility, required the American Commissioners to recognise that French and American national interests were not aligned. The British Foreign Minister Charles James Fox had already reasoned that Americans would soon come to the realisation that its [French] allies would never negotiate a peace favourable to America until such time as the powers of Europe "*had settled all the claims and differences which they have one with the other*".<sup>403</sup> For Fox, as soon as it accepted this point, America would realise that its treaty obligations did not preclude it from negotiating a peace with Britain as it saw fit because the former's interests were now different from those of its ally. Hence its treaty obligations did not mean that America should hold out until all French demands of Britain had been met. In a clear illustration of the balance rivalries that had manifest at this time, Fox might have been influenced, in this point of view not just in a desire to separate America from France but also because of a belief that France was emboldened in its demands of the British as a result of its alliance with America.<sup>404</sup> Indeed, it suited the British to take the view that once America had

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<sup>401</sup> Letter of Benjamin Franklin to David Hartley. 10<sup>th</sup> July 1782. TEN I, p. 461. The Maryland Assembly had just resolved to continue the War rather than violate the terms of the Franco-American alliance.

<sup>402</sup> See for example, Anderson M. S. *Europe in the Eighteenth Century, 1713 – 1783*. (Third edition), (Longman: New York, 1981). pp.344-347.

<sup>403</sup> Ultimately separate preliminaries of peace were entered into by the Americans, on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1782, and the French, on 20<sup>th</sup> January 1783. Copies may be found at TEN I, pp.697-701, and pp.755-756.

<sup>404</sup> Letter from Charles James Fox to Thomas Grenville. 26<sup>th</sup> May 1782. TEN I, pp. 403 to 404.

achieved its independence, it should assume that the objective of its treaty with France had been fulfilled entirely and Americans should therefore be free to act in their own interests.<sup>405</sup>

For Americans, as an end to hostilities with Britain were being contemplated, the French treaty would not be allowed to stand in the way of developing a closer trading relationship with Britain. However, this did not mean that it was lost on American Commissioners that much of the respect as a sovereign nation that America had from its former colonial master came about as a consequence of its alliance with France, the realisation of which, Adams described as her "*temper of wisdom*".<sup>406</sup> In other words, America hoped to negotiate not just peace terms but a future trade agreement with Britain by virtue of leverage of the alliance by playing to British fears of a post-War Franco-American closeness which would not be in British interests.

Separate negotiations were not just restricted to favourable trade or to emotional links with Britain, there were two other issues that went to the heart of national interest.<sup>407</sup> Firstly, after the War had ended American diplomats were to be actively involved in international politics and to be fully cognisant with the affairs of Europe and their consequences for American interests.<sup>408</sup> Britain's free press meant that it would be a convenient and useful place at which to base American diplomats intent on gathering news about European if not world events and its reliable "*postal*" service would permit safe transit of letters between London, Paris and the

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<sup>405</sup> Letter from *Lord Shelburne to Sir Guy Carleton and Admiral Robert Digby*. 5<sup>th</sup> June 1782. TEN I, pp.421-426. Indeed, America would then be subject to British influence and an important ally against the French, see also; Jasanoff (2011), p.80.

<sup>406</sup> However, also see; TWJA, Volume VIII, pp. 255 to 259. Adam's account of his meeting, as Minister Plenipotentiary, with King George III on 1st June 1785 provides an illustration of a feeling that appears to have been prevalent amongst British diplomats and indeed with the King. Adams recounts that the King stated "*there is an opinion among some people that you are not the most attached of all your countrymen to the manners of France*". Adams explains that he replied "*I must avow to your Majesty, I have no attachment but to my own country*."

<sup>407</sup> On the positive post-War effect of the loss of the American trade to Britain because of the increased competition, see Crowley J. E. *Neo-Mercantilism and the Wealth of Nations: British Commercial Policy after the American Revolution*, (*The Historical Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 2, June 1990), pp.339-360.

<sup>408</sup> Foner E., *The Story of American Freedom*, (W. W. Norton and Company: New York, 1998), p. 24., men such as Hamilton and Madison are described as "*nation builders*", intent on ensuring that America was actively involved in foreign affairs.

Hague.<sup>409</sup> Secondly, domestically Congress was in a hurry. This is because of the poor financial situation of the southern states, and the generally poor state of the national economy, in particular the devaluation of the paper money. Congress therefore concerned itself with dangers to interstate cohesion if Britain should attempt to entice one or more states away into a separate confederation.<sup>410</sup> Therefore, the union could not hold on for a peace that might be subject to prolonged negotiations to enable the French, and therefore the Spanish, to achieve their aims.<sup>411</sup> For example, influential in French peace negotiations was the desire for favourable commercial terms with not only Great Britain but also with her overseas territories, in particular, the West Indies.<sup>412</sup>

Hence, although a Congressional resolution adopted in May 1782, advised Robert Livingston, the first Secretary of Foreign Affairs, of Congress' desires to adhere to the French alliance, Congress was keenly aware of the limitations it confronted given the separateness, i.e. lack of cohesion of the states.<sup>413</sup> Such was the fear that the union might be torn asunder, as peace negotiations got underway, Livingston wrote to the Governors of each of the thirteen states appealing to them not to entertain British overtures of peace other than when communicated through the Continental Congress.<sup>414</sup> Livingston was influenced in giving this instruction by the fear of foreign intrigue and interference in domestic politics and its influence on the American people.<sup>415</sup>

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<sup>409</sup> *Letter from John Adams to the President of Congress*. TEN I, 5<sup>th</sup> February 1783. pp.761-763.

<sup>410</sup> Such an outcome would have been possible if Britain had been permitted to negotiate with the separate states independently of Congress, as had been proposed by Russia and Austria, the countries involved in trying to negotiate a peace between Britain and America; Morris R. B., *The Forging of the Union, 1781-1789*, (Harper and Row: New York, 1987), p.66

<sup>411</sup> *James Madison's Notes of Debates*. 30<sup>th</sup> December 1782. TEN I, pp.737-739.

<sup>412</sup> *Ibid*, TEN. I., pp.743-744.

<sup>413</sup> *Congressional Resolution*. 31<sup>st</sup> May 1782. TENI, p. 413.

<sup>414</sup> *Letter from Robert R. Livingston to the Governors of the States*. 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1782. TEN I, pp 369-371.

<sup>415</sup> *Letter from John Jay to Robert Livingston*. 28<sup>th</sup> June 1782. TEN I, pp.442-443. Jay expressed this fear when he suggested to Livingston that British Peace Commissioners not be allowed within the states more generally but should be confined to New York from whence they "write .....whatever they may have to propose and may receive Answers [sic] in the same manner".



This is why, towards the end of 1782 and against its general sense that the 1778 Treaty should be closely adhered to, a motion was being considered by Congress to permit American Peace Commissioners to conduct their own negotiations without recourse to the advice and direction of France. However, the resolution to permit separate peace negotiations was postponed and ultimately not adopted by Congress although American Commissioners to Britain unilaterally decided to open and conclude the preliminaries of peace without recourse to either the French or Congress.

By March 1783, when the separately negotiated peace preliminaries reached Congress, some Congressional delegates indicated their displeasure that the matter had been concluded without recourse to French guidance and direction, as Congress had originally instructed its ministers.<sup>416</sup> Not only did these delegates take the view that the spirit of the French alliance had somehow been tested but also that the Americans had been duped by the British into weakening their French alliance.<sup>417</sup> The actions of American diplomats left Congress in a difficult position, because if it ratified the preliminaries, it would be seen to be in agreement with these actions which had clearly offended the French. Congress therefore directed that the French King be informed that the preliminaries would not “*take place*” until such time as “*a peace shall have been actually signed between their most Christian & britanic [sic] majesties*”.<sup>418</sup> Notwithstanding this, by design or otherwise, acceptable peace terms had been negotiated by taking advantage of superpower rivalries.

The question then is, why did the French not object to American tactics to a far greater degree and indeed threaten treaty cessation or at least brand America a “*perfidious nation*”, as

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<sup>416</sup> Stagg (2009). p. 26. The decision to treat separately with Great Britain, is attributed to John Jay’s belief that France would always support Spain in preference to Great Britain when it came to a discussion of boundaries.

<sup>417</sup> James Madison’s *Notes of Debates*. 15<sup>th</sup> March 1783. TEN I, pp.779-781.

<sup>418</sup> Robert R. Livingston to the President of Congress. 18<sup>th</sup> March 1782. TEN I, pp.790-793.

Vergennes had warned. The answer may be found in a memorandum that appeared in France some five months after peace preliminaries had been signed. French ministers had begun to realise that the end of the Revolutionary War was witnessing the creation of a new political order in America which would require France to develop “*principles of conduct*” in relation to foreign affairs more appropriate to a republican as opposed to a monarchical state.<sup>419</sup> Amongst the twenty such considerations outlined in the April 1783 memorandum on this subject, included one which distinguished the efficacy of a treaty made with a monarchical government to one which is made with a republican one. The latter, explained the memorandum, required influence amongst the people as opposed to a monarch or his courtiers, for its adoption.<sup>420</sup> The French had an overweening view of the antipathy towards them that remained in America, particularly amongst some loyalists, and even amongst some patriots. To the extent that loyalists did not emigrate from the states, they would remain as “*emissaries constantly working to cause old prejudices [against France] to revive....not in the chimerical intention of restoring America to English domination, but in the view of uniting it with England by a social contract, on equal terms and for mutual advantage*”.<sup>421</sup> Therefore French concerns were also with the *degree* of post-War closeness of America with it, not only with whether it would continue to comply with the terms of treaty obligations. An expected increase in post-War emigration from England to America would only heighten the sense of the weakening of the ties between the two nations. The French worried therefore that old animosities held over from the War, would soon give way as the generation of Americans that held hostile views to

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<sup>419</sup> *Observations on the Principles of Conduct to Maintain towards the Americans. 30<sup>th</sup> April 1783.* TEN I, pp. 839.

<sup>420</sup> However see; Hobbes T., *Leviathan*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1996), pp. 124-126., who portrays a monarch as being closer to the needs of the public because of his inability to govern or to go to war, for example, without the support of his people. This, however, does not preclude a monarch from pursuing his own ends at the expense of his public, provided that he can garner their support in doing so.

<sup>421</sup> *Gouverneur Morris to John Jay. 10<sup>th</sup> January 1784.* TEN II, pp. 273-274. For a discussion of this issue see Ritcheson C. R. *Loyalist Influence on British Policy Toward the United States After the American Revolution*, (*Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 7 No. 1, Autumn 1973), pp.1-17.

Great Britain as a colonial power would one day pass leaving American citizens who, because they did not experience that conflict, were more likely to see Britain as a friend.

The strong ties that existed between British and American merchants under the pre-War “regular [trading] system” would also revive themselves much more quickly and effectively than would the development of commerce with France.<sup>422</sup> French concerns were proven to be well founded because of the ease with which Americans after the War, even given the losses suffered by British merchants during it and the difficulties they experienced trying to enforce pre War debts in the American courts, were able to secure long term credit with British merchants. This may be due to the shared connections of “*the same manners, the same habits, and the same language*”, shared with the mother country.<sup>423</sup> It was also due to the size of the American market for British goods and the ease of securing long term credit.

French diplomats were keenly aware of the questions that Americans would be asking themselves as the Revolutionary War came to a conclusion and therefore the risks that faced the Franco-American *special relationship*. This partly influenced French willingness to advance yet further funds to support the union. Vergennes explained, in a letter of February 1783 to his foreign minister, that America would be trying to fix the principles “*that should serve as the basis for relations as much political as mercantile, which they will seek to establish everywhere,*

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<sup>422</sup> *Marquis de Lafayette: Observations on Commerce between France and the United States. 26<sup>th</sup> December 1783.* TEN II., pp. 261-268. Central to the idea of there being a “regular” trading system with the British was the ease with which British merchants were prepared to extend credit to American merchants. This document cites the English mills which were prepared after the War to extend longer credit terms than French merchants. Against this, was the advantage enjoyed by French merchants in the provision of fine wines and brandies. La Fayette was however also fully aware that it was the French trading system that failed to encourage American trade. He referred to the complexity of the system of trade rules under which American merchants can unwittingly fall foul as well as the difficulties in recovering import duties on goods that enter French ports but are destined for re-export. Ports that the French had agreed to open to American shipping, particularly, L’Orient and Bayonne, still remained closed. At the same time as Lafayette was extolling the virtues of a freer trade with America, French merchants in Quercy were complaining to Vergennes of the cheap American flour that was pouring into French colonies in the West Indies; see *Letter from Moissac Merchants to Comte de Vergennes. 1<sup>st</sup> January 1784.* TEN II, pp. 270-272.

<sup>423</sup> *Observations on the Principles of Conduct to Maintain towards the Americans. 30<sup>th</sup> April 1783.* TEN I, pp. 839-844.

*and principally with their former metropolis”*.<sup>424</sup> He wished to be acquitted of this model in order that French policies should then conform to this new American order. The effectiveness of this French policy towards America was however constrained by two important factors. Firstly, the refusal of the French to advance further funds to augment the 1783 funding of six million livres to America, was not because French diplomats failed to appreciate the risk of a possible rapprochement between Britain and America but because of France’s precarious financial state.<sup>425</sup> Secondly, French merchants complained bitterly about the value of American trade. Soon after the opening of the L’Orient free port to American shipping, merchants in Nantes and Bordeaux were complaining about the losses being suffered on American trade due in the main to the lack of American specie.<sup>426</sup> However, French policy remained the same as it had been at the outbreak of the War, to weaken Britain and to keep it weak and it continued to support American independence for this reason alone.<sup>427</sup>

## Conclusion

The existence of a balance of power relationship between European nations in the eighteenth century was propitious to the American ambition for independence. The very fact that nations fought wars to reinstate the equilibrium, created the circumstances for an effective American policy that took advantage of rivalries between those nations. The unique approach that blended the pragmatism so important to an emerging state, with the idealism of a republican nation that feared the consequences of European political involvement, was remarkably effective because of this rivalry. Hence, although political commitment was a stark feature of the French alliance, the American ideological refusal to accept the long term consequences of

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<sup>424</sup> *Comte de Vergennes to Chevalier de la Luzerne, 27<sup>th</sup> February 1783, TEN I, p. 772.*

<sup>425</sup> *Comte de Vergennes to Chevalier de la Luzerne, 27<sup>th</sup> February 1783, TEN I, pp. 772-773.*

<sup>426</sup> *Louis Guillaume Otto to Comte de Vergennes, 30<sup>th</sup> June 1785., TEN II, pp. 676-677.*

<sup>427</sup> Lyon E W., *Louisiana in French Diplomacy*. (The University of Oklahoma Press: Oklahoma, 1974). p. 57. According to the author, “France’s aim in the war of the American Revolution was recovery of European prestige through humbling England. The French ministers of the time did not believe in the permanence of colonies and Vergennes’ prime consideration was the independence of the United States”. In support of this point of view, Lyon quotes Corwin E. S. *French Policy and the American Alliance*. (Princeton: New Jersey, 1916), Phillips (1913), and Fay B. *Revolutionary Spirit in France and America*. (George Allen & Unwin: New York, 1927).

this responsibility was only made possible because the French did not wish to run the risk that there would be a post-War British American rapprochement. Such a risk was real given the close cultural ties, common language, the willingness of British merchants to extend credit, and the affections that some American still held for Britain.

Whereas in the War period rivalries would be easily exploited, the post-War period required a far more subtle approach to foreign affairs and to the European balance. Given that it was in the interests of both Britain and France to constrain American economic and territorial growth, and to prevent an American alignment with any European power, which would be an early indicator of a change in the balance, American foreign affairs dictated an ostensible neutrality. For American policy makers, adoption of a neutrality in foreign affairs was more accurately the acceptance of a transitory state that would treat Britain and France equally in order to secure valuable concessions from one or both. It is because of the apparent refusal at alignment implied by this transitory state, that an American neutrality has become conflated with isolationism and remained a feature of the American foreign policy discourse since the eighteenth century.

## 4. Chapter Four: Balance of Power Thinking in the Post War Years

### The Conflation of Neutrality and Isolation within the Farewell Address

Chapter One explained that an American isolationism is generally taken to have its origins in the very early days of the Republic, and has influenced foreign affairs into the early twentieth century, only to be exploded as a fundamental ideological assumption on America's entry into the world wars.<sup>428</sup> As explained above, the origins of this isolationism are generally located by historians in the Farewell Address and its warning against entangling alliances.<sup>429</sup> The political separation from the European nations that is implied by this isolationism has come to mean a refusal to engage militarily on behalf of alliance partners, to participate in the balance of power, or to accept that political obligations will arise from trading relationships.<sup>430</sup> Whereas

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<sup>428</sup> Other historians argue however, that far from a desire to be isolationist in this period, the aim of American foreign policy was to extend influence and power abroad, see; Williams A. W. *The Legend of Isolationism in the 1920's*. (Science & Society, Guildford Press, Vol. 18, No. 1, Winter, 1954), pp. 1-20.

<sup>429</sup> De Conde A. *Washington's Farewell, the French Alliance, and the Election of 1796*. (*The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Organization of American Historians, Vol. 43, No. 4 (Mar., 1957), pp. 641-658., and see Nau. H. R. *Conservative internationalism. Armed diplomacy under Jefferson, Polk, Truman and Reagan*. (Princeton University Press: Princeton. 2013). See also, Ellis J. J., *Founding Brothers, The Revolutionary Generation*, (Alfred P. Knopf, New York, 2001), p.129. See also, (i) The Farewell Address as the origin of isolationist thought in American foreign affairs is rejected by Dunn D. H. *Isolationism Revisited, Seven Persistent Myths in the Contemporary American Foreign Policy Debate*. (*Review of International Studies*, Cambridge University Press, Vol. 31, No. 2, April 2005). Pp. 237 – 261., (ii) Mead. W. R. *Special Providence. American Foreign Policy and How it Changed the World*. (Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 2001). p. 59, in which the author attributes the myth, like Dunn, to a "literal reading" of the Address in the absence of context. Dunn explains this context as being the military weakness of America which mitigated against joining any European war, (iii) for a view that Washington attempted to increase and improve relations with the outside world, see Dumbrell J. *American Isolationism. A Response to David Hastings Dunn*. (*Review of International Studies*. Cambridge University Press. Volume 31. No. 4, October 2005), pp. 699-700., (iv) for the view that American foreign policy has been continuously expansionist in both territory and trade, since the eighteenth century, see Thompson J. A. *William Appleman Williams and the American Empire*, (*Journal of American Studies*, Cambridge University Press. Vol. 7, No. 1, April 1973), pp. 91-104., (v) for the view that isolationism has its antecedents in the seventeenth century in the Puritan desire to create a settlement separate from Europe, and in the sixteenth century doctrine of the "two spheres", that is that America was a legally different world, which Europe had no right to control, see Savelle M. *Colonial Origins of American Diplomatic Principles*, (*Pacific Historical Review*, University of California Press, Vol. 3, No. 3, September 1934), pp. 334-350., (vi) see also Rossignol M. J., *Early Isolationism Revisited: Neutrality and Beyond in the 1790s*, (*Journal of American Studies*, Cambridge University Press, Vol. 29, No. 2, August 1995), pp. 215-227, who explains that the isolationism of the Proclamation, should not be equated with "an idealistic desire to establish peace and neutrality with all nations", finally, for the view that the real message of the address is avoidance of wars, see Curti M., *Peace or War, The American Struggle, 1636-1936*, (W. W. Norton and Company: New York, 1936), pp.23-24.

<sup>430</sup> See for example Braumoeller B. F. *The Myth of American Isolationism*, (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass., Draft Version 1.2). See also Osgood R. *Ideals and Self Interest in American Foreign Relations*. (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1953). p. 32., in which Osgood describes isolationism as a "cardinal tenet of the national creed"; see also Schlesinger A. *Back to the Womb? Isolationism's Renewed Threat*. (*Foreign Affairs*. July/August 1995), who argues that American isolationism only extended to foreign policy not to trade policy *per se*. For isolation as only a refusal to use military force outside the western hemisphere, see Powaski. R. E. *Toward an Entangling Alliance: American Isolationism, Internationalism, and Europe*. (Greenwood Press: Connecticut, 1991). For the idea that isolation involves no use of military forces in peacetime, outside United States territory more generally, and specifically to influence the European balance of power, see Spiezio K. E. *Beyond Containment: Reconstructing European Security*. (Lynne Rienner Publishers: Boulder, 1995). See also Walker M. *The Next American Internationalism*. (*World Policy Journal*, Volume 12. No. 2. Summer. Duke University Press. 1995). pp. 52-54., in which the author describes the period between the Second World War and the end of the Cold War as being the only period during which American internationalism

more extreme interpretations of isolationism demand that a society be totally closed to international trade, isolation generally accommodates trading relationships but draws the line at overt military or political involvement.<sup>431</sup>

Given these ideas, the isolationism said to have been mandated by Washington in 1796, has much in common with neutrality, describing, as it does, non-entangling alliances as the basis of foreign policy.<sup>432</sup> For example, Grotius describes neutral nations as having a duty to “do nothing towards increasing the strength of a [belligerent].....nor to impede the measures of [another]... power”.<sup>433</sup> In other words, neutral nations remain impartial and do not engage in actions that alter the relative power between two belligerents, a key facet of Washington’s warning to avoid alliances that might obligate America to enter a war on the side of one or other belligerent. A point reinforced by de Vattel in his comment that neutral nations “do not take part in the contest”.<sup>434</sup> Hence, the isolationism of Washington’s warning against avoiding

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comprised military involvement overseas, the periods before being described as internationalist on the basis predominantly of American involvement in international trade. A similar argument as regards the relationship of colonial Massachusetts with neighbouring colonies, particularly in New France, is made in; Buffington A. H. *The Isolationist Policy of Colonial Massachusetts*. (*The New England Quarterly*, Volume 11. No 3. April 1928). pp. 158-179. However, the colony was unable to maintain its isolation because the growth of its economy led to economic interconnectedness within the colonial system. The importance of trade in American foreign affairs since 1778 is made in Straus O. S. *American Commercial Diplomacy* (*The North American Review*, University of Northern Iowa, Volume 194, No. 669, August 1911), pp. 218-225. See also; *Letter from John Adams to The President of Congress. The Hague, 10 February, 1784*, TWJA, Volume III, p. 177. The Swedish, amongst others, suggested America maintain safe distance from European politics. “I am quite in sentiment with the Baron de Nolken, the Swedish ambassador at St. James’s, who did me the honor to visit me, although I had not visited him. “ Sir,” said he, “ I take it for granted, that you will have sense enough to see us in Europe cut each other’s throats with a philosophical tranquillity.” See also. *Congressional resolution of 11<sup>th</sup> May 1784*, Hunt (1900), p. 369. One further proviso that was communicated to Benjamin Franklin was that Congress had decided that no treaty commitment was to be such that it placed the citizens of any other nation “on more advantageous ground” than those of France.

<sup>431</sup> Morison S. E. *The Origin of the Monroe Doctrine, 1775-1823*, (*Economica*, Wiley, No. 10, February 1924), pp. 27-51. However, Margold S. K. in *The Beginnings of the American Policy of Isolation*, (World Affairs, World Affairs Institute, Vol. 97, No. 2, June 1934), pp. 89-95, based on a reading of *The Federalist Papers, the Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution, and Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States of America from the Signing of the Definitive Treaty of Peace, September 10, 1783, to the Adoption of the Constitution*, explains how the ideas of no-political involvement, and separation from Europe came to be distinctly formed in the period to 1787, as American statesmen formed treaties of amity and commerce. For a discussion of the idea that a nation could never conceive of itself as truly isolated whilst professing interest in international trade, see Williams W. A. *The Legend of Isolationism in the 1920s*. (*Science and Society*, 18:1, 1954). pp. 19-35., who states “that the absence of genuine economic isolationism demonstrates the mythical nature of the entire concept [of isolationism]”.

<sup>432</sup> However, for the point of view that neutrality can only be fixed by reference to the general law of nations, in other words that neutrality must be accepted by other nations as a proclaimed or treaty based state, i.e. in order to achieve neutrality as a “binding force”, see Washburn A. H., *The American View of Neutrality*, (*Virginia Law Review*, Virginia Law Review, Vol. 2, No. 3, December 1914), pp. 165-177.

<sup>433</sup> Grotius (1901), p. 377.

<sup>434</sup> Haakonssen (2008), pp. 523-525.

alliances, has much in common with an American neutrality. Central to the idea of neutrality was the belief that, provided America posed no threat to Europe, it had little to fear from it. A natural isolation would therefore prevail from eighteenth century European nations who, too preoccupied with their own arguments and “.....*pitted against each other*”, would not have an interest for “*adventures*” in America” hence leaving America free from European military interest.<sup>435</sup>

This chapter will demonstrate that the American neutrality that would underpin the approach to post-War foreign affairs, the proxy of isolationism, was heavily qualified by considerations of the European equilibrium.

