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“A More Stainless and Splendid Name?” Contrasting the Wartime and Peacetime Strategies of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, 1757-1778

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State University of New York
College at Buffalo
Department of History

“A more stainless and splendid name?”
Contrasting the wartime and peacetime strategies of William Pitt,
Earl of Chatham, 1757-1778

A Thesis in
History

By

Lori Holmes

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements
For the Degree of

Master of Arts
May 2015

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Introduction – Historiography and Biography of William Pitt, the Elder

William Pitt the Elder was one of the dominant political figures in 18th century Britain. The climax of his career came during the Seven Years' War, primarily between the years of 1756 and 1761.¹ It was during that period his policies produced great British victories on four separate continents: Europe, Asia, Africa, and North America. Unlike his predecessors and some of his own colleagues, Pitt did not fear taking risks.² He worked for the expansion of the British Empire and was seen as a great patriot minister.

As this thesis will show, Pitt developed and pushed an agenda focused on a wartime victory, regardless of the financial costs. Each year more and more money was spent on the global war that he directed. In the end, the British Empire expanded across the globe and became the largest and most powerful empire in the world. However, when Pitt entered office as Southern Secretary of State, the country was at a low point. Britain relied on foreign mercenaries for her own protection, and she suffered losses in many theaters. During his tenure in office, Pitt reversed this, and brought together the English, Irish, Scots, and Americans to fight for the British Empire, it expanded as a result.³ More victories were achieved and conquests made during Pitt's time with the Newcastle Administration from 1757 until his resignation in 1761 than during any other period of expansion. This was one of the most successful administrations in the history of Britain, and Pitt was its driving force.⁴

¹ Mary Abu-Shumays, "Review of The Elder Pitt: Earl of Chatham, by Stanley Ayling" *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* Vol 61 (July 3, 1978): 3.

² Albert Von Ruville, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham* (New York, NY: Putnam, 1907), 30.

³ Basil Williams, *The Life of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham* (New York, NY: Longmans Green, 1914), 123-125.

⁴ Richard Middleton, *The Bells of Victory: The Pitt-Newcastle Ministry and the Conduct of the Seven Years' War 1757-1762* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1985), ix.

Nonetheless, it was disappointed Pitt who left office as the Seven Years' War concluded. He departed without leaving a strategy for the British Empire he had helped to create and with no specific ideas about how to recover financially from the global war he oversaw. He was not a part of the government that directed the affairs of the newly enlarged British Empire during the crucial period immediately after the war. It was during his time away from government that decisions were made that would forever change the dynamic between Britain and her American colonies. A little over a decade later, the empire he worked to create would lose one of its most important components, the American colonies. Pitt would eventually return to office. However, he was unable to implement a successful colonial policy and thereby prevent the severing of ties between the American colonies and the mother country.

Therefore, this thesis will contrast Pitt's successes as a wartime leader with the deficiencies he left for the peacetime government. It will be seen that Pitt promoted a major shift in Britain's military strategy during the Seven Years' War, 1757-1763. His decision to focus British military initiatives on the North American theatre of the war would all but eliminate France as an imperial power in the Western Hemisphere. For that reason Pitt has always enjoyed a special prominence in British history. Not unlike Winston Churchill he is celebrated for the victories he oversaw. This thesis contends, however, that this is only part of Pitt's historical legacy. Lost in the accolades he receives for these victories is a consideration of the costs that they brought to the British government and empire. In peacetime Pitt was never able to reconcile the costs that this strategy had brought with post war, political, economic, and imperial realities. The thirteen American Colonies had been the greatest beneficiaries of his war time strategy.

He had shied away, however, from demanding that they help meet these costs. As a result, post war British administrations that attempted to raise new imperial revenues from the colonies faced opposition and ultimately rebellion. Although Pitt was not in government when the American Revolution began, we will also see that he could not reconcile the need for shared responsibility for war debts with abstract and untested notions of colonial autonomy. In terms of his political and historical legacy there were in fact two William Pitts. The first was the successful war time leader who has already been cited. The second was a peace time politician who remained prominent in the public's imagination owing to his previous service but who was conceptually unable to make a meaningful contribution to mediating the growing crisis with the American colonies. To begin this analysis we must first assess his historiographical profile.