### **A Qualified American Neutrality**

The American idea of neutrality was subject to four qualifications that together mandated a policy of active involvement in the equilibrium.<sup>436</sup> The first recognised the reality that the sought after separation could never include a situation in which America was cut off from the outside world, since insularity could not then achieve national goals, for example, the expansion of trade.<sup>437</sup> American diplomats would therefore be instructed in the art of active foreign engagement by negotiation and treaty creation, and in agreeing the rules of engagement of an ostensibly neutral America.

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<sup>435</sup> Morgenthau (1952), pp. 1-7. This assessment is attributed to Alexander Hamilton, John Adams, and John Quincy Adams. One of the ways in which this intrigue might manifest was in the foreign influence on treaty making. However, American statesmen such as Hamilton rejected this claim as preposterous on the grounds of what he referred to as “*the advantage of numbers*”, that is, the Constitutional requirement that treaty formation requires a two thirds majority in the senate, see; Meyerson M. I, *Liberty’s Blueprint. How Madison and Hamilton Wrote the Federalist Papers, Defined the Constitution, and Made Democracy Safe for the World*, (Basic Books: New York, 2008), p. 186. The counter to this argument is that made by James Madison, who argued that in fact it was the minority that was at risk from the faction of the majority which can sacrifice “*the public good*”, to its own interests, the illustration being a slave owning majority that ignores the liberty of the slave minority, see Meyerson (2008). p. 169.

<sup>436</sup> The goal of neutrality in American foreign policy was to secure the survival of the state system. Some authors describe this as “*self-preservation*”. See; Sofka J. *American Neutral Rights Reappraised: Identity or Interest in the Foreign Policy of the Early Republic?*, (*Review of International Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4, October 2000), pp. 599 to 622.

<sup>437</sup> Lynch C. *The Promise and Problems of Internationalism*. (*Global Governance*, Vol 15. No. 1. January 1999). pp. 83-101. The author describes internationalism as the absence of nationalism and isolationism, and that isolationism involves an America that is “*sealed off*” from political problems that exist outside of its borders, irrespective of geographical distance from them.



Secondly, there was an acceptance that the very existence of America as an independent regional power threatened disequilibrium causing European nations to desire to destabilise it.<sup>438</sup> Americans would therefore naturally engage the European balance of power, and would sidestep the generally accepted idea that a nation intent on neutrality would establish this position within treaty commitments, hence rejecting the notion that international norms on foreign engagement would apply to them.<sup>439</sup> Thirdly, the belief that geography protected America from European affairs, could never be a serious consideration given the presence of Spain and Britain in the American sphere of interest and influence, the western territory.

Fourthly, the central ideological plank of pre-War foreign policy, the no political connections requirement of the 1776 Model Treaty, would not be set in stone, and could be compromised if the national interest demanded it. Hence, John Adams accepted that there should be military or other alliances to protect the Mediterranean trade, and a military alliance with France, to encourage Britain to treat with it.<sup>440</sup> Therefore, a neutrality would not preclude using the French alliance to secure valuable concessions from Britain.<sup>441</sup> As John Jay explained,

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<sup>438</sup> Claude I. *The Balance of Power Revisited*, (*Review of International Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2, Special Issue on the Balance of Power, April, 1989), pp. 77-85. See p. 79. The author concludes that wars are a relatively unimportant part of the operation of balance of power, which operates more effectively during times of peace. See also; Drumbell. J. *American Isolationism: A Response to David Hastings Dunn*. (*Review of International Studies*, Vol. 31. No. 4., Cambridge University Press, October 2005). pp. 699-700. The author explains that in the eighteenth century, balance of power was sometimes subject to the arbitrary will of the monarch and that in any case, European equilibrium was not separable from regional concerns and regional nations.

<sup>439</sup> However, for the point of view that neutrality can only be fixed by reference to the general law of nations, in other words that neutrality must be accepted by other nations as a proclaimed or treaty based state, i.e. in order to achieve neutrality as a “binding force”, see Washburn A. H., *The American View of Neutrality*, (*Virginia Law Review*, Virginia Law Review, Vol. 2, No. 3, December 1914), pp. 165-177.

<sup>440</sup> See Lake A. *Defining the National Interest*, (*Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science*, The Academy of Political Science, Vol. 34, No. 2, 1981), pp. 202-213. Lake makes the point by describing a general “posturing” in American foreign affairs, by achievement of a “balance among self-interest, idealism, and power”, and “but when proclamations of grand goals run ahead of capabilities ..... there is posturing, not policy”. To pro-Constitutionalists such as John Adams, America needed a complex diplomatic strategy to enable it to remain close to France as a counterweight to British power, whilst maintaining an overall American neutrality. In other words, to delay as long as possible a treaty commitment that led to political alliances until the Americans no longer had anything to fear from Great Britain, which Adams put at least ten years away. Until then, America should reach settlement of all issues with Britain, which no doubt the latter would welcome, being anxious to avoid a stronger Franco American alliance, see; *Letter from John Adams to Secretary Jay. Auteuil*. 13 April, 1785. TWJA, Volume VIII, pp 240-241.

<sup>441</sup> However, the British sought whenever they could, to use the fact of the Franco American alliance as an obstacle to negotiation in an effort to weaken the latter relationship. Hence in a letter to Washington, William Gordon (author in 1788, of the four volume *History of the Rise, Progress and Establishment of the Independence of the United States of America*) explained that the Duke of Dorset refused to treat with Americans in Paris on the basis that this was only appropriate when Americans had been closely aligned to France but in the post War situation such a suggestion offended the “dignity” of George III. Hence, whilst the Duke insisted on the sovereignty of America as the basis of treating in London or America, underlying this assessment was a desire to separate it from France. *To George Washington from William Gordon, 28 March 1785*, The Papers of George Washington,

holding out the prospect that there could be an American inspired “*defensive alliance*” involving France, Spain and Holland would be “*longer and more sensibly felt by Britain*”, i.e. have more effect on it than even conceding American independence, and that this might encourage favourable trade arrangements and vacation of the western forts.<sup>442</sup>

Hence foreign policy was predicated on a unique form of neutrality, within which diplomats were free to participate in the balance of power.<sup>443</sup> The effectiveness of this approach would be founded in the fear of European nations, “*apprehensive*” that “*notwithstanding.. professions*” of neutrality, America might find its national interests better served by an alliance with one of them at the expense of the other.<sup>444</sup>

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Confederation Series, vol. 2, 18 July 1784–18 May 1785, Abbot W. W. (ed.), (Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia: Virginia, 1992), pp. 465–467. FONA. Adams was suspicious that the Europeans were playing the same game and he described the “*hypocrisy*” of France and Britain each of which was “*professing desires of friendship*” with the other, in order to provoke a “*jealousy*” in America that would encourage an alliance with one or other of them, see; “*John Adams to John Jay, 27 Oct. 1786*,” Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-01-02-0792> [last update: 2015-12-30]). Source: this is an Early Access document from The Adams Papers. It is not an authoritative final version. FONA.

<sup>442</sup> *John Adams to John Jay, 15 Oct. 1785*, Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-01-02-0322> [last update: 2015-12-30]). Source: this is an Early Access document from The Adams Papers. It is not an authoritative final version. FONA. For the idea that trade duties would have the effect of forcing a favourable Anglo America treaty, see also *Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, 19 Nov. 1785*, Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-01-02-0376> [last update: 2015-12-30]). Source: this is an Early Access document from The Adams Papers. It is not an authoritative final version. FONA. Although there remained both Anglophile, and Francophile factions in Congress throughout this period, conflicts over which faction would influence America foreign policy, i.e. whether there would be an alignment between America and one or of these nations, was not a serious issue until about 1793 when Washington issued, what is referred to as the, Neutrality Declaration. It is at this time that there was argument over whether a French alliance should dominate (the desire of Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State, and of James Madison, Virginia Representative in the House), or a British alliance should (the desire of Alexander Hamilton, Treasury Secretary), see Meyerson (2008), p.125.

<sup>443</sup> Bukovansky M., *American Identity and Neutral Rights from Independence to the War of 1812 (International Organization*, 51, 1997) p. 210. The author supports the idea that neutrality in the pre and immediately post-independence years was highly nuanced but restricts this concept to maritime neutrality only and describes it as a more liberal neutrality based on American demands for the more expanded rights of the ships of non-belligerents, for example, in relation to the what could be defined as contraband. Such liberal rights were demanded by the United States even when they were usually only secured by a combination of a strong navy and defined closely within treaty commitments. For the value of America to the European balance, see; *From George Washington to Lafayette, 15 August 1786*, The Papers of George Washington, Confederation Series, vol. 4, 2 April 1786–31 January 1787, Abbot W. W. (ed.), (University Press of Virginia: Charlottesville, 1995), pp. 214–216. FONA., in which Washington explains that “*While connected with us as Colonies only, was not Britain the first power in the World? Since the dissolution of that connexion, does not France occupy the same illustrious place?*”. This summary of what neutrality meant to Americans of this period chimes with that used as the definition of isolationism by Doenecke J. D. in *The Literature of Isolationism. A Guide to Non-Interventionist Scholarship 1930-1972*, (Ralph Myles, Colorado Springs, CO, 1972), p. 5, who defines isolation as “*a unilateral foreign policy....unhindered by restraining commitments.....aimed primarily at avoiding conflict [with Germany]....[and is] noninterventionist*”.

<sup>444</sup> This is the argument made by Alexander Hamilton in Federalist Paper Eleven, *TFP*, pp. 55-59, when he explained that Great Britain is worried that America will create a navy and begin to compete directly with them in the carrying trade. Therefore, it is in the interests of Europe to “*foster division*” amongst the states. Hence a price would be set on neutrality as America focussed its resources on a common interest. See also; *Letter from John Adams to Secretary Jay. Grosvenor Square. 17<sup>th</sup> October, 1785*, *TWJA*, Volume VIII, p. 322. Adams explained to Jay how “*it is natural for England and France to be jealous of our neutrality, and apprehensive that, notwithstanding our professions, we may be induced to connect ourselves with one against the other. While such uncertainties and suspicions continue, we may find that each of these rival kingdoms will be disposed to stint our growth and*

## The Post-War National Interest

In the post-War period, the union of the states that had been so critical to securing independence, would now become an end in itself, in other words, the union was central to the three great planks of the national interest, *viz*; security, territorial expansion, and trade.

The security of the union was a problem brought into sharp relief by the fear of foreign interference in the affairs of the states.<sup>445</sup> Fears of foreign influence played a significant role in subsequent debates over the Constitution. Generally, the concern was that European nations were aware of the fractures in the union and were willing to take advantage of any division amongst the states, in order to destabilise it.<sup>446</sup> Such a fear would be well founded given that, whereas before the War, the states had formed a collective security union to secure independence, after the War, there was disagreement as to how close the union should be to protect itself against foreign intrigue.<sup>447</sup> One indicator of a lack of post-War state cohesion was the selfishness of the states in the international carrying trade.<sup>448</sup> Hence, whilst the states had

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*diminish our power, from a fear that it will be employed against itself, and in favor of its enemy. If France could be sure of our perpetual alliance, it is to be supposed she would favor our increase in everything which could be reconciled to her own interest".*

<sup>445</sup> The nature of foreign intrigue is explained in; Boyd J. P., *Number 7, Alexander Hamilton's Secret Attempts to Control Foreign Policy*, (Princeton University Press: New Jersey, 1964), pp. xii.-xiii., as the involvement of foreign nations in America, against which America is said to have adopted a position of neutrality and a policy of retaliatory tariffs. Neutrality in foreign affairs is linked closely with the avoidance of faction in domestic politics albeit created by foreign intrigue, see; Hunt M. H., *Ideology and US Foreign Policy*, (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2009), p.26.

<sup>446</sup> *Letter from John Adams to Secretary Jay. Grosvenor Square, 24<sup>th</sup> November 1785*. The divisions were put down to the infancy of America a consequence of which would be petty divisions as a consequence of the people having "*too much given up to the government of their passions*" in the current Articles of Confederation. In other words, the people were unaccustomed to living within large communities but took a very much parochial approach, interfering in local government. TWJA, Volume VIII, p. 347. See also; (i) *John Adams to John Jay*, 15 December. 1785, (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-01-02-0429> [last update: 2015-12-30]). Source: this is an Early Access document from The Adams Papers. It is not an authoritative final version. FONA. The fear of foreign intrigue was genuine, not restricted only to Britain, and indeed went beyond diplomatic involvement. Adams had reported the disinformation being spread in many European countries about the state of America with the sole aim of discouraging emigration to it; (ii) On the dangers to the union see for example the short hand notes of William Paterson New Jersey delegate to the Federal Convention of 1787, Farrand, Volume I. p. 273., when he refers to; "*No Provision agt. foreign Powers or Invasions*". For the point of view that such intrigue already existed in Congress, see the comments of Rufus King Delegate for Massachusetts, Farrand, Volume I. p. 263., who explained "*Every one [sic] is impressed with the idea of a general regulation of trade and commerce. Can congress do this? when [sic] from the nature of their institution they are so subject to cabal and intrigue?*".

<sup>447</sup> See Nagel P. C., *One Nation Indivisible, The Union in American Thought 1776-1861*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1961), p.14 in which the author describes post-independence union as an "*expedient* [in response to a] *crisis*", as opposed to what it had been, that is part of a strategic plan of the colonies.

<sup>448</sup> Hunt (1900). See also; *To Thomas Jefferson. Philadelphia, April 16, 1781*; "*The situation of most of the States is such, that two or three vessels of force employed against their trade will make it their interest to yield prompt obedience to all just requisitions on them. With respect to those States that have little or no foreign trade of their own, it is provided that all inland trade with such States as supply them with foreign merchandize may be interdicted, and the concurrence of the latter may be enforced, in case of*

achieved the shared goal of independence, they viewed their position in the post-War union not through the lenses of nationalism but of parochialism. Jefferson attributed this localism to be symptomatic of a union that, whilst it had the cynosure of independence in the War years, now struggled to support the common purpose.<sup>449</sup> Later in this period, a consolidation of the states under a Constitutional union would, it was hoped provide the missing focus.<sup>450</sup> For example, in discussions of the power of the President within a constitutional framework, the necessity of ensuring that he retained a “*permanent stake*” in the public as opposed to his personal interest was considered crucial to cementing state cohesion.<sup>451</sup>

Secondly, interest was located in the desire for westward expansion which came up against Spanish and British interests. Americans considered themselves as masters of the whole

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*refusal, by operations on their foreign trade”, and ; To George Washington from Unknown Author, 15 July 1784, The Papers of George Washington, Confederation Series, vol. 1, 1 January 1784–17 July 1784, ed. W. W. Abbot. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992), pp. 504–526. FONA. The idea that a concept of national interest had been accepted during the War years but that it became more difficult to define a national interest after the War is a theme of this letter, which attributes the post War difficulty to the selfish interest of the states which overtook matters of “National Importance [sic]” which the author also equates with a failure of patriotism. The point is repeated by Washington in; To George Washington from John Jay, 27 June 1786, The Papers of George Washington, Confederation Series, vol. 4, 2 April 1786–31 January 1787, ed. W. W. Abbot. (University Press of Virginia: Charlottesville, 1995), pp. 130–132. FONA. In this letter, Washington attributes selfishness to the unrestrained desire for personal gain, primarily through acquisition of land, at the expense of “public considerations” and “national interests”. See also James Madison’s Version, 18 June 1787, The Papers of Alexander Hamilton, vol. 4, January 1787–May 1788, ed. Harold C. Syrett. (Columbia University Press: New York, 1962), pp. 187–195. FONA. The idea of selfishness of states (as opposed to individuals pursuing land interests) is also made in; Salaries for Congress and Eligibility for Federal Offices, [14 June] 1788, The Papers of James Madison, vol. 11, 7 March 1788–1 March 1789, ed. Robert A. Rutland and Charles F. Hobson. (University Press of Virginia: Charlottesville, 1977), pp. 140–142. FONA. See also; Farrand. Madison, Monday June 18., in Committee of the whole, on the propositions of Mr. Patterson & Mr. Randolph. (On motion of Mr. Dickinson to postpone the xst. Resolution). p. 284. In which Madison explains “The great & essential principles necessary for the support of Government. Are I. an active & constant interest in supporting it. This principle does not exist in the States in favor of the federal Govt. They have evidently in a high degree, the esprit de corps. They constantly pursue internal interests adverse to those of the whole. They have their particular debts--their particular plans of finance &c”.*

<sup>449</sup> Jefferson explained that a two way trade should be the interest all of the states, and a nation that was incapable of retaliating against European trade restrictions would inevitably find itself “*in the situation [in the interests of Europe] as unimportant consumers of her manufactures... and useful labourers to furnish her raw materials*”. *From Thomas Jefferson to Edmund Pendleton, 16 December 1783, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, vol. 6, 21 May 1781–1 March 1784, ed. Julian P. Boyd. (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1952), pp. 385–388. FONA. British negotiators were also frustrated with trade negotiations and demanded clarity on the power of Congress to enter into trade agreements given the separate interests of the states, see The Duke of Dorset to the American Commissioners, 26 March 1785, The Adams Papers, Papers of John Adams, vol. 16, February 1784–March 1785, ed. Gregg L. Lint, et al. (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 2012), pp. 577–578. FONA.*

<sup>450</sup> *To Thomas Jefferson from John Jay, 9 February 1787, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, vol. 11, 1 January–6 August 1787, ed. Julian P. Boyd. (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1955), pp. 129–132. FONA. The idea of the Constitution as being in the national interest was discussed in; To George Washington from David Humphreys, 24 March 1787, The Papers of George Washington, Confederation Series, vol. 5, 1 February 1787–31 December 1787, ed. W. W. Abbot. (University Press of Virginia: Charlottesville, 1997), pp. 102–104. FONA., in which Washington’s attendance at the Constitutional Convention of 1787 was discussed.*

<sup>451</sup> *Revisionary Power of the Executive and the Judiciary, [6 June] 1787, The Papers of James Madison, vol. 10, 27 May 1787–3 March 1788, ed. Robert A. Rutland, et al. (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1977), pp. 35–36. FONA.*

continent, in contrast to a pre-War contextualisation of colonists as members of a British Empire. These so called meta-geographies, or ways of defining one's environment by reference to geographical constructs, which, for example could also include middle states, northern states and southern states, caused Americans to think of westward expansion, and control of the entire continent, as inevitable.<sup>452</sup> The possibilities for the union from westward expansion had grown stronger as a result of victory in the Revolutionary War. Rakove explains that creation of a national domain, the opening of the west to American settlement, articulated a clear view of the national interest creating a "*stronger set of shared concerns*" and therefore a more sophisticated view of national interest than had been the case with the outbreak of the War. He explains that sale of the western lands was critical in creating economic stability and providing badly needed funds with which to pay down the national debt. However, in order to organise the lands for gain, a stronger central government than that under the Confederacy was needed otherwise the continent would fall to the influence of Spain and Britain leaving America within the confines of the original thirteen states.<sup>453</sup>

Hence, a Congressional failure to allow newly formed western quasi-states into the union, once they had met some minimal criteria, and more importantly guaranteeing them a republican form of government, would not only limit economic growth, it would ultimately weaken the union leaving it vulnerable to European interests. Foreign influence was keenly felt in the north as well as in the southwest, for example, Jefferson feared that the Vermont territory preferred a closer connection to Britain, and that it was in British interests to nurture

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<sup>452</sup> Drake (2011). pp.2-10. Earlier chapters discuss the so called Turner Thesis of inevitable westward expansion.

<sup>453</sup> Essay; Rakove Jack N. *Ambiguous Achievement. The Northwest Ordinance*, in; Williams F. D. (ed.). *Northwest Ordinance. Essays on its Formulation, Provisions and Legacy*. (Michigan State University Press: Michigan, 1989). pp.1-17. *Vices of the Political System of the United States, April 1787*, The Papers of James Madison, vol. 9, 9 April 1786–24 May 1787 and supplement 1781–1784, Rutland R. A. (et. Al), (eds.), (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1975), pp. 345–358. FONA. Reference to the pre-Constitutional union as the "*Confederacy*" appears, for example, in this document.

this tension.<sup>454</sup> By 1787 negotiations were already underway between Britain and Vermont which might cause the latter to cede from the union.<sup>455</sup>

It was Spanish interests in the southwest that created the greatest vulnerability to the union, and Madison, worried whether the American settlements on the banks of the Mississippi would “.. consist of a hostile or a foreign people, or will they not be a bone of our bones, and flesh of our flesh?”<sup>456</sup> In other words, settlers might see themselves as Spanish, not American. Hence, western settlers might seek Spanish protection in the south, reach agreement with the Spanish to close off the Mississippi River to other American traffic, and establish a union separate from that of the thirteen states.<sup>457</sup> Hostile American settlers allied with the Spanish colonial system, and a Britain in control of parts of Florida threatened to create a buffer against further America expansion.<sup>458</sup> The historian James Lewis refers to this risk as the

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<sup>454</sup> *To Thomas Jefferson from John Jay, 14 December 1786*, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, vol. 10, 22 June–31 December 1786, Boyd J. P. (ed.), (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1954), pp. 596–599. FONA.

<sup>455</sup> *New York Assembly. Remarks on an Act Acknowledging the Independence of Vermont, 14 March 1787* The Papers of Alexander Hamilton, vol. 4, January 1787–May 1788, Syrett H. C. (ed.), (Columbia University Press: New York, 1962), pp. 115–118.

<sup>456</sup> *From James Madison to Lafayette, 20 March 1785*, The Papers of James Madison, vol. 8, 10 March 1784–28 March 1786, Rutland R. A. and Rachal W. M.E., (eds.), (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago), 1973, pp. 250–255. FONA. Although the 1783 Paris Treaty had placed the American boundary at the Mississippi River, with the exception of the Kentucky territory, Americans were mostly settled east of the Appalachians, see; [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/paris.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/paris.asp) (accessed 22 June 2014 at 13.21). Article II in relation to the boundary, states *inter alia*; “by a line to be drawn along the middle of the said river Mississippi”. See also; Whittaker A. P. and Morison S. E. *The Spanish-American frontier. 1783 to 1795. The Westward Movement and the Spanish Retreat in the Mississippi Valley*. (The Riverside Press Cambridge: New York, 1927). p. 9.

<sup>457</sup> However, *ibid*, Whittaker (1927), p. 28. Whittaker states that the frontiersmen, without the support of a militarily strong Congress, were in no position to threaten Spanish possessions in North America. See also; Burstein A. and Isenberg N. *Madison and Jefferson*, (Random House, New York, 2010). p. 130. However, see; Witcover J. *Party of the People. A History of the Democrats*. (Random House: New York, 2003). pp. 4-14. The formation of parties and in particular the Democratic Party after 1787 are attributed to the Jeffersonian defence of the “*pioneer spirit*” or the tension that was evident in 1787 between the settled thirteen states and the frontiersmen. The tension was a very real one because frontier settlements such as Kentucky, Cumberland, and Holston counties, having common cause with the Spanish in terms of an Indian threat, interest in land speculation, and a desire for free navigation of the Mississippi, as well as their isolation from the American union of states, made those counties more likely to cede from the union. By 1787, Spain was considering attracting settlers in these counties into the Spanish colonial system by offering a twenty-five percent duty on products traded with Spanish colonists, considered sufficiently low to be attractive, see; *ibid*, Whitaker. pp. 31, 79, and 92.

<sup>458</sup> Cowans (2003), p.234. Aranda, a Spanish diplomat, explained his view, not necessarily widely shared, that France had acted against her interests in supporting the America colonies in their fight for independence. Although the French had few colonies on the American continent they did appreciate the security risks to the Spanish colonies from an independent America. Further, he took the view that it would have been in France’s best interests to allow America and Britain to destroy each other but that the French had been “*blinded*” by their hatred of Britain into supporting the Americans. The concern was therefore that, although born small, America would grow into a major international power and would then threaten the Spanish colonies which, in any case were difficult to manage from such a great distance. In order to mitigate the risk, three princes should be appointed over the Spanish territories in order to create three kingdoms. This would then prevent American growth into the west and through trade, the three kingdoms and Spain would grow stronger, leading to the growth of a navy which itself would alter the balance of power in Europe *vis a vis* the British.

*problem of neighbourhood*, or the military and economic competition from new states.

However, managed properly, expansion west, the guarantee of a republican form of government to the newly formed states, and a general economic growth, were regarded by Lewis as fundamental to the survival of the union.<sup>459</sup> Hence, it was imperative that new territories, be accommodated within the union lest they align to a European power in the western boundary.

A similar situation was developing in the northwest. Congress, to ward off an American Indian war, had issued a proclamation in September 1783 preventing the occupation of any land that was claimed by Indians, not already within the boundary of the states.<sup>460</sup> Jefferson however, believed that the Americans would soon be at war with an Indian confederacy supported by the British.<sup>461</sup> Originally, employment of the Indian tribes on the side of British troops in the Revolutionary War had been widely supported in the British Cabinet, despite being greeted with horror when initially proposed due in the main to their method of waging war.<sup>462</sup> After

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<sup>459</sup> Lewis J. E. Jr. *The States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire. The American Union and the Problem of Neighbourhood. 1783 to 1829*, (University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 1998).

<sup>460</sup> Horsman R., *Expansion and American Indian policy 1783 to 1812*. (Oklahoma University Press: Oklahoma, 1992). pp.3-74.

<sup>461</sup> *To Thomas Jefferson from John Jay, 14 December 1786*, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, vol. 10, 22 June–31 December 1786, Boyd J. P. (ed.), (Princeton University Press: New Jersey, 1954), pp.596–599. FONA. See also; Richter D. K. *Ordeals of the Longhouse. The Five Nations in Early American History*. (The University of North Carolina Press@ North Carolina, 1994). The Six Nations of the Iroquois comprised the Iroquois Great League, a cultural institution, and the Iroquois Confederacy, which represented the political and war making arm. It was this essential collective security body that gave the tribes their power and allowed individual tribes, by virtue of their membership of the confederacy, to enhance their negotiating position with the British American colonies.

<sup>462</sup> Gore-Browne (1953). p. 111. The Northwest Indian tribes under the Six Nations of the Iroquois had originally joined the British side in the Revolutionary War risking their lands on the presumption that a strong independent American nation to their east would represent a more significant and immediate threat to their security than would the British, see; Richter D. K. and Merrell J.H. (eds.), *Beyond the Covenant Chain. The Iroquois and Their Neighbours in Indian North America 1600 to 1800*, (Penn State University Press: Philadelphia, 2003). The Iroquois tribes exerted greater influence than their size, put by the author at some 10,000, as a result of what is known as the *covenant chain*, a series of alliances between the Iroquois tribes and European settlers, agreements that compensated for their lack of diplomatic skills. The covenant chain contributed to perceptions amongst the Americans, British, Dutch etc. of the dominance of the Iroquois. The Oneidas Indians, as a result of an invasion of their lands by British commander, Barrymore St Leger in 1777, was one of the few north eastern tribe to join the Revolutionary cause, see; Glatthaar J.T. and Martin James Kirby, *Forgotten Allies. The Oneida Indians and the American Revolution*, (Hill and Wang: New York, 2006). pp.85-150.

the end of the War the Indians were once again important in a British policy that was essentially hostile to an America that was not in control of the strategically important west.<sup>463</sup> Although the Indian tribes had been ignored in the 1783 Peace Treaty, compared to for example British support for restitution to the loyalists remaining in America, it was not in the interests of Britain to completely forsake them because of their continued usefulness in containing American post-War expansion.<sup>464</sup> Britain therefore adopted a strategy towards the Indians that encouraged the Indian fur trade, to prevent American influence in these north-western territories. For example, although initially neutral and assured that no side would attack them or invade their lands for fear of driving them into the camp of the enemy, Iroquois neutrality was compromised by the fear, encouraged by British commanders, that an undefeated America would represent a prospective land hungry adversary.<sup>465</sup> Although the British Forts in the northwest were garrisoned, Britain could not, without being charged with violation of the 1783 Peace, deploy its troops to support these strategic objectives. Hence, the British occupation of the western forts that were reinforced with loyalists based in Quebec, allowed them to continue with a strategy of trying to weaken America on its own continent.<sup>466</sup>

National interest was thirdly located in the international trade and the desire of the states to sustain access to, primarily British markets and to the financial credit available from British

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<sup>463</sup> *John Adams to John Jay, 15 Dec. 1785*, Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-01-02-0429> [last update: 2015-12-30]). Source: this is an Early Access document from The Adams Papers. It is not an authoritative final version. FONA.

<sup>464</sup> Downes R. C. *Council Fires on the Upper Ohio*. (University of Pittsburgh Press: Pittsburgh, 1977). pp.278-282. Although attempts were made by Joseph Brant, representative of the Six Nations of the Iroquois, to form this Confederacy ultimately such a collaborative approach to Indian security was to fail and lead to the Battle of the fallen Timbers in 1794 without any British military support.

<sup>465</sup> See Haan R.L. *Covenants and Consensus. Iroquois in English 1676 to 1760*, p. 41., in Richter Daniel K. and Merrell James H. (eds.), *Beyond the Covenant Chain. The Iroquois and Their Neighbours in Indian North America 1600 to 1800*, (Penn State University Press: Philadelphia, 2003). The covenant chain should be viewed not as a centralisation of control of the Indians by European powers but as a means of "sharing power with Iroquois over other indigenous peoples".

<sup>466</sup> Essay by Stewart Gordon T. *The Northwest Ordinance and the Balance of Power in North America in*; Williams F. D. (ed.). *Northwest Ordinance. Essays on its Formulation, Provisions and Legacy*. (Michigan State University Press: Michigan, 1989). pp.21-33.



merchants.<sup>467</sup> The value that Americans placed on their trade and their perception of the value that other nations would place on it played an important part in early American foreign affairs. Congress had first passed a resolution in April 1776 opening American ports suggesting that local assemblies appoint officers to “*observe the regulations made by Congress*”.<sup>468</sup> It has been suggested that this Congressional resolution had the aim of encouraging the importation of materials to support the War and, separately, that it also symbolised also a revolution in international trade from that of a “*corrupt mercantile system*” to one of free trade.<sup>469</sup> Historians disagree on the extent to which the concept of mercantilism was generally understood as a single generally accepted doctrine, and a whether it represented a political approach or an economic one. However, there is agreement on some fundamental concepts, for example that it was the state that controlled trade, with its interests being superior to that of the individual, and that trade represented a zero sum game and therefore that the control by one nation of foreign markets implied their loss to another nation.<sup>470</sup> Either way, a victorious post-War America desired trade agreements with as many nations as possible and to protect that trade, by insisting in bilateral trade agreements that imports be carried only in American ships.<sup>471</sup>

### **Neutrality and the Balance of Power**

The national interest described above, required the continued exploitation of the rivalries between France and Britain, a policy founded in the fear of both nations for their West Indian trade, and in England from losses it would suffer from “*a heavy land war on the [American]*

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<sup>467</sup> Schlesinger (1918) pp. 15-19. See also; Beard et.al., 1934). Charles Beard describes these national interests as arising from economic factors and from domestic conflict between rival economic groups.

<sup>468</sup> *Resolution of the Continental Congress. 9<sup>th</sup> April 1776. JCC, Volume IV p. 257*

<sup>469</sup> McCoy D. R. *The Elusive Republic. Political Economy in Jeffersonian America.* (University of North Carolina Press: North Carolina, 1980), p. 76. The author explains that the Resolution reflected a view that “*since the Revolutionaries viewed traditional restraints on trade as symptoms of British corruption*” their vision of an independent republican future “*encompassed vigorous commercial expansion*”.

<sup>470</sup> Anderson (1961), pp.72 to 124.

<sup>471</sup> *Letter to Secretary Jay. Grosvenor Square, 26<sup>th</sup> February 1786, TWJA, Volume III. p. 380.* See also Marshall (2012). p. 99. Marshall explains that regulation of trade, as opposed to *laissez faire* free trade was adopted by the Americans.

*continent*” if it had to fight to protect this trade.<sup>472</sup> However, a policy that did not treat French and British trade equally, through the imposition for example of reduced imposts, would run the risk of diminishing one or other of these nations within the European equilibrium.<sup>473</sup> France and England, were closely interested in any appearance of an American partiality towards the other that could be seized upon as a cause for complaint.<sup>474</sup> This is why Adams recommended to Congress that ministers be sent to each of these nations to deal with any trade or other dispute arising as a *prima facie* means of demonstrating the lengths that Americans were prepared to go to treat each nation equally. The refusal of smaller nations to treat with America was influenced by the same idea of impartial dealings. Hence, when Commissioners sought treaties of commerce with Sardinia and Naples, both refused Adams suspected, because of their close ties to respectively France and Spain.<sup>475</sup>

However, America could never adopt the impartiality that was implied by traditional ideas of neutrality because its very existence as an emerging nation made it an important balance participant. As America grew stronger it would give ever greater cause for concern that it

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<sup>472</sup> *From Thomas Jefferson to William Carmichael, 15 December 1787*, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, vol. 12, 7 August 1787–31 March 1788, ed. Julian P. Boyd, (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1955, pp. 423–427. FONA. See also; Lycan G. L., *Alexander Hamilton and American Foreign Policy*, (University of Oklahoma Press: Oklahoma, 1961), p. 71., Hamilton laid the foundation of neutrality soon after the War ended when he expressed concern that there were men in both camps, the pro French and the pro-British, that would cause factional dissent which would be counter to American national interests.

<sup>473</sup> See the point (described above in Chapter One) made by the early eighteenth century Spanish diplomat Jose Campillo y Cossio in Cowans (2003). Essay by y Cossio Jose Campillo. *A New Economic Policy for America. 1762*. p. 217.

<sup>474</sup> *John Adams to John Jay, 25 Aug. 1785*, Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-01-02-0200> [last update: 2015-12-30]). Source: this is an Early Access document from The Adams Papers. It is not an authoritative final version. FONA. Pitt asked Adams if there were any concessions that Americans were prepared to offer to Great Britain that they would not then feel obliged to offer to the French. Adams said that both nations had to be treated equally, however he indicated that on “*so free a footing*” British trade would benefit much more than would the French trade because Americans were attracted to the more favourable credit terms available from British merchants. The neutrality that Adams proposed is that accepted by jurists since the seventeenth century, see; Grotius (2005), pp. 377 to 378, who explains that “*those who profess neutrality*” must do nothing to assist any other belligerent, whether it is involved in a just or an unjust war. Put another way, the guarantee of neutral rights was a guarantee also that America would not be involved in European wars, for an early twentieth century acceptance of this tenet, see; Van Alstyne, R.W., *American Crisis Diplomacy, The Quest for Collective Security, 1918-1952*, (Stanford University Press: Stanford, 1952), p.43.

<sup>475</sup> Adams had described neutrality as “*a perfect impartiality*” since close attachment to any nation simply endangered America. *John Adams to Elbridge Gerry, 9 March 1785*, The Adams Papers, Papers of John Adams, vol. 16, February 1784–March 1785, ed. Gregg L. Lint et al. (Harvard University Press: Mass., 2012), pp. 551–553. FONA. Since the international system was fraught with uncertainty, it was necessary to “*limit the behaviour of the ambitious*”; hence John Adams’ belief in the benefit to America of the tension between the French and the British see; Graebner et. al. (2011), pp. xii. to 130.

might ally with either France or Britain creating disequilibrium.<sup>476</sup> This could happen sooner, for example if Americans could not protect their Mediterranean trade and were forced to seek alliances. Hence in early 1785, the American Commissioners, writing to Vergennes, explained that Congress had resolved that, if the French were unwilling to renew their expiring treaty of 1684 with Algiers and wished for war with the Barbary states to protect their trade, then Congress was willing and indeed preferred to “*join in the war, rather than treat with*”, what were regarded as, barbarous nations [Algiers].<sup>477</sup> Hence the comments of the Commissioners point to a strong desire to expand the meaning of an American neutrality to include an offensive alliance at least as far as the Mediterranean trade was concerned.<sup>478</sup>

Therefore, equilibrium considerations that had become so powerful in the foreign affairs thinking of American statesmen during the War years, were just as powerful, but they were

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<sup>476</sup> *John Adams to Samuel Adams, 26 Jan. 1786*, Founders Online, National Archives

(<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-01-02-0479> [last update: 2015-12-30]). This is an Early Access document from The Adams Papers. It is not an authoritative final version. FONA.

<sup>477</sup> *The American Commissioners to the Comte de Vergennes, 28 March 1785*, The Adams Papers, Papers of John Adams, vol. 16, February 1784–March 1785, Lint G. L., (et.al.), (eds.), (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2012), pp. 579–581. FONA.

<sup>478</sup> This is despite the Congressional Resolution of June 1783 instructing its ministers to avoid any alliance commitments that might require America to “*support those stipulations by force of arms*” and is therefore representative of realism in foreign affairs at this time; see, *Continental Congress Report on American Participation in a European Neutral Confederacy*, 12 June 1783, The Papers of Alexander Hamilton, vol. 3, 1782–1786, Syrett H. C. (ed.), (Columbia University Press: New York, 1962), pp. 377–378. FONA. *Stephen Higginson to John Adams*, 30 Dec. 1785, (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-01-02-0448> [last update: 2015-12-30]). This is an Early Access document from The Adams Papers. It is not an authoritative final version. FONA The importance of America in the post War European balance is a major theme of this letter, in which Higginson explains that the very fact that European rivalry will be decided by “*dominion of the Sea [sic]*” means that America will have a major part in the contest. Even though America does not currently have the naval power, it will eventually have it, in the interim, American “*ports, our Supplies and our Men*” will be of sufficient weight to decide balance conflicts. More importantly, this letter exposes the fact that statesmen were clearly thinking in terms of an American interest which would not be constrained by wartime obligations. Hence, Higginson went on to explain that British fears of a Franco American friendship could be easily allayed by a British American “*offensive and defensive*” alliance which, aside from its military benefits would also bring trade benefits to the two nations that were connected by “*language, habits, manners*”. Indeed, such were the benefits of a British alliance, it was in the national interest that it be pursued, at the expense of France, by America offering itself as a balancing participant. A discussion of an alliance being in the national interest of both Britain and America is continued in *Stephen Higginson to John Adams*, July. 1786, (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-01-02-0708> [last update: 2015-12-30]). Source: this is an Early Access document from The Adams Papers. It is not an authoritative final version. FONA. This latter correspondence is surprising for its candour since Higginson talks of playing “*one [France and Great Britain] off against another*” in the American interest. See also; *To Thomas Jefferson from James Madison, 19 March 1787*, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, vol. 11, 1 January–6 August 1787, ed. Julian P. Boyd. (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1955), pp. 219–225. FONA. The British, for example, were causing “*great agitation*” with western settlers with promises of joining a British colonial system in order to be free from the taxation and governmental “*burdens*” of being a state in the union. Jefferson described the problem as being the equivalent of the Vermont cessation issue but “*on a larger [western] theatre*”. For the idea that Jefferson not only believed in but actively tried to maintain a North American continental expansion policy in 1790, see; Bowman A. H. *Jefferson, Hamilton and American Foreign Policy*, (*Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 71, No. 1, March 1956), pp. 18-41. This paper also explains Jefferson’s willingness to exploit the European balance of power in 1803 in order to secure the Louisiana Purchase.

now no longer thousands of miles away in Europe, but firmly embedded in considerations of the western frontier with Spain in the southwest and with Britain in the northwest. Both nations anxious to restrain the American ambition for continental expansion.<sup>479</sup>

### Exploiting Superpower Rivalries

Rivalries would be exploited by taking advantage of the continuing distrust between France and Great Britain, and the 1778 French alliance would be central to this policy.<sup>480</sup> Military commitments within the 1778 French treaty had left a dilemma in American foreign policy making given the imperative that reciprocal military obligations must be avoided at all costs.<sup>481</sup>

Whilst an ostensible American commitment to French aims of reinstating the equilibrium during the War had been a perfectly acceptable price to pay for that nation's support in winning independence, after the War the obligation required reassessment, something that would not happen until 1793 when America would be called to declare its interest in an Anglo French war.<sup>482</sup>

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<sup>479</sup> Lang (1985). pp. 67 to 68. Therefore, Lang asserts that the international setting is the correct context within which to view the American constitution and its creation. To American thinking, vacation of the western forts sought from Britain would only be possible if Britain could be convinced that the only feasible alternative for Americans was a closer relationship with France. In the south west, it was the struggle over whether the western settled territories would be tied to Spain or to the United States, see; Stagg (2009). pp. 4-15.

<sup>480</sup> Marshall (2012). p. 55. Alternatively, the author takes the view that once American Peace Commissioners had negotiated separate peace preliminaries without recourse to the French, America as well as Britain, could be assured that the French alliance had ruptured, implying that it was not then available as a lever.

<sup>481</sup> Some Americans were not, even out of gratitude for French support during hostilities with Britain, prepared to adhere strictly to the terms of the Alliance; Wood G. S., *Empire of Liberty, A History of the Early Republic*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2009), p. 184.

<sup>482</sup> Hence, the British worried that the United States would continue to align with the French after the War, and therefore desired a neutral America, see, Ritcheson C. R., *Aftermath of Revolution, British Policy Toward the United States, 1783-1795*, (Southern Methodist University Press: Dallas, 1969), p.273. A full re-assessment of the Franco American relationship would not take place until about 1793 with Washington's Proclamation of Neutrality, see; Morton F. J. (ed.). *The Pacificus-Helvidius Debates of 1793-1794. Toward the Completion of the American Founding. Alexander Hamilton and James Madison*. (Liberty Fund: Indianapolis, 2007). Morton, in the introduction, argues that opposition to the Proclamation came not only from those opposed to neutrality *per se*, but from those, primarily in Congress, that opposed on the grounds that the Executive was assuming more power than the founders had ever intended. These debates are generally, according to the author, regarded as having confirmed the power in the executive by virtue of the general grant of powers of the Constitution. The idea of neutrality legislation as a restraint on the powers of the Executive are also illustrated by reference to a Congressional neutrality resolution proposed to Franklin Roosevelt in the 1940s, in; Schlesinger A. M. Jr., *The Imperial Presidency*, (Houghton Mifflin and Company: Boston, 1973), pp.96-97. For an alternative point of view, that Washington feared pernicious French influence in Republican Party politics, see Wood. G. S. *Revolutionary Characters. What Made the Founders Different*, (Penguin: New York, 2006). pp.61 to 62. Further, for Hamilton's view that the usurpation of the French monarchy by the French Revolution invalidated the Treaty because it had originally been made by the American states with Louis XVI, see; Jones (2007), p. 82. However, Hamilton might have been influenced in his view by his hatred of the French Revolution, quoted in Palmer (2014), p. 756. In any case in 1793, there were two camps, one led by Hamilton and the other by Jefferson, which respectively promoted a neutrality more in favour of either Britain or France, see; Casto W. R., *The Supreme Court in the Early Republic, The Chief Justiceships of John Jay and Oliver Ellsworth*, (University of South Carolina Press: South Carolina, 1995), p.74.

In the immediate post-Revolutionary War era the national interest would instead shape the Franco American relationship.<sup>483</sup> The post-War basis of this relationship would be based on equality, that is, America as a sovereign nation with interests distinct from those of France.<sup>484</sup> Taken together therefore, there were two fundamental facets of American foreign policy. Firstly, at one level, an American commitment to the Treaty and hence the law of nations, and secondly a commitment to a national interest.<sup>485</sup>

It was important to maintain the appearance of closeness to France and the promise of an ever greater alliance, especially the promise of ever increasing commerce, since this is the only thing that would, In Adams' words, bring the "*British to terms*".<sup>486</sup> A belief in the value of the 1778 French alliance went so far as to create a commitment on the part of the American Commissioners to support a European war provided that there was the "*clearest conviction of the justice of the cause...and [America's] real interest*" was at stake. A point that was made by Adams when discussing with John Jay the possibility that there might be an English, Dutch, Prussian campaign against the Bourbon nations in 1787 which might require American to join France pursuant to the 1778 alliance.<sup>487</sup> However, if Britain were to agree to relinquish the Western forts and open trade in the West Indies, Americans would favour Britain. Jefferson

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<sup>483</sup> The Pacificus (in the Pacificus Helvidius Debates) approach to disengagement with the 1778 Treaty can be regarded as sidestepping the legal obligation, by relying instead on "*economic, ideological, and political considerations*", as being why the Americans could no longer support the 1778 Treaty, see; Blumenthal (1970), p.9.

<sup>484</sup> The principle being explained here is an instance that arises by virtue of there being an unequal treaty between two parties as opposed to an equal treaty. This was explained by Grotius, see; Grotius (2005), p. 184. An unequal treaty, according to Grotius, requires one partner to a treaty to require the consent of the other before waging war. However, Americans regarded themselves as equal partners in the 1778 alliance, not the junior subject to the instructions of the more senior, that is, that they were parties to an equal treaty. See also Adams C. F. *The Struggle for Neutrality in America: An Address Delivered before the New York Historical Society at their 66<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. December 13<sup>th</sup> 1870.* (University of Michigan Library: Michigan, 2005). Adams explains that the gift of sovereignty is the right to remain in peace while other states are at war.

<sup>485</sup> See for example, La Feber W. *The US Rise to World Power 1776 – 1945*, in Cox M. and Stokes D. (eds.) *US Foreign Policy.* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008), and; Cooper P. J., *By Order of the President, The Use and Abuse of Executive Direct Action*, (University Press of Kansas: Kansas, 2002), pp.122-123.

<sup>486</sup> *Stephen Higginson to John Adams, Jul. 1786*, Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-01-02-0708> [last update: 2015-12-30]). Source: this is an Early Access document from The Adams Papers. It is not an authoritative final version. FONA.

<sup>487</sup> *From John Adams to John Jay, 15 November 1787*, Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-02-02-0270> [last update: 2015-12-30]). Source: this is an Early Access document from The Adams Papers. It is not an authoritative final version. FONA.

explained that Americans desired this outcome but were prevented from it by the “*stupid king*” of Great Britain.<sup>488</sup> A king who refused to vacate the western forts and whose government continued to harass American shipping.<sup>489</sup> It was therefore, for the British to lose the opportunity of an American alliance by their ill-judged desire for revenge for the loss of their former colonies.<sup>490</sup> If Britain could not be made to see sense, then Americans would be tied much closer to the Bourbon nations by enforced “*closer connections of alliance and commerce*” as Adams explained it.<sup>491</sup> Americans would not however, necessarily need to threaten a defensive military alliance, by directly engaging militarily with Britain’s enemies. Instead Britain could be deprived of her power by simply weakening her trade. Such a situation could be achieved by declaring French manufactured goods exempt from a proportion of, or all American imposts. Since these might include naval products, America hoped to threaten Britain with a commercial, and therefore a naval decline because it would only be France that benefitted from competitively priced naval stores.<sup>492</sup> A close post-War relationship with France would therefore provide America with the basis of a military and naval strength it could not achieve alone.

However, this policy of leveraging the French alliance came with the risk that Americans would be associated in foreign affairs as the close ally, pupil and even the spy of French interests in Europe. Hence, John Adams observed that in gatherings of foreign diplomats from Sweden,

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<sup>488</sup> *From Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, 28 September 1787*, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, vol. 12, 7 August 1787–31 March 1788, Boyd J. P. (ed.), (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1955), pp. 189–190. FONA.

<sup>489</sup> *From Thomas Jefferson to John Jay, 8 October 1787*, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, vol. 12, 7 August 1787–31 March 1788, Boyd J. P. (ed.), (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1955), pp. 214–217. FONA.

<sup>490</sup> *John Adams to John Jay, 17 Oct. 1785*, Founders Online, National Archives (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-01-02-0325> [last update: 2015-12-30]). Source: this is an Early Access document from The Adams Papers. It is not an authoritative final version. FONA.

<sup>491</sup> For the converse, i.e. that a closer trading relationship between Britain and America would prevent Americans “*throwing their weight into the scale against Great Britain by enabling them to maintain a neutrality*”, see; *John Adams to John Hancock, 26 Jan. 1786*, (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-01-02-0480> [last update: 2015-12-30]). Source: this is an Early Access document from The Adams Papers. It is not an authoritative final version. FONA.

<sup>492</sup> *John Adams to John Jay, 17 Oct. 1785*, (<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-01-02-0325> [last update: 2015-12-30]). Source: this is an Early Access document from The Adams Papers. It is not an authoritative final version. FONA.