In early histories and biographies of Pitt, he was glorified for his contributions to England and the British Empire. His efforts during the Seven Years' War were documented and celebrated. He was seen as a hero, a true patriot minister who led the British to victory across the globe and overall, these studies fall in to what one would regard as "Great Man" profiles.⁵

Early biographers and historians who offered such treatment were, Walford Davis Green, Basil Williams, and Albert von Ruville. In Green's book, William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, and the Growth and Division of the British Empire 1708-1778, Pitt received credit for his vigorous measures he laid out for prosecuting the war.⁶ Similarly Albert von Ruville, in William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, highlighted the new focus that Pitt gave to the North American theatre in Britain's long war with France. He showed that Pitt was

⁵ Middleton, *Bells of Victory*, 223.

⁶ Walford Davis Green, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, and the Growth and Division of the British Empire, 1708-1778* (New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Soon, 1901), 97.

willing to take risks in the war for the empire, and his efforts paid off.⁷ However, in studies such as these, there was little criticism of Pitt, especially when it came to his failure to develop an overall imperial policy. These biographical works also acknowledged Pitt's frequent illnesses and their impacts on his career. Notably, Basil Williams, in The Life of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, illustrated how severely incapacitated Pitt would become when struck with illness. Williams described Pitt's fits of madness and insanity, arguing that he became more incoherent and unable to function as his illnesses became more lengthy and severe.⁸

Recent biographers and historians have been more critical of Pitt, even finding fault with his leadership during the Seven Years' War. Stanley Aylings in the Elder Pitt, Earl of Chatham, goes so far as to completely tear down the pedestal that Pitt had been placed on more hagiographic treatments. Aylings details Pitt's difficulties with physical and mental illness which show Pitt to be a comparatively weak figure in the Newcastle Ministry.⁹ However, more recent historians such as Jeremy Black and Marie Peters have reached a middle ground. They still believe Pitt should be celebrated for his efforts during the Seven Years' War and the contributions he made to England and the Empire, but address his short-comings as well.¹⁰ In Pitt and Popularity, Marie Peters credits him with British success in North America she states that: "Pitt's war leadership reaped decisive colonial success."¹¹ Specifically his focusing of resources in North America provided for constant victories. She goes on to argue that Pitt's career had reached its

⁷ Ruville, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 30.

⁸ Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 242.

⁹ Mary Abu-Shumays, Review of *The Elder Pitt: Earl of Chatham*, by Stanley Ayling. *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, Vol 61, Number 3 (July 3, 1978).

¹⁰ Jeremy Black, *Pitt the Elder* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 230.

¹¹ Marie Peters, *Pitt and Popularity: The Patriot Minister and London Opinion during the Seven Years' War* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1980), 143.

height by the end of the Seven Years' War, and that thereafter, incapacity was the dominate theme of his life. Black and Peters remind us that Pitt was not the only one to help lead Britain and her Prussian allies to victory during the war. They recall that Pitt was part of a ministry to which others contributed.¹² For example, without the Duke of Newcastle, who served as Prime Minister and controlled the treasury, Pitt a Secretary of State, would have been unlikely to achieve his mass deployment of new forces to North America during the war. In the eyes of many of Pitt's contemporaries, he was arrogant, resentful, irritable, and disdainful.¹³ For these reasons Pitt had a difficult time making allies and finding supporters.

Newcastle was the opposite. He had a great base of supporters, including the King and many of his friends, and Pitt would rely on this base to get war measures through Parliament. Earlier historians who exaggerated Pitt's role, failed to place him in the proper political context. As a member of parliament he required support and votes to carry out his policies. He could not have achieved these on his own. Furthermore, he was not a lone agent.

The government was broken down into departments and shared responsibilities with cabinet colleagues.¹⁴ It would have been nearly impossible to control every branch and department of the government to plan and conduct the war, and no one in Britain had held such power since Oliver Cromwell.¹⁵ Pitt spearheaded the efforts of the war that led Britain and the Empire to victory, but he could not have accomplished this without the help of others.

¹² Karl W. Schweizer, "Review of Pitt the Elder by Jeremy Black" *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* Vol 25, No 4 (Winter, 1933): 710.