Prussia and Holland at Versailles, foreign representatives were circumspect in the presence of Americans lest the latter were to report “*a look or a word*” to the French.<sup>493</sup> The *impartiality* that Adams had proclaimed therefore based itself in the inescapable fact of the French alliance, but carried risk that American interests might be subordinated to those of France.<sup>494</sup>

Therefore, it remained in American interests not to become too closely associated with France for the simple reason that such a relationship would cause other nations to assume that the Americans were in thrall to French ministers and therefore not to be trusted. In other words, that American and French interests were either aligned, or that American interests had been so degraded in priority, that, now, naïve American diplomats were reliant on French guidance in international affairs.<sup>495</sup>

There was, however, a feeling amongst some in America that there was a strong Anglo anti-Americanism.<sup>496</sup> Therefore, Jefferson believed that, despite jealousy of the French alliance, Britain had no intention of entering into an alliance with America and simply wished to “*keep up an existence with*” it in which the latter retained its sovereignty distinct from France, and

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<sup>493</sup> *John Adams to Tristram Dalton, 5 March 1785*, The Adams Papers, Papers of John Adams, vol. 16, February 1784–March 1785, (ed.) Gregg L. L. (et. Al), (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 2012), pp. 542–543. FONA. However, at least to nations such as Russia, the strict rules of neutrality applied, and hence the Empress, refused to accept an envoy from the United States until the articles of the 1783 Peace Treaty had been ratified in Congress, since this was the final step in the formal independence of America, see; *Letter from Messrs Ellery and Howell, to Governor Greene, September 8<sup>th</sup> 1783*, in Guild A. R., *Rhode Island in the Continental Congress, with the Journal of the convention that adopted the Constitution. 1765-1790*, (Providence Press Company: Providence, 1870), pp. 442-443.

<sup>494</sup> For the point of view that Americans were not prepared to accept that their leverage of the 1778 Alliance permitted the French to reciprocate, see Bemis (1957), p. 182., who explains that the Americans were not prepared to disavow alliance commitments but took the point of view that an independent America was sovereign and “*that the French republic could not use in America .....the lever of a political opposition to overthrow any government that stood in the way of French policy, purpose and interest*”.

<sup>495</sup> *John Adams to Tristram Dalton, 5 March 1785*, The Adams Papers, Papers of John Adams, vol. 16, February 1784–March 1785, Lint G.L. (et. Al) (eds.), (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 2012), pp. 542–543. FONA.

<sup>496</sup> *Joseph Reed to John Adams, 7 May 1784*, The Adams Papers, Papers of John Adams, vol. 16, February 1784–March 1785, ed. Gregg L. Lint G. L. (et. al.), (ed.), (Harvard University Press: Cambridge MA, 2012). pp. 191–193. FONA. This letter exposes the underlying anti-Americanism in Britain; Reed, a Pennsylvania politician visiting England for health reasons, commented on its prevalence, especially in the areas of trade (access to the West Indies trade) and how such attitudes would simply encourage a closer American alliance with the French.

should be restrained in its growth and certainly not be assisted by access to British ports around the world.<sup>497</sup>

Hence, as Americans tried to treat with the Six Nations of the Iroquois, they suspected that the British were trying to frustrate any agreement by suggesting to the Indians that “*the alliance between the United States and France was insecure and transitory*”, and hence that the Indians need not respect their American interlocutors because they did not represent to, or were associated with, a nation anywhere as powerful as France.<sup>498</sup> Evidently, British negotiators believed that their post-War strategic aims could be better achieved by attempting to entice the Iroquois Indian tribes on the northwestern frontier into an anti-American confederacy, despite having betrayed their wartime loyalty by ignoring them in the 1783 Paris Peace Treaty.

Given British antagonism, Americans were prepared to strengthen the French arrangement. To keep alive this possibility, Washington was at pains to explain to the French that it was British acts and omissions, the failure to vacate the western forts and to agree a trade treaty, that was causing America to look to its France alliance, and to “*strengthen*” it to “*promote*” mutual interests.<sup>499</sup> To underline this commitment and to qualify what neutrality meant, Washington took a very specific view of the rights and obligations of non-belligerents in times of conflict. Hence, a non-belligerent America was entitled to “*such a neutrality as will actually help her [America’s] allies, and increase her [America’s] own wealth*”.<sup>500</sup> Washington explained that while America would not involve itself in any future Franco British war, it did expect to take

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<sup>497</sup> From Thomas Jefferson to James Currie, 27 September 1785, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, vol. 8, 25 February–31 October 1785, Boyd J. P., (ed.), (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1953), pp. 558–560. FONA.

<sup>498</sup> From James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, 17 October 1784, The Papers of James Madison, vol. 8, 10 March 1784–28 March 1786, ed. Rutland R. A. and Rachal W. M. E., (eds.) (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1973), pp.118–122. FONA.

<sup>499</sup> From George Washington to La Luzerne, 1 August 1786, The Papers of George Washington, Confederation Series, vol. 4, 2 April 1786–31 January 1787, (ed.), Abbot W. W., (University Press of Virginia: Charlottesville, 1995), pp. 185–187. FONA.

<sup>500</sup> To George Washington from Lafayette, 9 October 1787, The Papers of George Washington, Confederation Series, vol. 5, 1 February 1787–31 December 1787, Abbot W. W. (ed.), (University Press of Virginia: Charlottesville, 1997), pp. 358–365. FONA.



advantage of the consequences of naval combat particularly where this involved the sale of captured prizes in American forts, and the revenues that would be associated with repair and refitting of French ships. Washington's comments imply that American willingness to work on French naval ships in times of conflict arose directly from the 1778 alliance and hence indicate a rather peculiar view of what neutrality was meant to be. Alexander Hamilton's comments that American neutrality was intended to be "*useful to France, profitable to the United States, and perfectly safe on the footing of the treaties*", provides a rather clearer explanation that what was intended was a neutrality that suited American interests.<sup>501</sup>

There are three illustrations of this qualified neutrality in post-War American foreign policy as equilibrium participation, briefly explained in the sections that follow, as exploitation of balance rivalries in the three pillars of national interest .

### **National Interest in Security: Military Alliances**

In the first instance, then, the American response to the Barbary pirate attacks on its shipping in the Mediterranean illustrates both the clear willingness to qualify neutrality through alliance creation and direct threats to the balance.<sup>502</sup>

The desire to protect the Mediterranean trade involved consideration of a mutual defence alliance with Portugal. The Portuguese Queen had offered to protect American shipping against the Barbary Pirates, Adams however worried that such an offer might involve obligations to enter into treaty commitments and, in his letter to John Jay, American Foreign

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<sup>501</sup> *To Alexander Hamilton from Marquis de Lafayette, 15 October 1787*, The Papers of Alexander Hamilton, vol. 4, January 1787–May 1788, Syrett H. C. (ed.), (Columbia University Press: New York, 1962), pp. 282–284. FONA.

<sup>502</sup> *Letter from John Adams to Secretary Jay. Auteil. 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1784*, TWJA, Volume VIII. Adams reported that a Virginian ship had been captured by Algeria and this had raised insurance premiums and would raise the cost of American goods thereby making them uncompetitive. At this early stage he was convinced that the payment of tribute was the only option available to Congress and indeed would be a more cost effective outcome than paying ransom for enslaved sailors.

Secretary, made the point that if the United States were to agree to pay taxes and build a navy, that such alliances would not be needed.<sup>503</sup> However, Jefferson by the summer of 1786 had resigned himself to seeking a naval or military solution to the continued attack on American commerce. He therefore proposed to Adams that a three-way mutual defence treaty involving Naples and Portugal would enable America to share the burden of a war with Algiers. Jefferson much preferred “*obtaining it [the peace] by war*” since “*it will procure us respect on Europe and respect is a safeguard to interest*”.<sup>504</sup> Hence, Jefferson articulated the fourth qualification of an American neutrality. That when faced with crises of magnitude, defined as those that required America to demonstrate to protagonists that it had the ability to act to protect its interests, it would not hesitate to enter into military commitments to protect its trade.

That the Barbary attacks were a crisis of magnitude was clear by about 1785 when American shipping in the Mediterranean had all but ceased.<sup>505</sup> However, Congress, reluctant to enter into an alliance, was left with only two options with which to deal with the Barbary threat. Firstly, to build a navy that would be able to wage war on and protect American shipping from the pirates or, secondly to succumb to the threat and pay the tribute demanded.<sup>506</sup> John Adams explained these alternatives when he reported the view of the Comte de Vergennes to Jefferson in the middle of 1786 that it was greed and fear that formed the basis of Algerian

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<sup>503</sup> Letter from John Adams to John Jay. 27<sup>th</sup> June 1786. TEN III, p. 206.

<sup>504</sup> Letter from Thomas Jefferson to John Adams. 11<sup>th</sup> July 1786. TEN III, pp. 220 to 222. See also Nau. H. R., *Conservative internationalism. Armed diplomacy under Jefferson, Polk, Truman and Reagan*, (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2013). pp.88-89.

<sup>505</sup> Letter from John Adams to Thomas Jefferson. London. 18<sup>th</sup> September. 1785, TWJA, Volume X, p. 314. Adams reported that American shipping was not currently present in the Mediterranean as a consequence of the risk but mainly in the Atlantic which, the pirates could “*expect to take but very few, at a vast expense of corsairs, and exposed to our privateers and frigates*”. Letter from John Adams to Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. Auteuil, 20<sup>th</sup> March, 1785. Adams had been advised in early 1785 that it was Congress’ failure to provide “*presents*” to the Emperor of Morocco that had caused offence. TWJA, Volume III, p. 230.

<sup>506</sup> Kohn R. H. *Eagle and Sword. The Beginnings of the Military Establishment in America*. (The Free Press: London, 1975). pp.2-84. The fear of standing armies may be found in the structure of typical eighteenth century armies since at least the 1620s. Since they were comprised of aristocratic officers, but soldiers from the lowest orders of society, accustomed to extremely harsh conditions and discipline and usually not subject to the liberties afforded to the remainder of society, there was a fear that a standing army, in times of peace would, out of boredom or idleness, turn on the people. However, this had not been the experience of the Americans in, for example the period from 1757 to 1763 when the British army had brought economic benefits to the colonies. It was thought that a well organised militia did not present these risks since it was on the whole recruited from local men with a stake in local society. For this idea of this, the virtuous soldier, see Niemeyer C. P., *America Goes to War, A Social History of the Continental Army*, (New York University Press: New York, 1996), p. xiv.

insecurity. The cost of tribute was put at between two hundred and five hundred thousand pounds sterling, the upper range of which was estimated to be the cost of building and maintaining a navy. Compared to this Adams estimated the cost of the extra insurance premiums and the loss of up to half the Mediterranean trade. This calculation led Adams to conclude that tribute would be the best of all of the worst options since Congress could borrow the entire sum and therefore the cost would be the annual interest on the debt, put at most thirty thousand pounds sterling, compared to a destructive and costly sea war.<sup>507</sup>

Although Jefferson had believed that a concert of European nations could be arranged to provide mutual protection in the Mediterranean, the scheme ultimately failed for lack of French and British involvement, only Spain was willing to intervene on behalf of the Americans and this was because of its interest in seeing Britain leave continental North America.<sup>508</sup> The very proposal to enter into an alliance with the European nations thereby creating a two or three way alliance illustrates the willingness of American statesmen to pursue national interest even at the expense of entangling alliances and coalitions that might threaten the existing balance.

### **National Interest in Trade: Leveraging the 1778 French Alliance**

In the second instance, the 1778 Alliance was used directly to obtain trade concessions.

American merchants preferred trade with the British over the French, attributed by Jefferson to nothing more than financial considerations since the British merchant was more willing to extend credit than was the French merchant. In addition, it made no commercial sense for an American merchant, able to sell at a profit in British ports, to make his way to France with

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<sup>507</sup> *Letter from John Adams to Thomas Jefferson. London. 6<sup>th</sup> June 1786. TWJA. Volume X. p. 399.*

<sup>508</sup> The proposal to other European nations is reproduced in; Petersen M. D., *Thomas Jefferson, Writings*, (The Library of American: New York, 1984), pp.59-60.

commodities landed in Britain. However, if the British were unwilling to provide Americans with reciprocal trade concessions, particularly access to the West Indies, then Jefferson submitted that America should commit itself “*unequivocally*” to France and seek protection for American trade.<sup>509</sup> This view was reinforced by Ralph Izard, a member of the Continental Congress, who explained that irrespective of whether Congress was given greater powers in the forthcoming Philadelphia Convention of 1787, America should align itself with France, from whom it had secured great advantage. For France, American trade carried with it the guarantee that it would benefit greatly, to a value that could be easily measured when compared to the trade with England, an equilibrium consideration.<sup>510</sup> Hence, Americans carried with them the firm belief that the assurance of their trade carried with it the power to determine the equilibrium in Europe between the two great superpowers.<sup>511</sup>

For Adams, if Britain were to offer terms, it could be assured of an American “*impartiality and neutrality*”, if not then Britain would only encourage “*closer connections of alliance and commerce with France, Spain, and Holland*”.<sup>512</sup> What is important is that Adams was contemplating, if America were forced into alliance with France, two important principles. That there should be a new defensive alliance, and secondly that commercial considerations should

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<sup>509</sup> *Enclosure: Jefferson’s Report on Conversations with Vergennes, [December 1785]*, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, vol. 9, 1 November 1785–22 June 1786, Boyd J. P. (ed.), (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1954), pp. 139–146. FONA.

<sup>510</sup> For the opposing view, that the American trade was of little consequence to any of the powers of Europe, not to Britain if the latter could not control it, nor to Spain and France who would, in the event of an American independence, take control of some or all of the colonies, see *Letter of Massachusettensis* [being Daniel Leonard, a Massachusetts based lawyer] *No. VIII, To the Inhabitants of the Province of Massachusetts Bay*, in Wood G. (ed.), *John Adams, Revolutionary Writings, 1755–1775*, (The Library of America: New York, 2011), pp. 392–396.

<sup>511</sup> *To Thomas Jefferson from Ralph Izard, 4 April 1787*, The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, vol. 11, 1 January–6 August 1787, Boyd J. P. (ed.), (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1955), pp. 262–266. FONA. See also the desire to replace goods no longer available from Britain with French products; *To George Washington from George Mason, 19 June 1789*, The Papers of George Washington, Presidential Series, vol. 3, 15 June 1789–5 September 1789, Twohig D. (ed.), (University Press of Virginia: Charlottesville, 1989), pp. 49–55. FONA. See also; *John Adams to the president of Congress, 13 May 1784*. The Adams Papers, Papers of John Adams, vol. 16, February 1784–March 1785, ed. Lint G. L. (et. al.), (eds.), (Harvard University Press: Cambridge MA, 2012), pp. 211–213., in which Adams advocates a closer relationship with France because of the “*coldness and distance*” of the British.

<sup>512</sup> Bragg C. L., *Crescent Moon over Carolina, William Moultrie and American Liberty*, (The University of South Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 2013), p. 256., the French Alliance continued to affect American foreign affairs thinking after the War had ended. Hence, in South Carolina, the Governor continued to follow the terms of the Alliance by allowing French ships to operate from Charleston Harbour after France went to war with Britain in 1793.

be inextricably entwined with it, to the extent that favourable trade terms should persist into perpetuity. Adams likened such an arrangement to the 1703 treaty between Britain and Portugal which had provided for the trade of woollens and wines, uninterrupted even by war between the two nations.

Whilst discussing the possibility that Americans might contemplate a French commercial and defensive alliance, Adams was at pains to point out that America “*cherished*” its impartiality and neutrality but would consider it abandoned only if compelled to by the actions of the British. For example, Britain had adopted a strategy of harassment, refusing trade concessions, or to vacate its western forts, and impressing American sailors into the British navy.<sup>513</sup> The British had attributed this conduct to the actions of the individual American states which had passed stay laws preventing British creditors from being able to enforce pre-War debts.

The above analysis indicates that the threat of a French alignment was being used as a lever to secure British concessions, only possible because of European rivalries. Indeed, it was precisely the favourable terms that would be offered to France in such circumstances, possibly in perpetuity, which would have the effect of causing a decline in British manufacturing. This is because French treaty terms would no doubt require that punitive tariffs be levied on British trade making the manufactured goods of the latter less competitive.<sup>514</sup>

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<sup>513</sup> *A Memorial. 30th November 1785*. The posts included Oswegatchy, Oswego, Niagara, Presque Isle, Sandusky, Detroit, Michilimackinac and surrounding land garrisoned by British forces, TWJA, Volume III. p. 357. See also; *Letter from John Adams to The Marquis of Carmarthen. London. 3 October, 1787*, TWJA, Volume VIII, pp. 456 to 457. Problems with the British did not just involve the British Forts but also complaints about the impressment of American sailors. Adams complained about an American citizen and sailor, Charles Baldwin, who been removed from the ship *Favourite* and put on a boat to Sheerness. Baldwin had explained in his letter, claimed Adams, that “*there are six or seven others, American citizens, on board the same ship in similar circumstances*”. See also Marshall (2012). p. 89. The author explains that the British were busy trying to tempt the Vermont settlers to a closer connection to Quebec, and to separate Kentucky from the American union by developing a separate trade with them.

<sup>513</sup> *Letter to Secretary Jay. Grosvenor Square, 26th February 1786*, TWJA, Volume III, p. 380. See also Marshall (2012). p. 99. Marshall explains that regulation of trade, as opposed to *laissez faire* free trade was adopted by the Americans.

<sup>514</sup> TWJA, Volume VIII, p. 322.

### National Interest in Territory: A Balance of Power Consideration

Finally, the political relationship between the Americans and the Creek Indians in the southwest illustrates the American participation in a North American continental system that depended on maintaining a balance between Spain and the American union in which the Creek Indians were an important consideration.

In the southwest, the Creek Indians were keenly aware that the Americans simply wanted their lands, after the War, had been abandoned to their fate by the British.<sup>515</sup> The Creeks were having to content with conflicting offers of alliance from the American states, and from Spanish Commissioners eager to create a buffer between the Spanish colonies and the American union. However, Creek strategic interests lay in resuming trade with either of these neighbours whilst at the same time securing land rights to the Creek people.<sup>516</sup> Their lands were more at risk from American expansion than they were from existing Spanish colonists intent not on expansion but protection within their current territorial envelope, albeit subject to the creation of buffer territories described above.<sup>517</sup> This situation may be attributed in part to the uneconomic Spanish colonial system which barely paid for itself without Spanish subsidy, and therefore obviated further expansion especially at the expense of treasure.<sup>518</sup> Therefore, the Creeks tended towards a Spanish alliance, associated not just with the feelings

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<sup>515</sup> Letter of Arturo O'Neil, Spanish Governor of Spanish West Florida. MoG. p. 90. McGillivray, in this letter, recognised that the Americans wanted free access not only to their lands but also to the Mississippi. See also; *Letter of McGillivray to Arturo O'Neil, Spanish Governor of Spanish West Florida*. MoG. p. 84. *After the 1784 Treaty of Pensacola, British merchants in West Florida did resume trading with the Creeks and the Spanish*.

<sup>516</sup> *Letter of McGillivray to Arturo O'Neil, Spanish Governor of Spanish West Florida. 20<sup>th</sup> March 1784*. MoG. p. 73. McGillivray claims to have established that there was a possibility of America gaining her independence and therefore to seek Spanish protection in the event that the "British nation has been compelled to withdraw its protection from us. She has no right to give up a country she never could [sic] call her own. Therefore, as a free nation we have an undoubted right to choose what protection we think proper".

<sup>517</sup> For the Spanish, their North American colonies might similarly come under threat from an expanding America as the failure to reach agreement on navigation rights to the Mississippi had shown. It might also be possible to tempt some loyalists from America to the Spanish colonies, see; *Letter of McGillivray to Arturo O'Neil, Spanish Governor of Spanish West Florida. 5<sup>th</sup> February 1784*. MoG. p. 69

<sup>518</sup> Whittaker (1927). p. 22. The Spanish colonies produced products such as indigo, rice and tobacco, only the latter of which had a ready market in Spain. The Spanish colonies required annual funding of some one million dollars and produced a net income to Spain of some fifty thousand dollars per annum.

of Alexander McGillivray, *de facto* diplomat of the Creek nation and a half Creek half Scotsman whose father had been a loyalist, and who felt antipathy to the Americans for the way his father had been treated.<sup>519</sup>

American expansion west was already underway, and indeed had barely stopped during the Revolutionary War. The Creeks therefore had much to fear from armed frontiersmen, some former soldiers, who complaining about unfair Congressional taxes, were looking for land free from Congressional interference.<sup>520</sup> Therefore, by the middle of 1784, the Treaty of Pensacola, a treaty of peace and commerce, had been entered into between Spain and the Creek nations, guaranteeing the integrity of Creek lands.<sup>521</sup> The Creeks sought to cement their protective relationship with the Spanish by resuming as soon as possible their trade and also denied outright the claims of the Americans to their lands, claimed simply by virtue of the American claim that any lands apparently ceded to the British after the end of her Seven Years War were automatically those of the American union.<sup>522</sup>

Americans continued to attempt to lure the Creeks to their sphere of influence by offering free trade, particularly their almost exclusive access to London merchants.<sup>523</sup> By 1786, American efforts at encouraging a Creek alignment took on greater impetus following the appointment by Congress of Commissioners to settle the western boundary, forcing McGillivray to meet with them and thereby causing concern to Spain of an impending American Creek

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<sup>519</sup> See generally; MoG.

<sup>520</sup> *Letter of McGillivray to Arturo O'Neil, Spanish Governor of Spanish West Florida. January 1, 1784.* MoG. p. 64. McGillivray sought Spanish protection from the westward expansion of Americans in Georgia. He attributed American expansion to Congressional requisitions of the several states with which to meet the war debt put by him at some \$42 million attracting interest at \$2.5m per annum. Americans were therefore, according to McGillivray, attempting to escape the reaches of Congress by seeking new lands in the west.

<sup>521</sup> A copy of the *Treaty of Pensacola. 1<sup>st</sup> June 1784.* may be found at p. 75. MoG.

<sup>522</sup> Letter from McGillivray to [this letter is not signed addressed or dated but was probably written shortly after the Congress of Pensacola]. MoG. p. 77. McGillivray wrote "*In order to secure firmly .... to the Crown Spain the first measure that ought to be adopted is by a well regulated trade upon as reasonable terms*".

<sup>523</sup> *Letter of McGillivray to Arturo O'Neil, Spanish Governor of Spanish West Florida. 24th of July 1785,* MoG. p. 93.

rapprochement.<sup>524</sup> Despite the possibility for negotiations, and encouraged by Spain to “oppose vigorously” American expansion into Creek lands, by early 1786, it was clear to the Creeks that settlers from Georgia could not be easily constrained in their demand for lands and that “*the miseries and horrors of the savage*” war were being contemplated.<sup>525</sup>

However, the Spanish, anxious to avoid an American Creek conflict, explained to McGillivray, that they would not, in offering their Royal protection to the Creeks, do “*prejudice to the good harmony that exists at present between Spain and the United States of America*”.<sup>526</sup> Further, the Spanish counselled that the Creek Indians should be circumspect when considering how to respond to American encroachments in order to avoid open hostilities since, “*if they exasperate the Georgians with new hostilities all the states will make common cause*” and the Creeks would not be able to “*resist them*”.<sup>527</sup> Hence in many ways the Creek Indian relationship with Spain and America is representative of wider European balance of power considerations. This is because, after the War had ended, in the southwest at least, America and Spain were the chief participants in the equilibrium in which the Creek Indians were an important balancing consideration. In other words, Spain and America tried to balance each other’s power by attempting a Creek alliance.

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<sup>524</sup> Letter of McGillivray to Arturo O’Neil, Spanish Governor of Spanish West Florida. 14 September 1785. MoG, p. 97. McGillivray placed this obligation to meet with the Americans on the desire to do all that he could to avoid an American Indian war. American negotiations with the Creeks also had the necessary but risky effect of creating an Indian confederacy since boundary negotiations would only be effective if all Indian nations agreed. This was made clear in a Letter from Benjamin Hawkins, American Commissioner to McGillivray. 8<sup>th</sup> January 1786. p. 101. in which Hawkins explained “*The commissioners would not treat with a few of your nation who met them I’m since informed that the agents of Georgia did treat with them and.... there were not twenty Indians ....*” that went to the negotiations which is clearly not regarded as representative of all Indians nor likely to bind them.

<sup>525</sup> Letter of McGillivray to Arturo O’Neil, Spanish Governor of Spanish West Florida 1<sup>st</sup> May 1786. MoG, p.106. Complaints were made about the continued encroachment on Indian hunting lands by Americans generally but specifically the Georgians and McGillivray was asking for Spanish military aid. (see Letter of McGillivray to Arturo O’Neil, Spanish Governor of Spanish West Florida. 20<sup>th</sup> June 1786. p. 177., the Indians were seeking five thousand pounds of powder and balls). The American Commissioners, for their part, insisted that any such *encroachments were “strictly forbidden”* and subject to punishment – see Letter from the Georgia Commissioners to McGillivray. 15<sup>th</sup> August 1786. p. 129. See also Tomlins C.L. et al, (2001), p.123. Essay Hermes Katherine. *Justice Will Be Done Us. Algonquian Demands for Reciprocity in the Courts of European Settlers*. The Indians and the English agreed that when colonists hurt Indians colonial courts would punish the offender. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Algonquian’s ruled themselves but also came to French and English colonial courts in certain matters. See also; Letter of Arturo O’Neil, Spanish Governor of Spanish West Florida to Jose de Galvez, Marques de Sonora (Minister of the Indies). 10<sup>th</sup> August 1786. MoG, p. 125.

<sup>526</sup> Letter of Vincent Manuel Zespedes to McGillivray 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1787. MoG, p. 143.

<sup>527</sup> Letter of Estevan Miro to Arturo O’Neil, Spanish Governor of Spanish West Florida. 24<sup>th</sup> March 1787. MoG, p. 145.



## Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the continuing affect that balance of power considerations had on shaping American foreign policy even after the War for Independence had come to a conclusion. In the post-War years, equilibrium thinking was wrapped within a very specific version of the idea of neutrality in foreign affairs. In essence, America would treat Britain and France impartially only in so far as it suited the national interest. Profession of neutrality would therefore provide a safe haven from which to take advantage of balance rivalries, even if this meant compromising the ideology of no political connections. Separately from the adoption of this nuanced form of neutrality, American statesmen continued to be drawn into the consideration of equilibrium issues because of the existence of the Spanish and British presence in the west, both nations interested in reigning in American expansion. Hence, had American statesmen wished for some form of isolation from Europe, this was just not possible given its continued importance to the balance participants.

This argument, presented in Chapters One to Four, essentially rejects the idea that there was isolationism in early American foreign affairs, by explaining that a pragmatic foreign policy involved an active participation in the European balance of power, the definition adopted of internationalism in foreign affairs. To complete the argument, the next chapter directly confronts ideas of isolationism as they manifest in eighteenth century American foreign affairs, and explains either their impracticality as policy, or that they were nothing more than essentially bit parts in overall arguments against Constitutional reform.

## 5. Chapter Five: The Eighteenth Century Meaning of Isolationism

### Introduction

Isolationism as a concept in this period, is regarded as a non-sequitur by some historians, due in large part to the connections brought about by the substantial flow of migrants to America, and European connections through trade.<sup>528</sup> Thomas Paine had explained in his famous publication, *Common Sense* in 1776 that immigration was important because it had resulted in close ties with Europe owing to those familial and other relationships that immigrants still had in European countries.<sup>529</sup> For Paine, ties with Europe would act as a balance to a hostile Britain, which, because of its previous colonial relationship would always interfere in America domestic politics.<sup>530</sup>

Kaplan, for example, explains that the importance to America of France as a “*counterweight*” to Britain, the negotiations with Spain over trade and navigation of the Mississippi River, as well as trade concessions with the British, all show that the “*bonds of Europe were difficult to break*”.<sup>531</sup> Kaplan further explains that ideas of isolationism if they existed at all in American foreign affairs, should be regarded as more a freedom to act as the Americans wished than it was a desire to separate the new world from the old. As explained in Chapter One, this is the

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<sup>528</sup> These trade links re-commenced immediately after the War with the purchase and sale, between American and British merchants, of dry goods see; Bezanson A., *Prices and Inflation During the American Revolution, Pennsylvania, 1770-1790*, (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 1951), pp. 6-7. For American merchant efforts to reinstate the pre-War Anglo American trade, see; Buel R. Jr., *In Irons, Britain's Naval Supremacy and the American Revolutionary Economy*, (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1998), pp. 240-245., and Bowling K. R., *The Creation of Washington D.C., The Idea and Location of the American Capital*, (George Mason University Press: Virginia, 1991), p.24., who describes it as being in the national interest to reinstate and develop trade with Europe.

<sup>529</sup> TWTP, *Common Sense*. pp.35-49. See also; Foner E., *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1976), p. 79., the author explains that *Common Sense* had been read across the colonies “*by all sorts of people*”.

<sup>530</sup> See; *The Crisis II*. p 13, *The Crisis III*. pp 36 to 37, *The Crisis VI*. pp. 92 to 93, and *The Crisis VII*. pp. 97 to 116. For Paine's belief in the idea that Britain would attempt to entice America away from, for example, its French alliance, see *The Crisis XII*, p. 176., all references to TWTP.

<sup>531</sup> Kaplan L. S. *Entangling Alliances with None. American Foreign Policy in the Age of Jefferson*. (The Kent State University Press: Kent, Ohio. 1787).

view of Morgenthau that an American separation could not be achieved by doing nothing.<sup>532</sup>

For Kaplan, this freedom to act was the freedom not only from allegiance to any one nation, but the freedom to visit any international port, and the adoption of the idea that free ports make for free trade. Hence, according to La Feber, and attributed to Benjamin Franklin, there was a “*dilemma [in] American isolationism*” reflected in the desire to seek international commercial arrangements, without incurring the expense of political alliances.<sup>533</sup> In other words, the desire to remain separate from political Europe given that trade implied economic interdependence which in turn might lead to foreign engagement.

Notwithstanding the views of Kaplan and La Feber, the argument of this Chapter is made by considering two other possible interpretations of isolation. Firstly, the closed agricultural society of Jefferson, an ultimately theoretical construct, that was not adopted as a serious alternative to international trade. Secondly in the arguments of the Anti-Federalists, who opposed constitutional reform in 1787, and the Federalists who supported it. In foreign affairs terms, Anti-Federalists believed that geographical distance isolated America from the ills of Europe, but constitutional change that centralised power, would create the circumstances for European nations to send its diplomats and agents to influence domestic politics, destroying the tranquillity afforded by virtue of geography. Hence, Anti-Federalists demanded that the liberty afforded by distance be protected by maintaining the current state system and the loose arrangements of the Articles of Confederation.

For Federalists, however, the creation of a powerful, centralised concentration of power held out the prospect of a more cohesive union better equipped to engage in foreign affairs, and

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<sup>532</sup> Morgenthau (1952), pp. 1-7

<sup>533</sup> La Feber. W. *Foreign Policies of a New Nation: Franklin, Madison, and the “Dream of a New Land to Fulfil of American Foreign Relations*. (John Wiley and Sons Inc.: New York, 1972).

more immune from foreign intermeddling. Hence, Federalists rejected the isolationist tendencies of their constitutional detractors and looked to the delegation of power to a federal government that would create in America, a representative sovereign nation equivalent, in foreign affairs terms, to other nations.

This Chapter begins with a brief review of the idea of the isolationism afforded by an economically closed society. It then explores the Federalist and Anti-Federalist writings to uncover the arguments for and against isolationism.

### **The Agri-Idealism of Jefferson**

The Jeffersonian ideal was one of a society that operated an agriculture economy, with limited domestic manufacturing, not reliant on overseas trade.<sup>534</sup> Jeffersonian agri-idealism lay in the belief that the American union would have little need for overseas markets for agricultural surpluses since farmers would be encouraged to produce only what the nation needed, that is, there would be no surplus.<sup>535</sup> A closed economy would rely on American consumers conditioned to deny themselves the manufactured luxuries of Europe, other than those that could be encouraged at home by the payment of bounties.<sup>536</sup> The idea of agricultural economic isolation can be found in Jefferson's 1781 *Notes on the State of Virginia*, in which he implies that the loss of revenue from international trade will be made up by the contentment felt by

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<sup>534</sup> See; Kulikoff A., *From British Peasants to Colonial Farmers*, (The University of North Carolina Press: North Carolina, 2000), pp. 289-291. The author explains that before the Revolutionary War, and until circa. 1840, America was a rural based economy with only between 3.5% and 8.5% of people living in cities. The author also clarifies the idea of manufacturing in the early Republic to comprise not just luxury manufactured products, but large scale agricultural production at the expense of the smaller farmer. However, other historians regard what they refer to as "*Jeffersonian political economy*" as being a belief in an agricultural economy but with American farm surpluses sold abroad and used to buy European manufactures, in the Adam Smith free market style, see; Gibson A., *Interpreting the Founding, Guide to the Enduring Debates over the Origins and Foundations of the American Republic*, (University Press of Kansas: Kanas, 2006), pp. 58-59.

<sup>535</sup> Cogliano F. D., *Emperor of Liberty, Thomas Jefferson's Foreign Policy*, (Yale University Press: New York, 2014), p.5. As to Jeffersonian agriculturally inspired isolationism, see Tucker (1990), pp. 30 – 32., and also Malone D., *Jefferson and His Time, The Sage of Monticello*, (Little, Brown and Company: New York, 1970), p. 146.

<sup>536</sup> Alexander Hamilton is regarded by some as having led Americans from agriculture to a manufacturing based economy built on transport and banking, see Rossiter C., *Alexander Hamilton and the Constitution*, (Harcourt, Brace and World: New York, 1964), p. 9. For a discussion of the conflict between Hamilton, who promoted a manufacturing economy, and Jefferson, who favoured agriculture, see; Reynolds, D., *America, Empire of Liberty, A New History*, (Allen Lane: London, 2009), pp. 86-87.

Americans from stable governments of virtuous men.<sup>537</sup> This agri-idealism is reflective of a wider Jeffersonian belief in the rejection in America of the European ideas of class, hence that the American farmer was as deserving of civilisation as those in the so called “*polished societies*” of Europe, and indeed possessing greater morality, and worth to society because of his honest labour.<sup>538</sup> To emphasise the point, for James Madison, the creation of a manufacturing base was causative of a loss of personal liberty, and destructive of virtue. Madison attributed this undesirable outcome to what would be the inevitable rise in mass production, the export of surpluses, and therefore the rise of interest groups attracted by commercial profits, pernicious to the general welfare.<sup>539</sup> Since, international trade inevitably required active involvement with European nations in pursuit of markets for surpluses, it would expose the American economy to fluctuations in European demand, and European economic policies.<sup>540</sup>

In a variation of Jefferson’s idea, Benjamin Franklin mused about a mixed manufacturing and agricultural economy, politically isolated from Europe, with markets only in an ever expanding American nation. Franklin had formed a view of the unsettled western territories of North America as being a natural part of the original thirteen states, and a large future consumer of American manufactured and agricultural products. However, he recognised that output would

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<sup>537</sup> Jefferson T., *Basic Writings*, (Konecky and Konecky: Connecticut, 2005), pp. 163-164. Essay by Banning L., *Political Economy and the Federal Republic*, in; Konig (1995) pp.32–34. Jefferson generally sought to reduce reliance on foreign nations; Ellis J. J., *American Sphinx, The Character of Thomas Jefferson*, (Random House, New York, 1998), p. 308. See also; Ekbladh D., *The Great American Mission. Modernisation and the Construction of an American World Order*, (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2010) p.15, in which the author explains that in this period “*frugality and industry*” were to be encouraged.

<sup>538</sup> Tucker R. W. et. al., (1990), p.6. The farmer citizen would naturally oppose centralised power and desire his personal independence against its usurpation by a Federal government, see; Breen T. H., *Tobacco Culture, The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution*, (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1985), pp. 9-12. However, Pennsylvania Quakers believed that international trade, by creating domestic employment, laid the foundation for a society of virtuous men, usefully engaged in valuable economic output to the betterment of themselves and of society, see; Crowley (1974), p. 39.

<sup>539</sup> Banning L., *The Sacred Fire of Liberty, James Madison and the Founding of the Federal Republic*, (Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London, 1995), pp. 61-65. But also see Pocock J. G. A., *The Machiavellian Moment, Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1975), p. 539, in which the author argues that Jefferson believed that the vast continent could easily subsume the worst effects of commerce within an agrarian society.

<sup>540</sup> Beard C.A. and Beard M. R., *The Rise of American Civilisation, Volume I, The Agricultural Era*, (Johnathan Cape: London, 1927), p.391.

eventually find a natural limit in domestic demand, requiring overseas markets and hence foreign alliances in support of trade.<sup>541</sup>

These ideas owed more to ideology than they did to pragmatic policy making not least because of their economic infeasibility. The idea that America might become a closed society, is exposed as deeply impractical by the eighteenth century economic thinker, Adam Smith. Smith explains that a nation that attempts to protect its economy from imports, or tries to restrict exports, runs the risk of coming up against a natural constraint to its growth unrelated to the size of its consumer base.<sup>542</sup> A closed society, according to Smith, has limited access to capital with which to invest in agriculture and manufacturing, because of the unattractiveness to overseas merchants and prospective buyers of the nation's financial securities. Limited access to capital in turn limits employment opportunities for the indigenous population and clearly therefore limits demand for immigrant labour, and therefore production output. Smith explains this outcome as a consequence of the constant relationship that labour bears to capital. Therefore, restricted access to cash capital with which to meet costs and make investments, limits economic growth as well as restraining the creation of a domestic manufacturing base. A society unable to produce sufficient to feed its population, never mind provide manufactured luxury goods, would inevitably turn to overseas markets from which to meet domestic needs.<sup>543</sup>

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<sup>541</sup> Williams (1972).

<sup>542</sup> Smith A, *The Wealth of Nations, Books 4-5*, (Readaclassic: London, 2009), pp.16-17.

<sup>543</sup> Some economic writers however question Smith as a thinker in matters of international trade, especially because he had not appreciated the idea of comparative advantage, that is, the theory that nations should concentrate on production in which they experience a comparative cost advantage *vis a vis* other nations, see; Myint H., *Adam Smith's Theory of International Trade in the Perspective of Economic Development*, (Economica, New Series, Vol. 44, No. 175, August 1977), pp. 231-248. This is to say that Smith concentrated on absolute advantage as the basis of production and trade, as opposed to trade only in goods in which a nation has a relative (comparative) advantage, see; Porter M. E., *The Comparative Advantage of Nations*, (Macmillan: London, 1990), p.11.

This chapter does not explore further the above ideas of American isolationism, not only because of the comments made above, but because both Jefferson and Franklin were American statesmen dedicated to the proposition of an active American foreign policy, whether or not one equates their thinking with balance of power or internationalism more generally.<sup>544</sup> These ideas were therefore not ultimately adopted as policy.<sup>545</sup> Jefferson and Franklin tacitly recognised that a policy that closed the American economy to outside trade, would not be a practical consideration for a nation already immersed in foreign treaties.

This Chapter instead postulates that ideas akin to isolationism and internationalism, are exposed as key debating points between the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists, after the draft of the Constitution was sent to the several states for ratification in 1787.<sup>546</sup> One of the planks of Anti-Federalist objection to the Constitution was that, by centralising power, it would create the circumstances for foreign interference in the affairs of the union. Hence, the safety that the states enjoyed by virtue of distance from Europe, would be immediately compromised. Therefore, the existing state system, that guaranteed the essential separateness of the states, offered the best protection to them.<sup>547</sup> This argument was in stark

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<sup>544</sup> Jefferson for example is regarded as a “modern ...agrarian”, dedicated to the idea of international trade, thereby reflecting the desires and hopes of Americans wishing for limited government and private success, see; Wood (2006), pp. 98-99. See also Tucker R. W. and Hendrickson D. C., *Empire of Liberty, The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1990), p. 88 for the explanation of a Jeffersonian belief, in 1800, in small government centred around a predominantly agricultural economy selling its surpluses abroad, albeit with a limited domestic manufacturing base and overseas trade playing only “an auxiliary role”. See also; Smith J. M., (ed.), *The Republic of Letters, The Correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, 1776-1826, Volume One, 1776-1790*, (W. W. Norton and Company: New York, 1995), p. 440., in which the editor describes Jefferson’s tendency to view even domestic affairs from an “international perspective”, given his experience in France.

<sup>545</sup> Indeed, see; Crockett T. and Wallis B. C., *North America During the Eighteenth Century: A Geographical History*, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1915), pp. 104-110, for an explanation of a burgeoning manufacturing and agricultural base in America.

<sup>546</sup> After the constitution had been drafted by the Convention the delegates returned to their states to seek its ratification with James Madison, John Jay and Alexander Hamilton writing articles in the New York papers in favour of the Federal Constitution. Called the Federalist Papers, these 85 essays addressed some of the key aspects of the Constitution making the case for adoption. At the same time Anti-Federalist papers were being written under the pseudonyms Centinel, Cato, Brutus, the Federal Farmer, John de Witt and others in papers in Philadelphia and New York and then reprinted throughout the states. I refer to the Federalists as being the three authors of the Federalist Papers viz Hamilton, Jay and Madison as opposed to members of the Federalist Party formed some years later, or indeed to the founding fathers more generally.

<sup>547</sup> The foreign recognition of the states as separate entities was evident in both the Paris Peace Treaty of 1783 and the 1778 French alliance, both of which, when describing the nation, list the individual states, thereby accepting their separateness, see; McDonald F., *States’ Rights and the Union, Imperium in Imperio, 1776-1876*, (University Press of Kansas: Kansas, 2000), pp.10-11.

contrast to that of the Federalists, who in many ways supported an internationalist foreign policy, as will be described below.

This chapter explains these arguments for internationalism and for isolationism in four major heads. The first, locates the idea of foreign interference in the literature that describes the origin of the Constitution. This section concludes by explaining that both the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists perceived that the motivation for foreign nations to interfere in the union was in the jealousy that monarchical nations held for republican nations. The second major heading, describes the permissive environment of the state system which, it was believed, created the conditions that had the potential to make foreign intrigue successful. These circumstances formed the basis for the Federalist and Anti-Federalist arguments for internationalism and isolationism in foreign affairs, respectively the third and fourth major headings of this chapter.

### **Location in the Literature of Foreign Influence**

The fear that the European nations would interfere in the union, destabilising and creating separate confederacies of the member states, was central to the desire to centralise power in a Constitutional government, according to Marks.<sup>548</sup> The union was susceptible to outside influence because of what Marks refers to as “*the delinquent states*”, that acted according to local as opposed to national considerations, and the failure of the Articles of Confederation to reign in their excesses.<sup>549</sup> Dougherty explains this failure of the states to comprehend what was generally in the national good by using the economic theory of public goods to explain that, states could withhold contributions to Congress in the expectation that other states

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<sup>548</sup> Marks (1997). pp. x-xxi.

<sup>549</sup> Alternatively, McAfee. et. al. attribute the post-War independence of the states to their constitutions and reluctance to give up powers to a national government, see; McAfee T. B. (et. al.) *Powers Reserved for the People and the States. A History of the Ninth and Tenth Amendments. A Reference Guide to the United States Constitution.* (Praeger: Connecticut, 1952).



would make good the demands placed on them. Since the common good produced by Congress, primarily defence of the union, could not be withheld by Congress from a delinquent state, there was no incentive to act in the national interest.<sup>550</sup> Hence, coercive powers were needed that only constitutional reform could achieve. Holton supports Dougherty's conclusion that the states required coercion to act in the national interest, but explains that the failure of the states to protect property rights, indulging recalcitrant debtors, and laxity in tax policy and revenue collection, were the real causes of reform, as opposed to the catalyst being foreign dangers.<sup>551</sup>

These interpretations that generally refer to either personal interests or the incompetence of the state legislatures as the catalyst for reform, owe at least a passing debt to Charles Beard's seminal study, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* first published in 1903.<sup>552</sup> Whilst Beard placed emphasis on the men of property with a vested interest in there being effective federal laws to protect those interests, he also made the direct correlation with foreign dangers. Relying on Alexander Hamilton's Federalist Four, he explained that territorial disputes, competition for commerce between the states, and the public debt of the union were possible causes of economic state conflict. However, the greater risk lay in the exploitation of these fault lines by foreign powers anxious to restrain American growth.<sup>553</sup> Therefore, the creation of the Constitution was also a foreign policy act, one

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<sup>550</sup> Dougherty K. L. *Collective Action under the Articles of Confederation*. (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2001).

<sup>551</sup> This connection made by Marks between domestic instability and foreign affairs is a step too far for Holton who regards state failures alone, that is not external danger, as causative of a call for reform, see; Holton W. *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution*. (Hill and Wang: New York, 2007). In support for the thesis that protection of property rights, consistent laws for dealing with recalcitrant debtors and a common tax policy were the real causes of reform, Holton refers to two publications; *Miracle at Philadelphia* and *The Summer of 1787*, which point to the imbecility of the Articles in reigning in the imprudence of the states, requiring the greater centralisation of power of the Constitution, see; Bowen-Drinker C. *Miracle at Philadelphia: The Story of the Constitutional Convention. May to September 1787*. (Little Brown: Boston MA, 1986), and Stewart D. O. *The Men Who Invented the Constitution. The Summer of 1787*. (Simon & Schuster: New York, 2007).

<sup>552</sup> Beard (1986).

<sup>547</sup> Schachner N. *The Founding Fathers*. (Putnam: New York, 1954). According to the author, Washington's farewell address addressed just this risk of foreign intrigue some years later in 1796. Schachner explains that Washington believed the threat to the union to be from external sources, and that it was the schemes of "designing men" who tried to create "a real difference of local interests and views based on geographic distribution". Pole hones the argument somewhat by referring not to an elite, but to

designed to protect the affairs of the states as a whole, by creating a representative government capable of addressing these domestic ills, and creating a more cohesive union.<sup>554</sup>

The creation of representative government under the Constitution made possible by surrender of state sovereignty, in itself provided protection to the union. Hence, McDonald, in *E Pluribus Unum, The Formation of the American Republic*, explains the importance of national representative government by giving the example of the leadership of the Continental Congress, without which the states would not have provided the men and treasure with which to prosecute the Revolutionary War.<sup>555</sup> Waldstreicher provides support for the importance of representative government and for it as the goal of reform, quoting two eminent historians of the period, Bailyn and Wood that the populism of the War years gave way to a more reasoned approach to post War government.<sup>556</sup> Bailyn, for example, believed that the Constitution created a strong national government that served economic factions through concentrated power.<sup>557</sup>

The incentive to surrender sovereignty to create this government, important to concentrating power in a federal government came, according to Hendrickson, from a realisation of external dangers. He explains a willingness to submit to a national government, in terms of what he calls a unionist paradigm at the core of which, was a belief that Americans created a union that

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factions; the military, agricultural, legal, commercial interest groups, that were the main gainers from centralisation of power, see; Pole J R (ed.) *The American Constitution. The Federalist and the Anti-Federalist Papers*, (Hackett Classics: Indianapolis, 2005).

<sup>554</sup> Barrow C. W., and Beard C.A. *More Than a Historian: The Political and Economic Thought of Charles A. Beard*, (Blaser: Kent, 2000).

<sup>555</sup> McDonald (1965). In *Novus Ordo Seclorum. The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution*, McDonald explains that the mandate under which Congress had originally assumed the powers of, for example, raising the Continental Army, resided only in the willingness of the colonies to grant them. The War over, there was little cause for union and hence, it was external dangers that convinced the states that governmental reform was necessary, see; McDonald F. *Novus Ordo Seclorum. The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution*, (The University of Kansas Press: Kansas, 1985).

<sup>556</sup> Waldstreicher D. *Slavery's Constitution. From Revolution to Ratification*. (Hill and Wang: New York, 2009). p. 10.

<sup>557</sup> Bernard B. *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*. (Belknap Press: London, 1992).

solved two problems. Firstly, it preserved "*peace within its zone*", and secondly it offered protection to the union from external threats.<sup>558</sup>

For Constitutional reformists, therefore, success for foreign nations, intent on ambitions pernicious to the general good of the union, would be made possible by weaknesses in the state system, attributed in turn to a failure of the Articles to provide an effective schema for government. The fact that the states freely ignored national treaty commitments, which an ineffective Congress was powerless to enforce, provided even more fertile ground for foreign complaint, and therefore for the union to apprehend dangers to its survival from the monarchical states of Europe.

### **Republican and Monarchical Interest**

For Americans, foreign nations were motivated in their propensity to interfere in America, not by hard headed assessments of their national interest but often on a whim of the monarch intent on achieving personal ambition. Monarchical ambition was truly dangerous to the union since it could not be restrained until it had settled a score, or corrected an imagined sleight.<sup>559</sup> This is the argument of Federalist Four, that monarchies were sometimes motivated by jealousy, sentiment and greed, and would seek war for reasons that had no connection to the

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<sup>558</sup> Hendrickson D. *Peace Pact*. (University Press of Kansas: Kansas, 2003). Heideking furthers the argument that external threats provided the catalyst for change, to include a wider problem of the lack of virtue, regarded as critical to the success of republican forms of government, see; Heideking J. *The Constitution Before the Judgement Seat. The Prehistory and Ratification of the American Constitution. 1787-1791*. (University of Virginia Press: Virginia, 2012). Consequently, nationalists were influenced to create a form of government that would obliterate the causes of poor moral rectitude, as they saw it, a change that could not be achieved by a simple amendment to the Articles. If external dangers, poor morals and the selfishness of the states contributed to a sense of a national crisis, Wood locates the cause in what he calls "*good old American popular politics*", see; Wood G. S. *The Idea of America. Reflections on the Birth of the United States*, (Penguin Books: New York, 2011). He accepts that the Articles failed to give Congress sufficient power to address the humiliation of the nation in international relations, but maintains that the Articles could have been amended. Their defects were not therefore the sole cause of the crisis, it was state defects, such as paper money laws, and stay laws that gave relief to debtors but infringed property rights. Amendment of the Articles was also an objective of the Federal Convention, but within the overall aim of reform, see; *Resolution of the Committee of the Whole*, Monday 18<sup>th</sup> June 1787. Farrand. p.281. By the middle of June 1787 the delegates had agreed, ten votes to zero, that the purpose of the Convention was to revise and amend the Articles so as to strengthen the government in order to make it more able to preserve the union and to ensure its prosperity, an objective carried over to discussion of the new Constitution.