¹³ Rupert Furneaux, *Seven Years' War 1756-1763* (London: Hart-Davis MacGibbon, Ltd, 1973), 49.

¹⁴ Middleton, *Bells of Victory*, 19.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 49.

One of the more balanced treatments comes in Middleton's work, The Bells of Victory. Here Pitt's role in the Newcastle administration and the Seven Years' War is explored within the context of ongoing debates in cabinet over strategy. Home defense versus foreign military commitments was one such case. When Pitt entered office in 1758, the country was defended by foreign mercenaries. The army and navy had long been neglected, and there was a long list of defeats early in the war for Britain and her allies across the world. Reversing this situation required constant political jockeying as will be seen.¹⁶

Pitt shifted Britain's focus in its war against France from a secondary role in continental European battles to a more global initiative. He was the first to see that France could not be decisively defeated in a European war, but was vulnerable in a global, imperial struggle.¹⁷ Therefore, Pitt shifted the policy of traditional European campaigns to a global campaign. For the purpose of this thesis, it will be the North American component of this strategy that receives our attention. As will be seen, Pitt's eventual strategy would result in the nearly complete removal of the French from North America.

Pitt played a hands-on role in this. Throughout the war, he was constantly analyzing letters and reports from his generals such as Jeffrey Amherst and James Wolfe, in order to prepare future campaigns. He was eager for all the information he could gather on both successes and failures. He spent many long hours working on plans for campaigns, especially in America.¹⁸ This would finally bear fruit in 1759, the most successful year of the war for the British. The successful campaigns of General Jeffrey

¹⁶ Ibid,

¹⁷ Green, *William Pitt*, 74.

¹⁸ Ibid, 56.

Amherst at the fortress of Louisbourg and General James Wolfe capture of Quebec were mainly due to Pitt's strategic vision.¹⁹

However, Pitt failed to recognize the financial strains placed on the treasury as a result of his global war. His desire to fight the war in America made the war one of the most costly in British history. He ignored and failed to understand the financial aspects of this effort and its aftermath. This theme is developed by Jeremy Black in Pitt the Elder. He argues that Pitt lacked a comprehension of the financial realities of global war.²⁰ Black further states that Pitt's unwillingness to compromise made him difficult to work with, and impeded cabinet solidarity. When advised of the growing financial strains, he rebuffed pleas to end the war and save the economy.²¹ His lack of immediate concern for finances therefore forced the statesmen who followed him to make difficult decisions that would ultimately lead to American rebellion.

Pitt's career tumbled after peaking with victory in the Seven Years' War. His career reached its height at the conclusion of the Seven Years' War. It was the highlight of his career, and he was admired by Englishmen on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. However, he did not have the foresight to guide the Empire in its new form. He failed to develop a plan for financing the war both during and after the war. He failed also to develop an imperial policy to take effect at the conclusion of the war for the new British Empire.

After the war, he was frequently sidelined by illness, and because of this, he was largely absent politically as Britain's American colonists became increasingly discontented. New leaders were forced to make difficult and important decisions, often

¹⁹ Ibid, 85.

²⁰ Jeremy Black, *Pitt the Elder*, 235.

²¹ Ruville, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 217.

related to the growing costs of imperial defense. Decisions were made and new policies were implemented during his absence. With his brief return to power as Prime Minister in 1766, he demonstrated how changed circumstances and physical maladies had taken their toll. According to Black, he was now unsuitable for governing.²² In the end he was ill for all but eight months of his premiership, and his administration was left leaderless and without direction. During this absence, crucial decisions were made that forever impacted the relationship between Britain and her colonies. When Pitt's health recovered briefly, he returned to London to resign his position, and he did not hold office ever again. This thesis, therefore, seeks to contrast Pitt the war leader, with Pitt the weakened, peacetime figure. As will be seen, the man who won North America, was unable to keep the American colonies.

Pitt bitterly opposed any policy that levied new taxes on the Americans, but he did not provide alternatives to raise needed peacetime revenues. At one point, he urged Parliament to repeal all tax legislation enacted since 1763. He told Parliament it should compensate the colonists for burning down their towns and destroying their lands during the recent skirmishes between the British troops and American colonists. However, his proposals were rejected.²³ In peacetime, a combination of changed circumstances and his own incapacities made Pitt a progressively isolated figure, according to Black.²⁴ His health and his age began taking a toll, and the great William Pitt was soon gone in more ways than one.

²² Black, *Pitt the Elder*, 264.

²³ Peter Douglas Brown, *William Pitt Earl of Chatham, the Great Commoner* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1978), 18.

²⁴ Black, *Pitt the Elder*, 263.

In order for the reader to see how these contrasting images of Pitt's career will be treated, some structural notes about the thesis must be provided. The purpose of the first chapter is to give the reader background knowledge of the Seven Years' War. This was the first truly global war with conflict taking place on multiple continents. This chapter narrates the causes of the war in the two major theaters of war: Europe and North America. Early in the war, the prospects looked dismal for a British victory. It was not until William Pitt came to power to conduct the war as the Southern Secretary of State that the position of Britain finally changed. Decisive victories soon followed.

The second chapter will begin with establishment of the Newcastle-Pitt government in 1757, as this would be the administration that would win the war. The main focus will be to illustrate the crucial role Pitt played in Britain's global strategy in the Seven Years' War. As soon as he was sworn in as the Secretary of State of the Southern Department, he immediately began developing a new strategy that emphasized Britain's war efforts in North America against the French. He resisted efforts to send reinforcements to Britain's ally in Prussia as well as calls from within the ministry to negotiate peace with France. However, as successful as he was in leading the war effort, he failed to appreciate the economic ramifications of his policies. Global victories and a global empire came at great costs to Britain and its treasury, and Pitt the wartime leader was unprepared to address this.

As the thesis moves into the third chapter, it will shift the focus from wartime to peacetime, focusing on the impact of the Seven Years' War. As the war reached its conclusion, Pitt resigned his position as Secretary of State, and he found himself in the minority of the new king, George III's, ministry. Unhappy with the direction of these

changed circumstances brought, he resigned prior to the peace of 1763. Therefore, he was not a part of the peace negotiations. Pitt was extremely unhappy with the terms of peace and spoke out against the ratification of the Treaty of Paris almost immediately. Two major issues needed to be addressed at the conclusion of the war. One was the financial crisis Britain faced after the costly and lengthy conflict, and the second was the need for new imperial understandings for the greatly enlarged British Empire. Pitt was no longer in a position of power, nor was he physically able to be a part of this decision making process. As a result, crucial decisions were made by other statesmen that would eventually lead to the loss of Britain's American colonies in 1776. Had Pitt been able to lend the same coherence to the challenges of peace that he had shown during the war, events might have turned out differently.

The fourth and final chapter of the thesis surveys the British crisis with her American colonies. In 1766, Pitt formed a ministry which had the opportunity to implement an imperial policy for the British Empire that addressed the frustrations of Americans. Tensions were high between Britain and America as a result of the Stamp Act, despite its eventual repeal. But before Pitt could set to work on a plan for the Empire, he succumbed to illness yet again. The majority of his sixteen month administration was spent in seclusion, leaving his administration without his leadership or vision. This allowed for the rise of Charles Townshend, whose policy of imposing new taxes continued to divide Britain and the colonies. Following his resignation in 1768, Pitt spoke intermittently in Parliament. When he did, it was usually about the American affairs. He was horrified by the growing rift between Britain and America but could not offer few specific suggestions. At the time of his death in May of 1778, events had spun

irrevocably out of control and a new war in America, this time for independence, was all but inevitable.

Although the focus of this thesis lies in an analysis of Pitt's wartime and peacetime records, and the contrasts between them, a brief biographical survey must be presented first. William Pitt was born on November 15, 1708, the second son and fifth child of Robert and Harriet Villiers Pitt.²⁵ His maternal grandfather was a Viscount, while his fraternal grandfather was the governor of Madras.²⁶ His father would eventually enter politics. He was not from the landed gentry; but instead made his money through investing and trade.²⁷ This would impact Pitt's view during his political career regarding the British colonies in the New World. He would always remain a staunch advocate for imperial trade.