<sup>559</sup> *The Crisis VII*. TWTP, p. 102. Paine made a similar accusation against Great Britain accusing it of waging war for national honour and conquest and not in the national interest.

interests of security and economy, but for vainglorious concerns.<sup>560</sup> America therefore had much to fear in its republican ideals since it afforded monarchical nations with abundant pretext for waging conflict. Whether it was inconsistent state adherence to treaty obligations, the idealism of free trade, or jealousy of cheap American manufactures, they were all possible causes of war which only a strong national government, made up of men more inclined to reign in the effect of these monarchical tendencies.<sup>561</sup> The loose arrangements of the Articles permitted the states, as sovereign delegates to an ineffective Congress, wide latitude of action and did not create a compact sufficiently powerful to protect the union, it only made the states more susceptible to intrigue.<sup>562</sup>

## The Permissive Environment of the State System

### Incompetence of the Articles

Therefore, reform, for the Framers of the Constitution, would provide protection from foreign interference and the domestic upset it would cause.<sup>563</sup> This was because Congress had been unable to protect the Mediterranean trade from the Barbary pirates, organise the western settlements, or indeed regulate the international trade.<sup>564</sup> This failure to govern had led to

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<sup>560</sup> Federalist Four, TFP, pp.22-24.

<sup>561</sup> Federalist Seventy Five. TFP, 366-370. Hamilton explains the power to make treaties should be allocated between the President and Senate to guard against “*an avaricious man who might be influenced by foreign powers*”. Foreign nations would not be deterred by a stronger Constitutional union, but it would make them more circumspect when considering interference in American domestic affairs, see; Epstein D. F., *The Political Theory of The Federalist*, (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1984), p. 27.

<sup>562</sup> La Feber W., *The Constitution and the United States Foreign Policy: An Interpretation*, (*The Journal of American History*, Dec 1987), pp.695-717.

<sup>563</sup> Diamond M., *Democracy and the Federalist: A Reconsideration of the Framers’ Intent*, (*The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 53. No 1, March 1959), pp.52-68.

<sup>564</sup> Farrand. p. 204. Pierce Butler, the South Carolina delegate to the Convention of 1787 made the rather obvious connection between the power to raise money and the ability to exercise the war power. Butler thought that representation in the national legislature ought to be determined in proportion to state wealth. He further explained that “*when a boy he read this as one of the remarks of Julius Cesar, who declared if he had but money he would find soldiers, and everything necessary to carry on a war*”. This comment should, however, be read as an explanation of the importance of reserving the war power to the congressional government than in the states with their self-interest. See also; Rossiter C., *The Federalist Papers, Hamilton, Madison, Jay*, (*New American Library*, New York, 2003), pp. 144-146. The foreign dangers would come not just from abroad but also from hostile settlements in the western territories, not only because of foreign interference with those settlements but also if there were to be a congressional failure to integrate those territories into the union, see; Lewis J. E. Jr., *The American Union and The Problem of Neighbourhood, The United States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire, 1783-1829*, (The University of North Carolina Press: North Carolina, 1998), pp.14-15.

threats by Kentucky and Vermont, to align themselves to the adjoining British and Spanish settlements.<sup>565</sup> A Constitution was therefore needed to give the Federal government the powers to provide for the protection of the union and its trade.<sup>566</sup> Such a government would be more than a “*mere compact resting on the good faith of the parties*”, that is, the Articles, but a “*compleat [sic] and compulsive operation*” that the Constitution would provide.<sup>567</sup> For Federalists, it was not possible to achieve this end by amending the Articles, and by giving Congress the power to raise a standing army to force state compliance with Congressional requisitions, since the use of a national army on the states, would inevitably lead to civil war.<sup>568</sup> Instead, the states had to be subordinated to the government, so that the government might defend the national interest, which required, not coercion, but delegation of political power.<sup>569</sup> Hence, the ability of the states to ignore Congressionally agreed treaties had to be restrained in the national interest.<sup>570</sup> To achieve this, the federal government must be supreme over the states and they must submit themselves to its jurisdiction otherwise they ran the risk of being used as “*engines against the whole*” by foreign governments.<sup>571</sup> The danger was even starker as new states were formed, because they might also be inhabited by foreigners, and could therefore easily owe allegiance or affection to foreign nations and not to the union. Just as concerning, new territories and states had the potential to cause intrastate

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<sup>565</sup> La Faber believes therefore that nothing contributed more to the calling of the Federal Convention than the belief that the Articles were inadequate in the prosecution of foreign policy, see; La Feber (1987), pp.695-717.

<sup>566</sup> Federalists 1 to 8, 15 to 32, 34 to 36 and 73 to 77, TFP, refer to the need for energy in government to ensure political prosperity and to preserve the union. See also; Farrand. p.25.

<sup>567</sup> Farrand. p.34. “*Mr. Govr. Morris explained the distinction between a federal and national, supreme, Govt.; the former being a mere compact resting on the good faith of the parties; the latter having a compleat [sic] and compulsive operation. He contended that in all communities there must be one supreme power, and one only*”.

<sup>568</sup> Farrand. p. 54. James Madison observed that he doubted that force could be used on the people collectively since this would look like a “*declaration of war*” and be regarded by the state as a “*dissolution of all previous compacts*” made by it and by which it might be bound.

<sup>569</sup> The idea of a national interest arises again in Federalist 23, Goldman, when Hamilton explains that “*a government, the constitution of which renders it unfit to be trusted with all the powers which a free people ought to delegate to any government, would be an unsafe and improper depository of the national interests*”. For a discussion of the three different means by which federalist structures can come into existence, see Elazar J. D., *Exploring Federalism*, (The University of Alabama Press: Alabama, 1987). Elazar indicates that federations are created by force, by consent or they come into existence organically. The modern American federation, that Elazar explains is represented by both strong constituent members and a strong government with specifically delegated powers, implies federation by consent, resting as it does on the concurrence of the people given, for example, in the state ratifying conventions of 1788 to 1789.

<sup>570</sup> Farrand. p. 164.

<sup>571</sup> Farrand. p. 172.

and interstate conflict as territorial claims encroached on land claimed by one or more existing states.<sup>572</sup>

### Interstate Conflict

The localism of the states so apparent in their approach to international trade commitments was only one aspect of a more general view of each of them as mere members of a confederation, not parts of one nation. Such a loose arrangement of states, pro-Constitutionalists feared, facilitated engagement of them by outside influences, the creation of divisions amongst them, and hence, the circumstances for civil conflict.<sup>573</sup>

For Federalists, such fears took on importance because America was no longer protected by its distance from Europe. The Spanish colonial system, and the British occupation of the western forts, caused the States, as John Jay explained it, to “*apprehend danger*” more locally.<sup>574</sup> Therefore, states, in anticipation of danger, would pursue foreign alliances for protection in the event of interstate conflict.<sup>575</sup> Hamilton had referred to this theme in the Debates on State Equality during the Convention, when he warned that dissolution of the union would inevitably follow a failure to reform the Articles.<sup>576</sup> If the state ratifying conventions did not grasp this opportunity to replace the Articles, the union would become fertile ground for foreign governments to encroach on states’ rights, form confederacies of them, and use these

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<sup>572</sup> PHP p. 78. See the resolution adopted by the Virginia Assembly on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1779.

<sup>573</sup> Bowen-Drinker (1986), p. 81. Foreign intrigues were defined to be the Spanish influence in the Southwest, Vermonters with loyalties to the Canadians and therefore the British, and the continued influence from European powers mainly the French and the Spanish.

<sup>574</sup> Federalist 5, TFP, p. 28. The states had much to fear from the existence of Britain, Spain and the Indian nations, and because the states had the ocean to their rear and aggressors to their front, there was no option but for the states to share the burden of defence, see; Federalist Papers 25 to 29. TFP. pp 122-142.

<sup>575</sup> For the meaning of interstate conflict, see Onuf P., *The Origins of the Federal Republic, Jurisdictional Controversies in the United States, 1775-1787*, (University of Pennsylvania Press: Pennsylvania, 1983), who describes such conflict in terms of disputes over boundaries which did not threaten to disrupt into actual civil war. See also Jensen M., *The New Nation, A History of the United States During the Confederation, 1781-1789*, (Northeastern University Press: Boston, 1981), in which the post War state system is described as being in “*chaos*”, but not in conflict, p. xii. The boundary conflict is put in terms of claims over western lands, in Jensen, pp. 9-10.

<sup>576</sup> Madison (1966), The debates on state equality took place between June 28 to July 2 1787. pp. 215-216.

alliances to set one state against another, a policy of *divide et impera*, as Hamilton described it in Federalist Thirty-Two.<sup>577</sup>

John Jay reinforced this point by comparing the situation in America to that of seventeenth century Britain when it had been three individual nations in which troubles were “*perpetually kept inflamed*” by outside influence.<sup>578</sup> Unlike Britain in the seventeenth century, the American geography provided for an even worse outcome as the western territories tried to form states and join the union.<sup>579</sup> Since, the Articles made no provision for the admission of new states to the union, they would be free to choose any attractive partner that met their requirements, whether this was the American union, Spain or Britain.<sup>580</sup>

To underline the susceptibility of the union, Hamilton explained that it was not just outside influence that would catalyse interstate conflict, because, Hamilton explained, neighbouring states are “*natural enemies*” which will either go to war or league in confederacies because of their individual weaknesses.<sup>581</sup> One cause of this may be found in Federalist Seven, in which

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<sup>577</sup> Federalist Thirty Two, TFP, p.39.

<sup>578</sup> Federalist Five, TFP, p.26.

<sup>579</sup> Federalist Fourteen, TFP, p.71.

<sup>580</sup> Federalist Forty five, TFP, p.216. See also; *Letter from John Adams to Secretary Jay. Grosvenor Square. London. 8 May, 1787.* TWJA, Volume VIII, p. 439. The Annapolis Convention of September 1786 was the earliest opportunity to consider a change to the Articles to address the war debts, the failing credit of the states, interstate disputes based on tariff laws, the fact that nine states maintained their own navies and the fact that Virginia had ratified the Paris Peace Treaty of 1783 independently of Congress, see Bowen-Drinker (1986), pp.5-9. A farmer disturbance, in Massachusetts, was regarded as a demand, to reduce state debt, however the concern was that some faction in society, possibly backed by the British, was using debt as an excuse to cause dissension and therefore to destabilise the union as a whole, see; Raphael R., *The American Revolution, A People's History*, (Profile Books: London, 2001), pp.306-210, who explains the so called Shays rebellion, a rebellion of Massachusetts farmers, as an incidence of domestic upset. If British backed, the aim was to establish a monarchy in America which would mean that the French, for reasons of politics, would be encouraged to also interfere in American domestic affairs in order to contain British interference, see; *Letter from Samuel Osgood to John Adams.* New York, 14 November. 1786. TWJA, Volume VIII, pp. 419 to 420.

<sup>581</sup> See; Federalist Six, TFP, pp.29-34. See also; TDC, Part One, pp. 52 to 62. *Centinel I.* Centinel, considered to be the pseudonym of Samuel Bryan the Pennsylvania Anti-Federalist, explains that it was the experience of antiquity that a large country cannot be governed on democratic and therefore republican principles but only as a confederation of independent smaller republics. Intrigue would firstly include causing dissension between the states, finding advantage in existing sectional differences and causing the creation of three confederacies, intent on pursuing pan confederate interests. The idea of the colonies as three sections had its roots in Congressional administrative convenience in or around 1775, based on, there being three departments that managed Indian, and naval and military affairs, see; Jensen M. (ed.), *Regionalism in America*, (The University of Wisconsin Press: Wisconsin, 1965), pp. 26-27. Jay, in Federalist 5, TFP, pp. 25-28, somewhat contradicts the argument for the union as a collective security arrangement when he compares the confederacies that might arise in America to the relationship between Great Britain and say Spain as being so distinct that they would not form alliances against their enemies. One possible reason for this assertion may be that inherent in the conception of confederacies would have been the involvement of competing European interests which would

Hamilton explained that disagreements over the western territories, that had been ceded by the landed states to the union as a whole, would be a prime cause for conflict. If the states failed to ratify the Constitution, then it would not simply be a question of handing those lands back to the states that had originally ceded them, since the landless states would also demand a share, claiming ownership by virtue of representation in the Continental Congress.<sup>582</sup> A stronger union was therefore not only a protection from “*external danger*”, it made sense in the context of the domestic situation.<sup>583</sup>

The permissive environment in which foreign intrigue could flourish, however, was not just to be found in the domestic situation but in the international trade.

### **Incompetence in Trade**

Before the War, North American colonies had produced agricultural produce and raw materials, including rum, pine, lumber and planks, indigo.<sup>584</sup> Trading relationships had been reciprocal, Britain met a huge American demand for manufactured goods, provided capital for long term credit, and convenient ports from which American goods could be distributed around Europe.<sup>585</sup> In the post-War years, American Commissioners were instructed to expand

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perpetuate, in the confederacies, the malign policies of distrust and jealousy similar to that, for example, between Spain and Great Britain. Indeed, Jay supports this assertion when he talks of the confederacies as being more likely to form alliances with the European powers as amongst themselves. This in itself may presuppose the existence of the confederate blocks as independent quasi nations anxious to take advantage of international trade.

<sup>582</sup> Federalist Seven, TFP, pp.34-39.

<sup>583</sup> Other statesmen such as Franklin and Jefferson, tried to play down the instability of the union and the danger of anarchy in order to reassure the nation’s creditors who might otherwise seek immediate repayment of their debts, see; Morris R. B. ‘*The Confederation Period and the American Historian*’, (*The William and Mary Quarterly* Third Series Vol. 13 No 2, April 1956), pp. 140-156. This is one of the first illustrations in America of calming international markets by addressing sentiment, and demonstrates that foreign affairs were paramount, to both economy and security. However, for Federalists, the dangers were so real, that they required an almost immediate military build-up, in the form of a navy to protect merchant shipping, which, since it was essentially benign should not attract opposition, but would require finance, see; Federalist 24, TFP, 117-122. For Hamilton, in papers Twenty-Five to Twenty-Nine, TFP, despite the fear of standing armies a military capable of protecting against domestic insurrection was needed.

<sup>584</sup> Gilbert M., *The Routledge Atlas of American History*. (Fourth Edition), (Routledge: London, 1968), p.17. In 1770 British imports from the 13 colonies were tobacco £700,000, rice £170,000, indigo £130,000 and under £100,000 each of whale oil, naval stores, furs, hides and iron. See also; Draper T., *A Struggle for Power. The American Revolution*. (Times Books: New York, 1996). p. 128. Draper explains that Britain’s trade with Europe at the time was declining and this coincided with an increase in its trade with America

<sup>585</sup> Losse W. J. *The Foreign Trade of Virginia 1789 to 1809*, (*The William and Mary Quarterly* Third Series, Vol. 1 No 2, April 1944), pp 161-178.



the pre-War trade by creating treaties of amity and commerce along the principles of free trade.<sup>586</sup>

However, it was one thing making trade treaties, it was another enforcing them across the United States as one nation. Whilst France had been prepared from 1778 to commit itself to the pre-War confederation of thirteen states, even though, for example, the state of Maryland had not ratified the Articles until January 1781, after the end of the War, their remained doubt in the effectiveness of the Articles in international affairs.<sup>587</sup> Luzerne, the French Minister to America, complained that the trade laws of the confederacy were “*incoherent, contradictory ...and particularly prejudicial to foreigners*”.<sup>588</sup> Hence there would be doubt when foreign nations made commercial treaties with America, whether they would be consistent with all state laws, suited the requirements of all states, and would be honoured in full.<sup>589</sup>

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<sup>586</sup> *Instructions of Congress to the American Commissioners for Negotiating Treaties of Amity and Commerce*. TEN II, 7<sup>th</sup> May 1784. pp. 358-361. See also; *Resolution of May 11<sup>th</sup> 1784*. Congress resolved that America valued its foreign treaties but the financial situation of the nation was such that it could not afford to locate diplomats and ministers at the capital of each nation. JCC, pp.367-368. Congress required a commercial treaty that offered terms no more favourable than those with whom similar treaties had already been concluded, see; *Instructions to the American Commissioners in Europe*. 29<sup>th</sup> October 1783. TEN II. pp. 241-244. By the middle of 1785, a plan had been prepared by John Jay, now Secretary of Foreign Affairs, the first of the American Secretaries of State, which worked roughly according to the principles of reciprocity, see; *John Jay's Report on a Plan of Treaty of Amity and Commerce*. 17<sup>th</sup> May 1785. TEN II. pp. 634-636. Treaties proposed by the Americans were to be on substantially similar terms, for example, the envoy, Baron de Thulemeyer, charged with negotiating a Prussian treaty was content to adopt the model that had been successfully negotiated with Sweden, see; *Letter from Baron de Thulemeyer to John Adams*. 11<sup>th</sup> March 1784. TEN II, p. 315. Treaties were required with twenty countries, including; Russia, Spain, Genoa, Tuscany, Naples, Portugal, Denmark, and the Barbary Powers. Britain, objected to this expansion of American trade believing that huge pre-War debts owed to British merchants mandated policies aimed at improving relations with Great Britain, instead of which Americans seemed intent on promoting a notion of their equality with other nations in the international trade, see; *Letter from Sir John Temple to Lord Carmarthen*. 5<sup>th</sup> January 1786. TEN III. pp. 63-64.

<sup>587</sup> What is referred to as the Longchamps Affair is an example of how lacking in competence in international affairs the Continental Congress remained. A French soldier, Charles de Longchamps struck Luzerne's secretary with a stick in Pennsylvania. When Luzerne requested Longchamps' extradition to France, Congress was obliged to refer the matter to the Pennsylvania Executive Council, the only body competent to grant such a request. TEN II. p. 373. Later, there were suspicions that the Longchamps affair had been orchestrated by the British in order to cause fracture in the American French alliance, see; *Charles Thomson to Benjamin Franklin*. 13<sup>th</sup> August 1784, TEN II. pp. 426-428. However, in 1781 France was not prepared to advance further aid to Maryland until the latter ratified the Articles of Confederation, see; McDonald (1965), p.16

<sup>588</sup> *Letter from Chevalier de la Luzerne to Comte de Vergennes*. 5<sup>th</sup> October 1781. TEN II. pp.230-232.

<sup>589</sup> Examples of uneven state trade laws included a law by Connecticut not to permit any British ship into port where American ships were similarly treated in Britain, a resolution from New Jersey that authorised Congress to pass similar legislation, an impost on all cargoes from Great Britain, whether or not they were destined for re-export, contrary to the general rule that only landed cargoes attracted the impost, and a flat duty of two percent on all goods imported from England, see; *Letter from Chevalier de la Luzerne to Comte de Vergennes*. 15<sup>th</sup> January 1784. TEN II. p. 279. By April 1784, aware of these problems, Congress adopted a resolution calling on the thirteen states to provide it with the power to prohibit imports into the United States in any boat that was not owned and navigated by American citizens or citizens of countries with whom the United States had a treaty, see; *Congressional Resolution Relating to Commercial Matters*. 30<sup>th</sup> April 1784. TEN II. pp.354-355.

Similarly, Hamilton explained that trading partners would be unwise to enter into commercial arrangements with Congress since they might at any moment be “*violated by its members*” and prospective partners would be unlikely to enter into reciprocal arrangements given the “*nature of our political association*”.<sup>590</sup> This was a very real worry and Madison, speaking during consideration of the New Jersey Plan that had been put to the Federal Convention in 1787, referred to Congressional files recording complaints from nations with whom treaties had been formed by the states but which had been violated.<sup>591</sup> Complaints threatened to develop into a much more serious problem for the new nation, and Madison, warning that violation of treaties by any one state could give rise to the “*national calamity*” of a “*rupture with other powers*”, was anxious for a grant of power to a Constitutional Congress, that made it both the only body legally capable of making treaties, and with the power to bind the states behind it.<sup>592</sup>

John Adams felt similarly, and explained to Elbridge Gerry, a Massachusetts politician and delegate to the Convention, that trade disputes might give excuse for military conflict. Hence that, “*commercial connections*” with foreign nations would involve America in “*perpetual disputes and frequent wars if we do not keep up our part*”.<sup>593</sup> European governments would

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<sup>590</sup> Federalist Twenty Two, TFP, p.106. Commerce, its regulation, and promotion through treaty negotiation, was a primary consideration of early American foreign policy even, as has been suggested with regard to the Barbary Pirates issue, if this would result in entangling alliances. This is the argument made in Federalist 22 in which Hamilton suggests that the want of a Constitutional government could lead to treaty violations and hence causes for international conflict. Jay referred to this type of situation in Federalist Five, TFP, pp. 25-28., when referring to the lack of uniformity in “*sound policy, prudence and foresight*” currently across the states. A strong national government would remedy inconsistent state policy and decision making, by recruiting the best and most well informed representatives from each state into a federal legislature. The writers of the Federalist however probably echoed Edmund Burke when he wrote to his Electors of Bristol in 1774 refusing to accept instructions from them since he said that once he was elected he was representing them all, see: Elofson W. M. Woods J. A., and Todd W. B. (eds.), *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke, Vol. 3: Party, Parliament, and the American War: 1774-1780*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1996).

<sup>591</sup> Journal of the House, 19<sup>th</sup> June 1787, Farrand Volume I, p.316..

<sup>592</sup> Madison (1966), p.142.

<sup>593</sup> Clarfield G. *John Adams: The Marketplace and American Foreign Policy*, (*The New England Quarterly*, Vol 52, No.3, September 1979), pp. 345-357. In an essay, published in the Pennsylvania Packet and Daily Advertiser, it was argued that the national reputation had been “*sinking*” amongst foreign powers, and Congress, although it had made international treaties, could not enforce them. Foreign nations had “*shackled*” American commerce and the country was unable to retaliate by imposing its own tariffs. The Constitution was therefore needed to enlarge the powers already conferred by the Articles enabling Congress to regulate commerce, see; TDC. Part One, pp. 526-552. The power to make treaties was therefore paramount, see; Madison (1966), p. 521. The importance of the treaty making power is made forcibly by Casper, a twentieth century lawyer writing on matters of

use trading relationships as fertile ground from which could be established, even baseless, excuses for war, because monarchical nations sometimes sought war for reasons unconnected with national interest.<sup>594</sup> John Jay explained why this might happen, referring to the six treaties in place between America and the European powers and the extensive commerce with Portugal, Spain and Britain.<sup>595</sup> He believed that “*just causes of war*” between countries also often arise from their mutual ties and involvements, and that countries that have connections were more likely to go to war over “*real or pretended*” causes arising from those connections.<sup>596</sup> Jay later explained the ways in which resentment might arise by pointing to the American involvement in the cheaper supply of fish and in shipping more generally in competition with the European states.<sup>597</sup> Hence, because trade was a zero sum game, if American trade flourished, it in “*some degree*” diminished that of the Europeans, and hence could cause conflict.<sup>598</sup>

### **What the Constitution Would Achieve**

In conclusion then, the Constitution would “[prevent] *the fulfilment of the prophecies of the American downfall*”, described above, by achieving two national security objectives; protection from foreign invasion and the prevention of interstate conflict.<sup>599</sup> It would do this by providing

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American defence, who explains that since, the main objective of the Constitution was to set up the national government to enable the conduct and control of foreign policy that the Constitutional powers were to be “*exercised principally on external objects, as war, peace, negotiation and foreign commerce*”, see; Casper G., *Constitutional Constraints on the Conduct of Foreign and Defence Policy. A Non Judicial Model*, (The University of Chicago Law Review, Vol. 43 No 3, Spring 1976), pp. 463-498. Security of the union could not, therefore, be divorced from trade, see; Ketcham R. (ed.). *The Anti-Federalist Papers and the Constitutional Convention Debate*, (Signet: London, 2003). pp 237-238.

<sup>594</sup> See for example, Wood. G. S. *Revolutionary Characters. What Made the Founders Different*, (Penguin: New York, 2006), p. 167, who explains that liberal American revolutionary aims extended both to domestic and international affairs, the latter in the desire to avoid wars and promote peace. Hence, the desire was for an end to interest based on “*selfish monarchical courts, irrational dynastic rivalries, ....and [instead]..... ruled by commerce alone*”.

<sup>595</sup> Federalist Three, TFP, p. 19.

<sup>596</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>597</sup> The nature of foreign intrigue is described plainly by Hamilton in Federalist 22, TFP, 105-112, when he explains that under the Confederation system, since a two thirds majority is needed for treaty making, it is in the interests of foreign nations to attempt to influence one third of states in order to obtain a favourable result.

<sup>598</sup> Federalist Four, TFP, p. 22.

<sup>599</sup> At the opening of the Convention, William Randolph had immediately explained that reform would prevent these prophecies from coming true, see; Farrand, Volume I, p.18.

for collective security, and by making the government superior to that of the states, restraining the states from legislating in such a manner that was contrary to the national interest.<sup>600</sup>

### The Federalist Argument for Engagement in Foreign Affairs

The Federalists supported Constitutional reform because it would mitigate the above explained causes for interstate conflict by creating a nation under one superintending government.<sup>601</sup> Their argument that external dangers existed, relied on a concept of the-post War international system as a constellation of dangerous monarchical and absolutist nations, intent on dominating American trade or unravelling its union in pursuit of their own ends.<sup>602</sup> Such was the desire of the Federalists to encourage support amongst the people for the Constitution, the extant dangers were liberally complemented by reference to those from antiquity, which provided experiences that could not be illustrated exclusively by reference to the more recent American experience. Hence, the Greek and Roman experience of republican government, conflicts between neighbouring states, and the insecurity of loose confederations, were all explained as dangers illustrative of those that might befall America.<sup>603</sup>

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<sup>600</sup> Farrand. p. 24. Hamilton makes the same argument in Federalist Twenty Three but goes further by suggesting that a standing army is critical to the national security because the risks faced by the republic are infinite. In Matson C. D. and Onuf P. S., *A Union of Interests, Political and Economic Thought in Revolutionary America*, (University Press of Kansas: Kansas, 1990), p. 145., the argument is made that the Federalists believed in the state system, and ideas of state level republican government, but based not on ideas of collective security, but on the notion that the “*vigor and vitality*” of the states was key to successful Constitutional reform. See also; APW, p. 565. Anonymous. *Rudiments of Law and Government Deduced from the Law of Nature. Of Peace and War*. Charleston. 1783. For example “*peace should be maintained inviolate by every consideration of prudence, conscience, and honor*”. The passions of the people were for state level government now that the need for a union to fight a war for independence had come to an end, see; Jensen M., *The Articles of Confederation, An Interpretation of the social-constitutional history of the American Revolution, 1774-1781*, (The University of Wisconsin Press: Wisconsin, 1940), pp.244-245. See also; Amar A. R., *America’s Constitution, A Biography*, (Random House: New York, 2005), pp. 3-55, for discussions of the issue of state sovereignty that underlies the problem with the Articles.

<sup>601</sup> *Letter from John Adams to Thomas Jefferson. London. 6<sup>th</sup> December 1787*, TWJA, Volume VIII, p. 464. To achieve these goals a stronger union was needed, that left little room for foreign intrigue, but, for example, centralised information within Congress, on imports and exports to ensure that the states acted in concert in relation to their overseas dealings, see; *Letter from John Adams to Secretary Jay. Auteuil. 5<sup>th</sup> May, 1785*, TWJA, Volume VIII. Clearly thirteen diplomats trying to negotiate treaties would only cause confusion in Europe, a situation that could be used as a pretext for delaying treaty making, until all thirteen states had expressly vested the power of treaty making in Congress, see; *Letter from John Adams to Secretary Jay. Auteuil. 8<sup>th</sup> May, 1785*. TWJA, Volume VIII, pp. 242 to 243.

<sup>602</sup> See; Van Alsytne (1965), pp.198-199., for an explanation of the fears of the British from what they considered to be the inevitability of an American empire. For example, America was heavily involved in the West Indies, one of Britain’s most important markets for trade. American trade in Barbados included, the export of tobacco, flour, wheat, Indian corn, timber, salt meat, fish, iron, lead and hemp and importing hogsheads, sugar and molasses. Losse (1944), pp. 161- 178.

<sup>603</sup> For a view of the extent to which the Founders were influenced by their reading of antiquity see Carl. R. J., *The Founders and the Classics. Greece, Rome and the American Enlightenment*. (Harvard University Press: Massachusetts, 1995).

At heart of the Federalist argument, was the idea that preservation of the union from these, essentially foreign inspired interests, would assure security, stability, and economic growth, by perfecting it under a strong national Constitution.<sup>604</sup> This is evident from the construction of the Federalist Papers, the argument of which is made in distinct parts; the warning of foreign dangers supported the argument for preservation of the union. The arguments in support of republican government, together with considerations of revenue and economy talked to its perfection, and subsequent essays attempted to assuage the fears of loss of state sovereignty.<sup>605</sup>

What follows from these arguments for preservation of the union was a point of view on foreign affairs that, far from espousing a strict isolationism in the form of, say, Jefferson's agrarian idealism promoted a message of more and active involvement in world affairs, based on a stronger, unassailable union.<sup>606</sup>

By proposing Constitutional ratification, the Federalists were advocating the creation of a power that could successfully prosecute a foreign policy supporting the entry of the nation into the European balance. Why the Constitution, if adopted, would permit such an outcome is summed up by a comment made by Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Alexander George Sutherland in 1936. Discussing the powers, a Constitution would grant to a

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<sup>604</sup> Federalist Forty Five, TFP, pp. 228-232. The theme of union as a collective security arrangement is continued by Madison when he defines the union to be essential to the security of the people against foreign danger, protect them from wars amongst the different states, guard them against violent and oppressive factions, and guard them against military establishments. Marks (1973) takes the view that 25 of the first 36 Federalist papers concerned national security.

<sup>605</sup> Pole J. R. (ed.) *The Federalist. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay*. (Hackett Publishing Company: Indianapolis, 2005). In summary, papers 1 to 11 and 21 to 29, 45, 64 and 75 deal with foreign affairs, papers 30 to 36, 12 and 13 address the economy and revenue, papers 15 to 19 and 23 deal with preservation of the union, five papers deal with state sovereignty and the remainder deal with the defence of republican government.

<sup>606</sup> The idea of active involvement in foreign affairs is a theme of; Edling M. M., *A Revolution in Favour of Government, Origins of the US Constitution, and the Making of the American State*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2003), in which Edling argues that "the need for a stronger state in America emanated from the ambitions of such powerful and efficient "fiscal-military states" in Europe", indicating that the desire of Federalists was to counteract threats to American interests. See also; Fensterwald (1958), pp.111-139.

Federal government in foreign affairs, he explained that “*the powers to declare and wage war, to conclude peace, to make treaties, to maintain diplomatic relations with other sovereignties as a member of the family of nations*” should be in the powers of the nation state.<sup>607</sup>

Sutherland’s comments concisely describe what John Jay, one of the authors of the Federalist Papers and a former wartime Secretary for Foreign Affairs, believed the federal government needed to achieve under a Constitution if the country were to take its place in this family of nations.<sup>608</sup> American diplomats, representatives of a perfect American union, would participate in the European equilibrium or “*the balance of European competitions*” as Hamilton had described it. The nation would eventually develop the means to execute its foreign policy by the creation of a navy which, even if it did not initially “*vie with the great maritime powers*” could be of sufficient size as to “*decide the fate of a campaign*” if deployed in favour of one side or another in some conflict involving trade.<sup>609</sup> Hence, America, under a strong federal government, would take its place as an equal partner amongst the nations of the world, as an important member of the equilibrium.

An illustration of the role that America would play in this equilibrium can be found not in a military or naval power, and therefore as a general balance participant, but as a peripheral nation critical to the interests of the European powers. Hence, Hamilton identified the value of American ports and naval stores to a European power involved in military operations in pursuit of trade in the West Indies given its proximity to the region.<sup>610</sup> Therefore, for Federalists, America would be an important participant in the European balance of power system, and

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<sup>607</sup> Sherwood F. H. *Foreign Relations and the Constitution*, (*The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No 4, December 1948) pp 386-399.

<sup>608</sup> Deudney D. H. *The Philadelphian System: Sovereignty, Arms Control and Balance of Power in the American States–Union Circa 1787 to 1861*, (*International Organisation*, Vol. 49, No. 2, Spring 1995), pp.191-228.

<sup>609</sup> Federalists Four to Eleven, TFP, pp.22-59.

<sup>610</sup> Gilbert (1968). p. 24.

would use its influence to negotiate valuable trading rights, or offer not to intervene on one side or the other in a conflict.

To achieve the goal of an engaged foreign policy, the states would have to accept that there were clear external threats from the jealous European nations, that these perils had the potential to create faction in society, and that the Constitution was the remedy. Madison in Federalist Ten, explained that these factional interests would be diluted in a national government comprised of representatives from the greater republic. This is because “*designing men*”, whilst they might gain the upper hand in state legislatures, would not gain traction with representatives of the states to a federal government. The simple reason being, that federal congressmen, chosen in their states by a majority within which “*the cabals of the few*”, had been fully guarded against, would make it difficult for “*unworthy candidates*” to emerge as state representatives. Hence, whilst a faction may influence state legislatures, they would not be able to spread conflict across all states.<sup>611</sup> This essential Federalist internationalism was the precise opposite of the belief of the Anti-Federalists in the ruinous effects of centralisation of power, and hence a desire to maintain the isolation that geography provided.

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<sup>611</sup> Farrand Volume I, p. 136. Faction should not always be considered dangerous however. See also, Federalist Ten, TFP, pp. 48-54; Madison explained that American society should be comprised of many, or a “*great a number of interests and parties*”, so as to mitigate the effect of a large majority willing and able to exert its will on the minority. In this way it would be unlikely that there would be a common interest amongst such a large and disparate group and the best way to achieve this is by having as many disparate interests as possible that were unable to combine.

## The Anti-Federalist Argument for Isolation in Foreign Affairs

### The Isolationism of the Anti-Federalists

For Anti-Federalists, external dangers were exaggerated by Federalists solely to secure the vote for ratification in each state.<sup>612</sup> Anti-Federalist writer, Luther Martin was at pains to explain that America was safe, and wild Federalist claims that external foreign dangers would cause interstate conflict, were wrong because currently, no one individual or state posed the risk of tyranny to any other. Hence, the only way to protect the states from federal tyranny was by maintaining the balance of power that was the state system.<sup>613</sup>

This was not least because state militia were better equipped to deal with domestic insurrection, which might occur intrastate, than would a federal military that could, in any case, be turned on the people.<sup>614</sup> Patrick Henry, former state legislature and delegate to the Virginia ratifying convention, speaking in the ratifying debate in Virginia in June 1788, explained that the proposal to give a federal government the power to maintain an army, exposed the true reason for the clamour for reform, It was, he said, illustrative of the desires

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<sup>612</sup> Marks (1973). Marks believes that the Anti-Federalists rarely discussed foreign affairs. This point of view is not shared by Graebner N. A. *Isolationism and Anti-Federalism: The Ratification Debates*, (*Diplomatic History*, Vol. 11. No. 4., 1987), pp. 337- 353, who explains that far from being disconnected from foreign affairs, Anti-Federalists shared a keen interest in international relations. They differed in that they took, what Graebner describes as an isolationist view of the world. For them, the dangers to the union, described by Federalists, were exaggerated with the sole intention of securing ratification. The world was a safe place for Americans *to do business* and did not require a robust foreign policy; hence Americans could remain aloof from the balance of power.

<sup>613</sup> For a discussion of the state system as a balance of power arrangement, see also Hall M. D. *Roger Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2013), p. 125. The group of Federalists that were against expansion westwards explained that the balance of power relationship of the state system would fail as the union expanded west and the "political equipoise" of the state system was destroyed, see; essay, Onuf. P. S., *The Expanding Union*, in König (1995), p. 73. See also, Wakelyn (2004), p. 131., in which the author describes Martin's desire for smaller states to be created from larger ones in order to ensure that government remained "closest to the people". For the ubiquity of the idea of balance of power systems as those that protect participants from, what are referred to as, "predators" see; Dunne T. (et.al.), *International Relations Theories, Discipline and Diversity*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007), p.57., in which the authors quote from the Morgenthau H. definition of balance of power as "a social phenomenon...found...[at]...all levels of social interaction".

<sup>614</sup> *Cato III*, TDC, pp.214-218.



of a cabal in support of reform, for imperial glory, at the expense of the ideals of republicanism and representation, which a national government should in fact protect.<sup>615</sup>

Whether Anti-Federalists generally accepted the threat from external dangers or not, America was naturally isolated from European powers by virtue firstly of distance. Geographical isolation meant more than just some abstract thought about safety as a result of distance. It was borne out of practical considerations of the difficulties that Europeans would have of maintaining and supplying armies on the American continent. Similarly, risks of Indian tribes acting as proxies in a European conflict in America, were dismissed on the ground that they would be relatively minor border irritants not capable of harassing the main body of the states.<sup>616</sup>

Secondly America was isolated from Europe because the state system of the Articles denied foreign agents the opportunity to interfere in domestic politics an opportunity, that only centralised power would bring.<sup>617</sup> A federal government, constituting a strong executive and a small number of powerful representatives possessing vast delegated power, would only compromise natural safety, because it would provide fertile ground for the intrigue of foreign agents. The belief in states' rights that this argument implies, provides a basis for isolationism

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<sup>615</sup> *Speeches of Patrick Henry in the Virginia State Ratifying Convention, June 1788*. CAF, pp. 207-210. The Anti-Federalist writer, *Agrippa* also rejected the idea that only a strong government with the power to regulate trade and impose duties, would be able to pay down the War debt of some twelve million pounds. The same objective could easily be achieved by selling the western lands to settlers, who would be encouraged to accept a loan from the federal government, repayable in agricultural produce. Foreign creditors would, in turn, be repaid part of the War loan in-kind from the agricultural output. The objective of such an arrangement, according to *Agrippa*, would be not only to pay down the debt, but to also demonstrate the strength of the American economy and its credit worthiness; *Letters of Agrippa*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 1787, CAF, 4.6.27, pp. 81-85. The same point was made by *A Farmer*. CAF, 4.17. *Essays by A Farmer*. 11<sup>th</sup> January 1788. *A Farmer* dismissed, on the basis of distance and the attractiveness to foreign creditors of the high rate of interest being paid, fears of foreign wars that might be caused if the states do repay the foreign debt in short order. The *Storing* publication of seven volumes is generally regarded as a relatively complete collection of Anti-Federalist writing. References to the essays in these volumes is given by the paragraph, essay location and volume in one of the seven volumes. Hence, the reference; 3.16.2, is to be found in Volume III, 16<sup>th</sup> essay, paragraph 2. The Anti-Federalists were the, men (with the exception of Mercy Warren) who are recognised as the pseudonymous authors of essays either against Constitutional reform or in support, subject to amendment. The title Anti-Federalist was given to dissenters to the Constitution by its supporters who wished to discredit their arguments by claiming the title, Federalist, to themselves.

<sup>616</sup> *Essays of Brutus, New York Journal, October 1787- April 1788*, CAF, 2.9.90, p. 403.

<sup>617</sup> See, Madison (1966), p. 437, in which Edmund Randolph warns of interference from foreign emissaries.

with its origins in the colonial experience, and in the experience of the Seven Years' War.

Colonists reluctantly complied with British demands for militia support, and for intercolonial alliances, being attributed to their belief in colonial [states] rights, and hence a belief in isolation from what was perceived as a European war.<sup>618</sup>

Aside from the arguments of safety of the union from distance, and from the existing state system, was the aversion, amongst some Anti-Federalists, to compromising this situation through international trade, where it led to imbalances that enriched foreign merchants at the expense of Americans.<sup>619</sup> The pseudonymous Anti-Federalist writer *Alfred*, believed that America was too dependent on foreign trade to the extent that it had squandered its gold and silver reserves for the luxuries offered by British merchants.<sup>620</sup> The nations of Europe had cynically exploited America's natural agricultural resources when those products should have been diverted to meet the needs of the domestic population. It was therefore America's reliance on British manufactured goods that had to be broken.<sup>621</sup> An excess of imports over exports would leave America in permanent debt, and merchants would outnumber American farmers.<sup>622</sup> Because foreign trade implied an unhealthy reliance on European manufactured goods, the creation of a strong production basis in America must be encouraged provided production costs were competitive when compared with those of Britain.<sup>623</sup>

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<sup>618</sup> Boorstin D. J., *The Americans, The Colonial Experience*, (Phoenix Press: France, 1958), p. 362.

<sup>619</sup> Main J. T., *The Anti-Federalists, Critics of the Constitution, 1781-1788*, (W.W. Norton and Company: New York, 1961), p. xi., Main describes the large number of small farmers that supported the Anti-Federalist objection to the Constitution as representing the desire of the majority for protection against an elite interested in concentration of power. In this sense, the Anti-Federalists as representative of the agrarian interest is congruent with a Jeffersonian form of isolationism. This idea is reinforced by Main (1961), p. 270., in his association of the "mercantilist interest" with Federalists. This is however rejected by Cornell. S., *The Other Founders, Anti-Federalism and the Dissenting Tradition in America, 1788-1828*, (University of North Carolina Press: North Carolina, 1999), p. 83., who warns against generalisations, and describes some small farmers as intent on accommodating agrarian, commercial and merchant interests. This description is reinforced by Wakelyn (2004), p. xvii., who explains that Anti-Federalists were smaller farmers, but also large plantation owners, and a smaller number were middle sized farmers.

<sup>620</sup> *Essay by Alfred, 13<sup>th</sup> December 1787, CAF, 3.10.3, pp.141-142.*

<sup>621</sup> For a discussion of the cultural affinity of Americans with the British, the desire to adopt British manners, dress, customs, literature, political thought, etc., and the motivations behind demand for British manufactured luxuries, both before and after the War, see Griffin. P. *America's Revolution*. (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2013).

<sup>622</sup> *Address by A Plebeian, New York, 1788, CAF, 6.11.23, p.141.*

<sup>623</sup> *Letter from Sir James Jay to Patrick Henry, 30<sup>th</sup> December 1784. PHP, Volume III. pp.248-253.*

This is not to say that Anti-Federalists as a group of writers, thinkers and politicians presented a common policy reconciled against international trade. Patrick Henry, a delegate to the Virginian Ratifying Convention, for example, regarded a growth in the carrying trade as crucial to American growth and expansion. He expressed, however, a rejection of the monopolistic British merchants seeking to control American markets by exploiting free ports at Norfolk and Alexandria, Virginia, and a policy that relied for protection of that commerce on foreign aid. For Henry, a strong navy would not just relieve America of the reliance on foreign nations, but would provide security for the nation since the geographical distance from Europe and the separation by an ocean alone were insufficient to deter belligerents without a strong naval presence.<sup>624</sup>

### **The Anti-Federalist Objection to Concentration of Power**

Generally, however, the Anti-Federalists presented a distance and trade centric framework for isolation from Europe, that denied the existence of external dangers.<sup>625</sup> As explained, some took the view that the dangers had been overdone and were being exaggerated by their opponents to force ratification. Others did not entirely deny the external dangers on, for example, the western border, but attributed these to the special circumstances of a nation, with an extended border occupied on the whole by unfriendly Indian tribes.<sup>626</sup>

However, what would bring foreign influence to bear directly in the American government, would be annihilation of the existing loose confederation of the states in which state legislative representatives were close to the people they represented. Centralisation of power would

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<sup>624</sup> *Letter from Richard Henry Lee to Patrick Henry, 15<sup>th</sup> September 1776*, PHP, Volume III, pp. 10 to 11.

<sup>625</sup> See for example, the comments of *Aristocrotis, The Government of Nature Delineated, or an Exact Picture of the New Federal Constitution*, Carlisle 1788, 3.16.2, CAF. pp. 196 to 213.

<sup>626</sup> Edmund Randolph, the second American Secretary of State, believed the risk of European military involvement in America would be aided by their presence in the west, see; CAF, 6.11.1 to 6.11.33, pp.128-147. See also *Letters of Agrippa. 25<sup>th</sup> January 1788*, *Agrippa's* warning that foreign influence was just as likely to be felt from the interference of large trading companies that dominated European trade. CAF, 4.6.63, pp.104-105.

mean that the states would be reduced from sovereign power to subsidiary status.<sup>627</sup> Elbridge Gerry, a delegate to the Massachusetts Ratifying Convention, explained that the Constitution would so alter state constitutions that they would in effect be dissolved, and Federal government substituted for state assemblies.<sup>628</sup> According to George Mason, a delegate to the Virginian state Ratifying Convention, it was the implicit powers granted to the Federal government that were most dangerous of this outcome, in other words what the draft Constitution did not say as opposed only to what it did say. Hence, Mason pointed to the absence of a bill of rights that might guarantee certain freedoms to the people and the danger that the Constitution, might easily supersede states' bill of rights by retaining powers to the federal government by virtue of its position as a centralised power.<sup>629</sup> However, even with the protection that a bill of rights could provide, concerns remained that a government that was to be so geographically remote from its constituents would fail to represent local needs, and therefore be unconcerned with the liberties of the people, making it more likely to side with foreign interests.<sup>630</sup>

For Anti-Federalists, political representatives that derived their power locally, under the existing state system, would be less corruptible than delegates to a federal government.

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<sup>627</sup> *Observations Leading to a Fair Examination of the System of Government Proposed by the Late Convention, Letters from the Federal Farmer*, 1787 and 1788, CAF, 2.8.81, p. 261. Federal Farmer reinforces the idea that the states had the right to retain sovereignty by explaining that the original intention of the union was the "common defence", a union borne out of "friendship". The general theme of the Federal Farmer illustrates the major Anti-Federalist themes of (i) the absence in the Constitution of a bill of rights, (ii) the danger of a consolidation of the states, and (iii) the belief that republican government, based on the experience of antiquity, was feasible as a sustainable form of government only in small republics not in a nation that was already widely dispersed by 1787. See also Main (1961), p.168, in which the author refers to the fears of the Anti-Federalists as being one from "extreme centralization".

<sup>628</sup> CFA, Volume II, p. 7.

<sup>629</sup> *Objections to the Constitution of the Government formed by the Convention, 1787*, CAF, 2.2.1, pp.11-14

<sup>630</sup> *Robert Yates and John Lansing, Reasons of Dissent*. (New York Journal. 14<sup>th</sup> January 1788). This was the argument of both Robert Yates and John Lansing who doubted whether a bill of rights would be sufficient a guard against a government that could become so disinterested in the basic freedoms of the people. CAF, 2.3.6, p.17. See also; Bromwich D., *A Republic Divided, (Daedalus On the Humanities*, Vol. 135 No. 2, Spring, 2006), pp. 5-10., in which the author explains that "eagerness for foreign entanglements always stands in inverse proportion to a regard for liberty at home", a further objection to Federalist eagerness to secure ratification and hence to create a government active in foreign affairs. The closer the people were to power, the more they would participate in government, and the distant central government would only be disruptive of this fundamental desire of the people; Countryman E., *A People in Revolution, The American Revolution and Political Society in New York, 1760-1790*, (W. W. Norton and Company: New York, 1981), p.277.

Representatives to a federal legislature, by definition comprising a small number, would possess great power and therefore more likely to be subjected to foreign influence. Thus, for example, Edmund Randolph, Governor of Virginia and the Virginia delegate that introduced the so called Virginia Plan to the Convention, objected to the Article I provisions for election of representatives and senators, because frequent elections would encourage foreign interests to bribe voters to support, or reject incumbents.<sup>631</sup> Similarly, the proposed treaty making power which, because it required the consent of two thirds of the senate to treaties, would give extensive scope for foreign influence on **the mere ten senators** needed to support any treaty.<sup>632</sup>

Indeed, simply the perceived difference between Representatives and Senators would be sufficient to induce foreign agents to exert influence, particularly on Senators, anxious to outwit their counterparts in the House.<sup>633</sup> The pseudonymous Anti-Federalist writer, *A Farmer*, explained that there were a variety of other influential individuals in America, whom he referred to as the *aristocrats*, who would also be easily corrupted. They were the self-interested, property owning men who had originally opposed not the right of the British to maintain the American colonies within its imperial system, but to the imposition of direct taxation.<sup>634</sup> These were the merchants, men of money and power, and those with loyalist

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<sup>631</sup> This issue of foreign influence by virtue of recall, is more correctly the ability of foreigners to purchase votes as candidates stand for frequent election. *Agrippa* explains that, although not currently a mischief in the state legislature, congressional representatives to a federal government are more likely to be influenced by foreign bribes by virtue of the proportionately greater power they would exercise at the national level, see; *Letters of Agrippa*. 8<sup>th</sup> January 1788, CAF, 4.6.45, pp.91-93.

<sup>632</sup> *The Address and Reasons of Dissent of the Minority*. CAF, 3.11.43. pp.145-167.