Pitt was first enrolled at Eton at the age of eleven, where his intelligence and abilities were recognized early.²⁸ It was also at Eton that he experienced his first attack of gout at the young age of sixteen.²⁹ This was an illness that would incapacitate him throughout his career. Periodically he would slip into severe depressions and would be incapacitated for days or weeks at a time. The next stage of Pitt's education was at Trinity College, Oxford. He left after one year without a degree, following the death of his father in May of 1727.³⁰ Afterwards, he traveled abroad, studying at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands. It was there that he studied law. Meanwhile, his older brother,

²⁵ Brown, *William Pitt Earl of Chatham*, 18.

²⁶ Karl W. Schweizer, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham 1708-1778: A Biography* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993), xvi.

²⁷ Brown, *William Pitt Earl of Chatham*, 18.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 26.

²⁹ Green, *William Pitt*, 5.

³⁰ Brown, *William Pitt Earl of Chatham*, 29.

Thomas Pitt, became a Member of Parliament.³¹ Young William would eventually follow him to Westminster.

Pitt was quite handsome in his youth. This and his affable personality aided him in his rise to power in mid 1700s in Britain. The gift of oratory proved essential to Pitt's rise to power in British politics. His speeches commanded attention. He was able to dominate his colleagues, inspire confidence in and support of his positions, and in some cases, instill fear to gain support.³² Albert Ruville, an early biographer, noted that: "His attitude, his gestures, his movements and his glance united geniality with dignity, though dignity was predominant. It was, however, the flashing eye which made the strongest impression upon his contemporaries; its glow could excite his audience and win them to his cause, while his devastating glance could terrify and confound."³³ These traits propelled Pitt into the spotlight of British politics. His ability to sway opinions and gain support was crucial in persecuting the Seven Years' War.

Early on, his uncle, Lord Cobham, helped Pitt earn a commission in the King's Regiment of Horse.³⁴ However, Pitt was not interested in serving in the military. Instead, he wanted to enter politics. Pitt began his political life in 1735, when he was elected Member of Parliament from Old Sarum, where he served from 1735 until 1747.³⁵ He was only twenty-seven years old at the time of his election; and he eventually would go on to serve as a member of Parliament for Seaford from 1747-1754, Aldborough from 1754-1756, Okehampton from 1756-1757, and Bath from 1757-1766.³⁶

³¹ Ibid, 30.

³² Peters, *Pitt and Popularity*, 29.

³³ Ruville, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 145

³⁴ Schweizer, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham 1708-1778*, xvi.

³⁵ Schweizer, "Review of Pitt the Elder by Jeremy Black", 709.

³⁶ Schweizer, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham 1708-1778*, xvii.

In spite of some connections, Pitt was an outsider in many ways. He was not born into wealth or an inherited position.³⁷ His mother was from the aristocracy, but that did not make Pitt an aristocrat. He rose on his own. Upon the death of his grandfather, the Pitt family was left a sizeable inheritance. It paled compared to other powerful families of the time such as the Pelhams, Russells, and Cavendishes.³⁸ Pitt may have not had wealth or political connections, but his ambition, ability, and determination allowed him to rise to power. This was quite remarkable as Britain's class system made it difficult for Commoners to succeed in politics. Jeremy Black has described this situation as a "political situation dominated by aristocratic conventions."³⁹ Despite the politics of the time, Pitt was still able to achieve powerful positions within the British government.

This climb began between the years of 1735 and 1754. However, it was a slow ascent, peaking during the Seven Years' War. As a Member of Parliament, he frequently spoke out against Robert Walpole, First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of Exchequer.⁴⁰ He also spoke out against the Hanoverian connection. In 1714, King George I ascended the British throne from the German state of Prussia.⁴¹ George was the distant cousin of Queen Anne, and upon her death he became king. Even though he was King of Britain, he still was deeply connected to his native land. This connection would impact British foreign policy throughout the majority of the eighteenth century as both George I and his son, George II felt loyalty to Hanover and wanted it protected.⁴² Pitt despised this idea, stating in Parliament: "The extreme partiality of George II for his

³⁷ Schweizer, "Review of Pitt the Elder by Jeremy Black", 710.

³⁸ Brown, *William Pitt Earl of Chatham*, 27.

³⁹ Schweizer, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham 1708-1778*, 10.

⁴⁰ Brown, *William Pitt Earl of Chatham*, 34.

⁴¹ Brendan Simms and Torsten Rott, *The Hanoverian Dimension in British History 1714-1837*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 11.