<sup>633</sup> *Address by John Francis Mercer, Maryland*. CAF, 5.5.7, pp.102-106. The Executive might be subject to such influence because the President was more likely to have control over foreign affairs even though he was not intended to be the "*principal*" therein, see; Rakove J. N., *Original Meanings, Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution*, (The Easton Press: Connecticut, 1996), pp. 266-267.

<sup>634</sup> Foreign influence on American affairs was also more likely amongst papists and atheists who it was believed, respectively owed allegiance to a foreign power, or because they "*lack virtue*", see; *Letters by David*, 7<sup>th</sup> March 1788, CAF, 4.24.1, p. 246.

leanings, who had closely aligned themselves to Europe, its trade and fashions, and were susceptible to the foreign control of British merchants.<sup>635</sup>

However, it was the Executive that was most a risk of acting against national interests given his control of a standing army. An army that comprised cutthroats, and villains, at the behest of an Executive, who himself could easily be in thrall to interest groups, was more likely to turn on the people.<sup>636</sup> The Anti-Federalist argument against standing armies, as well as being a fear that the army might turn on the people in times of peace, is also a more nuanced argument against foreign involvement.<sup>637</sup> In explaining this, the pseudonymous Anti-Federalist Writer, *Impartial Examiner* places emphasis on the danger that an unscrupulous executive would ultimately seek the self-aggrandisement that is common to a monarch and his aristocratic court.<sup>638</sup> Hence, that the objective of keeping and maintaining an army was purely for the purpose of pursuing an imperialist foreign policy.<sup>639</sup> Fears were therefore being stoked by a cabal that demanded international respect and equality amongst nations, not because of a fear of foreign dangers.<sup>640</sup>

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<sup>635</sup> *Essays by a Farmer*, 18<sup>th</sup> March 1788, CAF, 5.1.53, pp.32-36.

<sup>636</sup> *Essays of Philadelphiensis. No. 3, Philadelphia Independent Gazette. November 1787 to April 1788*, CAF, 3.9.41. p. 121. Philadelphiensis was keen, however, to point out it was a large standing army that would be destructive of the liberty of people. A small standing army would only invite attack from foreign powers in the knowledge that the Republic could then be easily overrun. The idea of the incompetence of a proposed federal government was reflected in the belief that it would never be capable of investing in the development of a navy, not because of an inability to raise taxes, but because it would not do so given that the expense might threaten its existence, see; *Essays of Philadelphiensis. No. 3.*, CAF, p. 99.

<sup>637</sup> Anonymous. *Rudiments of Law and Government Deduced from the Law of Nature. On Modes of defence. Charleston. 1783.* APW, Volume I, p. 601. Such was the concern with standing armies that this writer suggested that the nation would be able to defend itself better with a navy since a standing army could oppress the people.

<sup>638</sup> *Essays by the Impartial Examiner*, 5<sup>th</sup> March 1788. CAF, 5.14.16. pp.183-188.

<sup>639</sup> *Speeches of Patrick Henry in the Virginia State Ratifying Convention, 12<sup>th</sup> June 1788.* CAF, 5.16.23, pp.229-239. The difference between republican and monarchical nations, in so far as waging war is concerned, is explained in this speech as the just war of the former prosecuted in the national interest as opposed to the war of the Prince, undertaken for reasons of ambition. See also *Cincinnatus*, CAF, 6.1.2.5, pp.17-22.

<sup>640</sup> *Essays by a Farmer.* Maryland 7<sup>th</sup> March 1788. CAF, 5.1.52. pp. 29 to 32. The protection that the army might provide to the republic could be achieved instead, according to the Anti-Federalist *Denatus*, by providing for academies in each state that would tutor the people in the art of defensive war; *Address by Denatus*, 11<sup>th</sup> June 1788, CAF, 5.18.12, pp.260-267.

For Patrick Henry, a self-appointed Federalist elite would use untrue concerns of foreign dangers to achieve this goal of continental expansion.<sup>641</sup> Expansion westwards and the claim of existing states to jurisdiction over those territories, would cause unrest as frontiersmen sought self-determination and state legislatures resisted. Article IV, Section IV which prohibited the creation of a state within a state without consent of the state legislature, would only encourage civil war. This is because, Martin explained, the Federal government would have to intervene, leading to state wide resistance and hence to contagious interstate civil war.<sup>642</sup> Therefore centralisation of power would magnify faction into an existentialist crisis for the union.<sup>643</sup>

Finally, the pseudonymous Anti-Federalist writer, *Philadelphensis* explained that centralisation of power would be destructive of the basic freedoms for which the Revolution was fought, making it less likely that America would continue to attract Europeans fleeing from oppression.<sup>644</sup> However, such largess to foreigners would always be tempered by a fear of its influence on morality, education, religion, and race. The pseudonymous Anti-Federalist writer *Agrippa*, for example, warned that the power of Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution which gave Congress the sole right of naturalisation, threatened to reduce the other states to the

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<sup>641</sup> Indeed, some authors take the point of view that Anti-Federalists were supported by those that would not have benefited from foreign trade, i.e. those that instead depended on local trading relationships, see; Pole (1987), p. 21., see also; Ketcham R., *The Anti-Federalist Papers and the Constitutional Convention Debates, The Clashes and the Compromises that Gave Birth to Our Form of Government*, (Putnam, New York, 2003), p.16. Such desires for national glory inimical to Republican ideas and more in keeping with those of European monarchies, see; Kidd, T.S., *Patrick Henry, First Among Patriots*, (Perseus: New York, 2011), p. 197. Martin believed that false and wholly unsustainable claims that the states faced external threats outside the powers of the Articles to contain, were being used to achieve this aim, see; *Luther Martin, The Genuine Information Delivered to the Legislature of the State of Maryland, 1788*, CAF, p.19. See also CAF. Volume III. *The Address and Reasons of Dissent of the Minority of the Convention of Pennsylvania to Their Constituents*. CAF, Volume III, pp.145-167.

<sup>642</sup> CAF, 2.4.45 to 2.4.102, pp. 48 to 72. The closeness of the ratification vote in the states meant that an effective opposition to Federal coercive acts was already forming, see; CAF, 6.11.1 to 6.11.33, pp.128-147.

<sup>643</sup> Factionalism was not to be considered a pernicious influence in all circumstances and situations, and indeed the extent of divisions in society could be safely accommodated provided the “*common interests*” remained superior. This was the essential message of Washington’s Farewell Address which combined factionalism with ideas of foreign engagement and entanglement, hence his warning against “*inveterate antipathies against particular nations and passionate attachments for others*”, quoted in, and based on Beard C. A., *The Republic, Conservations on Fundamentals*, (The Viking Press: New York, 1943), pp.48- 49.

<sup>644</sup> *Essays of Philadelphensis. Nos. 5. and 6.* CAF, 3.9.38, pp.118-119. Patrick Henry, desirous of commerce as the driver of economic growth, believed that the question was whether America would grow on a slow track, or on a fast track by encouraging immigration to exploit the industry and economy of the entrepreneurial classes seeking refuge, see; *Letter from Richard Henry Lee to Patrick Henry, 15<sup>th</sup> September 1776*, PHP, Volume III, pp.10-11.

licentious position of the state of Pennsylvania which, for many years had welcomed free and unrestrained immigration. To guard against the same fate befalling the other states, the level and the type of immigration should therefore be under the control of each state.<sup>645</sup>

### **The Anti-Federalist Reliance on the Balance of Power of the State System**

In essence therefore, the antidote to the Federalist desire for imperial glory was to be found in the maintenance of the *status quo*, the interstate balance of power afforded by the Articles which had the effect of limiting the powers of Congress, and protecting basic liberties.<sup>646</sup> Since a Constitutional union was more conducive to a fracture in the union than a confederated one, the overarching object must be to maintain a system akin to the European equilibrium within the American continent.

Hence, ironically, Anti-Federalists did not so much warn against involvement in European politics, as adopt its relationship framework to prevent European balance rivalries from irretrievably altering their republican ideal of what the interstate relationship should be.

Hence, the response of the states should be in the wholesale adoption of the principles of equilibrium, as a means to mitigate the external pernicious effects of the European version of it. In other words, to maintain a balance of power *within* the thirteen states that would prevent the success of European influence.

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<sup>645</sup> *Letters of Agrippa*, 28<sup>th</sup> December 1787, CAF, 4.6.34, pp. 85-87.

<sup>646</sup> See also PHP, p. 382 for support from Patrick Henry for this idea of the balance of power in America. Onuf takes the view that the Anti-Federalist concept of state autonomy was achieved under the Constitution, in so far as the states continued to “*exercise most governmental functions*”, see, *The Expanding Union*, Onuf. P. S., in Konig (1995), p. 79. See, also: Claude I. L Jr. *The Balance of Power Revisited*, (*Review of International Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2, Special Issue on the Balance of Power. Apr., 1989), pp. 77-85. Claude explains that “*balance of power is more appealing to statesmen than collective security in large part because, in contrast to the principled rigidity of behaviour demanded by the latter, balance of power caters for the sovereignty of the state.*” In contrast to this balance of power argument, Deudney (2007), pp. 162-189, in what he calls the Philadelphian System (a system designed to reign in the anarchical tendencies of republican states), explains that the states existed in a situation of, what he calls, “*negarchy*” or the negation of overt power by any one state not solely as a consequence of a balance of power but also because of “*the division of power*” between state and government. Separately, Deudney (2007), p. 166, explains that contrary to the argument that the Articles limited the power of Congress, the Constitution would control the state militia, the possible cause of interstate conflict.



The desirability of maintaining the equilibrium between the states were behind Martin's desire for two important amendments to the draft Constitution, ultimately not taken up.<sup>647</sup> The first, was to the treason clause of Article III, Section III, to exclude any citizen from being charged with treasonous behaviour solely because he was engaged in waging war against the Federal government, at the behest of his state legislature. The second to require that the Constitution explicitly recognise state militia, when engaged in military action against the United States, as being subject to the law of nations. Both amendments were to afford the states the same rights as any foreign belligerent when waging war against the federal government, since they were in that instance engaged in a war to maintain the states *qua* states. Hence, Martin wished for a high degree of state autonomy, albeit within a continental American system. In conclusion therefore, for Anti-Federalists, national government could never effectively govern vast territories, with the state system alone providing the only means of truly representative government.<sup>648</sup> According to *A Farmer*, in distinction to the European equilibrium, an American state balance of power system would not rely on relative hard power between its member states, but political power alone.<sup>649</sup> Political power, because it emanated from, and was close to, local representation, could not be usurped by outside influences. A balanced state system therefore provided safety, and in many ways reflected the pre-Revolutionary War status quo.

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<sup>647</sup> An alternative interpretation of this idea of the maintenance of an equilibrium intrastate and between states and congress, is put forward by Brown R. H., *Redeeming the Republic, Federalists, Taxation, and The Origins of the Constitution*, (The John Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1993), who explains that Anti-Federalists desired not so much equilibrium but an amended Confederation in which the states were supreme and representative.

<sup>648</sup> *Essays by a Farmer, Maryland*, 7<sup>th</sup> March 1788. CAF, 5.1.53, pp. 29-32.

<sup>649</sup> *Essays by a Farmer*, 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1788, CAF, 5.1.109 to 5.1.113, pp. 60-73.

## 6. Chapter Six: Conclusion

### The Argument of this Thesis

Isolationism has become the enduring view of American foreign affairs in the early part of the twentieth century, both before America's entry into the First World War, and during the interwar years. With a claimed origin in Washington's 1796 Farewell Address, the warning of *entangling alliances* has been the tradition of American foreign affairs for well over two hundred and fifty years, and is generally taken to mean two things. Firstly, that there should be no political connection with European nations, and secondly any connection that is made, for example in providing for the rights of belligerents in times of war, should not involve America in European wars. Whilst historians have tried to place the Address in context by arguing that it made sense for America to remain aloof from Europe given that it was militarily weak at the time, the idea that Washington would have disapproved of any military or political involvement in Europe continues to persist. Washington's words are therefore invoked to justify anything from a twentieth century refusal to intervene in foreign wars, to a twenty first century refutation of the theory and practice of globalisation.

There are sufficient grounds to suggest that the prevalence in the literature on American foreign policy of the Address as the origin of isolationism, and therefore a tacit rejection of the earlier period before it was given by Washington, rests on the notion that until there was a Constitutional Republic, there was no national interest. Such arguments appear to rely on; firstly, an underlying assumption that it was only what might be described as, a truly representative, Constitutional Congress that could legitimately articulate the national interest. Secondly, that there was no such thing as a national interest given the separateness of the colonies at the outset of the Revolution, and their continued failure to act in concert after Independence was won.

This thesis has sought to dispel the conception of an isolationist bent to American foreign affairs by attempting to demonstrate that, based on a broadly defined framework of what is national interest, the necessary conditions for it had been met at the start of the Revolution. In many ways the word national is unhelpful in this argument, since it creates a diversion for the researcher that leads to a search for evidence that a nation state was in existence. Such an argument is unnecessary since the correspondence of the Committees of Correspondence provide ample evidence of the shared colonial vision that the relationship with Britain was to depend on there being an independent union of the states that protected the autonomous government in each state.

Given that there was, what it is convenient to call a, national interest there was the foundation of a foreign policy which, this thesis argues, had a distinctly internationalist bent because it involved active participation in the balance of power. Hence, this thesis does not present an alternative point of view of the meaning of the Address. Instead it delves into the motives behind alliance formation, and the American exploitation of European state rivalries in the period before the Address was given. By clarifying the underlying considerations that went into policy making in these Revolutionary War years, what emerges is a nation keenly aware that active engagement with Europe would promote its trade, and assure its security. After the War, the definition of interest is more in keeping with what have become generally acceptable, but by no means the only, central planks of interest, *viz*, the pursuit of security, trade and territory. What is important about the post-War interest is that the union, critical to national interest at the outset of War, now became an end in itself, that is, the union had to be preserved for the sake of security from foreign influence, compliance with trade treaties, and to provide for a territorial expansion that assured that new states could join the other states of the union.

The early period, which forms the basis of this study, is the single most important phase in American foreign affairs history for two reasons. Firstly, during these years, two principles for a future American foreign policy were laid down. The first was that isolation was not a realistic consideration for a nation currently, or prospectively influential in the foreign affairs of other nations. By its own design or by that of others, it would always be fully engaged in world affairs, whether because of its trade interests, its importance as a military ally, or because of the universalism of the ideals of the Revolution. The second was, that ideology, whether of political separation, or of universal values, would be secondary to hard headed assessments of national interest. That these values would be compromised, traded off, and otherwise postponed between short and long term interests, would only confirm that realistic assessments of interest were central to foreign affairs.

Secondly, realism entered the American foreign policy discourse. Hence, statesmen rapidly concluded that it would never be in the interests of monarchical nations, absolutist or otherwise, to support an American independence on ideological grounds connected with ideas of liberty and freedom.<sup>650</sup> Indeed, such ideas were inimical to the fundamental premise of societies that were based not on the rights of man, given to them by God or nature, but at the pleasure of the monarch. Once this realisation gained traction in the foreign affairs thinking of American statesmen, policy decisions that exploited balance rivalries in the name of interest played a key role in policy making. Hence, fears or outright dislike of Catholicism, of absolutists nations with interests based on the whim of a monarch, or of politically entangling alliances,

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<sup>650</sup> According to one modern author, "*foreign policy has always been easiest for the United States when the nations who stood in the way of the realisation of American interests could also be regarded as the opponent of freedom and civilisation*", Widenor W.C., *Henry Cabot Lodge and the Search for an American Foreign Policy*, (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1983), p. 167

were all postponed to what was in the interest of the thirteen colonies, that is independence.<sup>651</sup>

Whereas these ideas had been forged in the years when the disparate colonies, represented by a weak Congress, had been desperate to create an independent nation and would therefore, for example, surrender even navigation rights to the Mississippi River, in return for a Spanish alliance, they also formed the foundation for post-War policy making. With the War finally over, American foreign policy thinkers set about trying to define how the ideology that was the essential basis for bringing disparate colonies together, would be fashioned into an approach to foreign affairs. They settled on a state of ostensible neutrality that allowed for two apparently conflicting bases for policy, a perfect impartiality and participation in the equilibrium, to be maintained as simultaneously realistic choices.

Hence, policy makers proclaimed themselves unwilling to align with either France or with Britain, and stated a desire to treat both equally so that there would be no risk that they might inadvertently cause offence by being seen to be too closely the ally of one or other. However, what this so called American neutrality represented in reality was the pre-War idea that ideology in foreign affairs would be blended with a healthy dose of realism. Hence, neutrality would be a transitory state, a framework for securing national interests without adopting a fixed alignment with either Britain or France. American policy would be defined to include, the no political connections mandate of the 1776 Model Treaty. Reality, however dictated that such a policy could never include a situation in which America was cut off from the outside

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<sup>651</sup> Historians are by no means agreed that the French monarchy was absolutist and explain the nuances in this concept especially in New France (the French colonisation, before 1763, of America from Canada to Louisiana) during which colonists are regarded as having enjoyed a degree of independence from French monarchical control and direction. See; Rule J. C. *The Old Regime in America. A Review of Recent Interpretations of France in America, (The William and Mary Quarterly, Vol. 19, No. 4, October 1962), pp. 575-600.*

world, because, insularity could not achieve national aims. American diplomats would be instructed in the art of active foreign engagement, negotiation and treaty creation, and in agreeing the rules of engagement of a neutral America in times of conflict. Subject to this, American statesmen would offer military commitments, to protect the Mediterranean trade, or threaten a military alliance with France, to encourage Britain to treat with it. Therefore, American foreign affairs would continue to be heavily influenced by the European balance of power.

Hence, while historians have traditionally believed that neutrality meant aloofness and even isolation from Europe after the War had ended, Americans only offered their neutrality as a means of coaxing Europeans to offer valuable concessions. Americans were willing to surrender neutrality for a defensive alliance with either France or with Britain if this were necessary in the national interest, and they were also prepared to maintain an ostensible neutral position until such time as they were able to secure these concessions.

Adoption of neutrality saved Americans from the defensive commitments of the 1778 alliance, since it enabled American Commissioners to profess ideological objection to military commitments whilst paving the way for them to enter into alliance with France's great enemy. It is for these reasons that, whilst the term neutrality appears consistently in the private papers and letters of American Commissioners and statesmen involved in foreign affairs, a close reading of this correspondence, reveals a far more nuanced, and limited interpretation of the term and one based firmly in pragmatic realism. Neutrality had a very specific meaning to these men. It involved a delicate combination of ideology and realism. The ideological consideration of staying apart from European intrigue was combined with an offer to trade this position of ostensible impartiality, of favour of national interest. A claim to neutrality was used to strengthen America's bargaining hand.

Whereas the above arguments attempt to dispel notions of isolationism in early American foreign affairs by offering the alternative balance of power perspective, this thesis also confronts ideas of isolationism more directly. Hence, the closed, agriculturally focused society of Jefferson, and the isolationist ideas that stem from the Anti-Federalist argument during the Constitutional debates are explored, but then rejected on the ground of respectively economic infeasibility, and, a failure to persuade the ratifying conventions of their merits. Once the Anti-Federalist argument for the state system as the guarantor of the safety of the union failed to gain traction, all ideas of geographical isolation were quickly rejected in favour of the internationalist foreign policy outlook of the Federalists.

In conclusion, the analysis of early foreign affairs through the prism of the balance of power that is presented by this thesis illustrates the effectiveness of the emerging, ideologically polarised American nation in confronting the established international structure that was the European equilibrium. An equilibrium that was designed to contain conflict and restrain power, provided fertile ground for American statesmen to achieve the objectives of national interest without compromising the fundamental tenet of the American founding. Indeed, the existence of a balance of power relationship between European nations in the eighteenth century was propitious to the American ambition to secure independence. The very fact that nations fought wars, or entered into alliance with peripheral nations to reinstate the equilibrium, mandated the success of American policies that depended on exploiting rivalries between those nations.

Finally, the much criticised Trumpian desire to put America, or even Americans, First [sic] should be seen within the context not of Washingtonian political separation at all, or even therefore through the lens of isolationism. More accurately, Trump's view of the world should be viewed from the perspective, before 1789, of the founders, who early recognised that,

above all else, national interest was the privilege of sovereign nations, that it was interest that should guide all policy, and that the promotion of interest as the overarching objective of policy should hold sway over any other consideration. It could be argued that because an early independent America lacked the political will and military prowess to promote universalist values abroad, that its ideas of liberty could not in any event, influence interest or policy, in these early years. This is true, and only a detailed enquiry into foreign policy making in subsequent decades could properly say whether values, distinctly American or of universal applicability, played any part in policy making. However, if modern politicians are to insist on using original intent to justify policies and decisions, what is clear is that Trump is simply asserting a position that has held true since the early founding period, that American interests, above any other consideration, should be the true basis of policy.

The argument presented herein contributes new knowledge to study of the field of early American foreign affairs. Firstly, it identifies in the literature the series of conditions that must be fulfilled if a new and emerging, disparate group of ostensibly separate colonies was to declare a shared interest. The identification of national interest helps to shift the Founding Father's view of the relationship that America should have with the rest of the world to much earlier in the founding period, freeing it from the association with Washington that has so coloured subsequent thinking about America's role in the world. Secondly, the very specific and highly nuanced meaning of a post-War neutrality, also associated with isolationism, is exposed as being more a freedom to engage with other nations in the national interest than it is a policy of separateness and desire for exclusion from unwanted commitments. Hence, thirdly, balance of power considerations are placed at the heart of foreign affairs thinking in preference to the traditional attention that has been given to ideas of universalism, isolationism, and neutrality, all underpinned by ideology. Given the importance, therefore, of the equilibrium this thesis explains that active engagement in foreign affairs was central to



Constitutional reform. Finally, this thesis exposes ideas akin to isolation in this early period as little more than theoretical arguments, and in the case of a closed agricultural society of Jefferson, as lacking a sound empirical economic basis. The Anti-Federalist argument for separation was, in all likelihood, simply another argument in the overall armoury of this bloc to prevent Constitutional reform at all, or only subject to amendment.

### **Future Research Agenda**

The analysis that has been presented in this thesis has highlighted important concepts that could form the basis of a future research agenda. Firstly, whereas the ideology that dictated separation from the affairs of Europe has been considered as an important aspect of foreign policy thinking, and indeed subject to compromise when pragmatic considerations dictated, research into the meaning and effect on foreign affairs of American exceptionalism more generally could stand analysis. Ideas of universalism have been shown, in this thesis, to be idealistic and not present in policy in the years under review, other than when associated with the spread of republican government into the western domain. However, the influence of American ideas of liberty and democracy as they affected its approach to foreign affairs in this period require further research. Hence, questions such as; *Did ideology play any part in shaping an American foreign policy in this period?*, and; *To what degree was the spread of the republican ideal [i.e. the extension of republican forms of government] in the west, important in creation of the Northwest Ordinance 1785?*, would be important to an argument that ideology played a role in early foreign policy formulation.

Secondly, the evolution of the Committees of Correspondence that were formed at each colonial town, village and parish level have not been comprehensively considered in the literature. They were not only instrumental in forging colonial consensus, but an enquiry into the reasons why they were created, by whom in each colony, and what their original

objectives were, might provide alternative assessments of the causes of the American Revolution. One aspect of their formation that might yield such interpretations could spring from a consideration of the role that foreign, particularly French, agents played in their formation. Hence questions might include; *Were French agents responsible catalysts for the seeding of dissent that led to the creation of some Committees?, If so, to what degree can foreign influence be said to have contributed to the Revolution?*, and; *Were some states more than others affected by foreign influence?* The answers to these questions would also assist in obtaining a more complete picture of the fear of foreign dangers that was such a part of post-War foreign affairs thinking. The archives that would support such research will be fragmented, and located widely in what were the original thirteen colonies, and in France.

Finally, there are inherent limitations in a study which relies on the writings and papers of a relatively small group of American foreign affairs thinkers and writers for insights into the very specific issue of the European balance of power and America's participation in it in this very narrow period of time. This thesis has inquired into the correspondence, and other writings of men who shaped American foreign affairs in these years. These men, because they were vested with great power as plenipotentiaries, and because problems of communication with Europe meant that they had wide latitude of action, were able to shape an American foreign policy. It has also based the argument in the writings of men actively involved in politics in the states and in Congress, particularly during the debates for ratification of the Constitution. However, an analysis based on a more in-depth and wider consideration of Congressional records, and the writings and speeches of other founders could provide further insight into the balance of power argument set out herein, but more particularly into ideas of national interest. A question that remain to be answered is; *Did national interest only become engrained in the foreign policy debate after Constitutional ratification?* An answer to this question would more fully address the essential argument of modern historians who, as

postulated in Chapter One, may have placed confidence in the Farewell Address as the origin of future American engagement solely because they would answer this question in the affirmative.

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