⁴² Simms and Rott, *Hanoverian Dimension in British History*, 13.

German dominions continued to be productive of the greatest inconvenience and expense to Great Britain. Apprehensions for the safety of Hanover had been one great causes of the War of Austrian Succession, which terminated in 1748.”⁴³

Pitt’s opposition to the Hanover connection made him an enemy of King George II early in his career.⁴⁴ He spoke out against involvement with European conflicts. Instead, he wished to focus on promoting the trade and security of British territory in the New World.⁴⁵ He had already been concerned with resisting French aspirations in North America, long before war broke out there.

Pitt married Lady Hester Grenville on November 16, 1754. He was forty-six years old, while his new bride was thirty-six. The couple welcomed their first child in November of 1755.⁴⁶ Together they had five children: Hester, John, Harriot, William, and James Charles. Their second son, William, became a famous politician in his own right. He would be known as Pitt the Younger. Throughout Pitt’s career, especially during his bouts of illness, it was his wife who supported him, even taking care of his official communications and letters. Throughout his life, his children were a source of great enjoyment.⁴⁷ His home life was one of great satisfaction and comfort.

In 1746, Pitt was commissioned as the Paymaster General of Forces, making him responsible for paying the army.⁴⁸ King George II eventually warmed to Pitt after previously being offended by his criticism of the King’s connection to Hanover during

⁴³ Frances Thackeray, *A History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*. (London: C and J Rivington, 1827), 174.

⁴⁴ Brown, *William Pitt Earl of Chatham*, 60.

⁴⁵ Peters, *Pitt and Popularity*, 26.

⁴⁶ Brown, *William Pitt Earl of Chatham*, 99.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 371.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 79.

the War of Austrian Succession.⁴⁹ Pitt spent nine years in the position. His time spent as Paymaster was important for the rest of his career. While serving, he became familiar with European territories in the New World, including those of the French.⁵⁰ This knowledge would greatly aid Pitt when he eventually guided Britain through the Seven Years' War.

Domestic and international crises brought Pitt to the forefront of British politics in the mid 1700s. As conflict broke out in both Europe and the New World, Pitt was put on the world stage. In North America, Britain failed to stop French encroachment in the Ohio Valley as General Braddock's troops were defeated. British troops were also defeated in the Great Lakes region in Oswego. The British were forced to evacuate Calcutta, in India.⁵¹ At the same time, there was a threat of a French invasion along the English coastline. The strategic Mediterranean island of Minorca was seized from the British.⁵² Britain's failures in the early stages of the Seven Years' War opened the door for Pitt's rise to power and fame.⁵³

The losses around the globe and fear of invasion were the catalyst for change in the King's ministry. Pitt was ready and eager to step into his role as Southern Secretary of State and lead Britain into one of the most successful periods of her history. In November of 1756, he was briefly appointed Secretary of State in the Devonshire Ministry. This appointment lasted for approximately four months as he was quickly

⁴⁹ Green, *William Pitt*, 39.

⁵⁰ Schweizer, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham 1708-1778*, xvii.

⁵¹ Furneaux, *Seven Years' War 1756-1763*, 40.

⁵² Middleton, *Bells of Victory*, 4-5.

⁵³ Peters, *Pitt and Popularity*, 62.

dismissed, only to return to that position the following year as part of the new Newcastle Ministry.⁵⁴

The Pitt-Newcastle Ministry was one of the strongest, most powerful, and important ministries of the century in Britain.⁵⁵ It was the Pitt-Newcastle Ministry that led Britain through the Seven Years' War. As will be seen, it is in the context of the Seven Years' War, and the strategic imperative that Pitt placed upon the North American theatre, that he truly rose to greatness.

⁵⁴ Schweizer, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham 1708-1778*, xvii.

⁵⁵ Peters, *Pitt and Popularity*, 87.

Chapter 1 – Survey of Seven Years’ War

While some in Britain may have indulged in illusions of isolation, by the mid-eighteenth century Great Britain was fully engaged in global geopolitics. Nativists and imperialists might have hoped to avoid entanglements on the European continent, focusing instead on a “blue water” policy and a growing empire, but continental conflicts often interfered. Following the Glorious Revolution of 1688, a progression of foreign-born rulers (Queen Anne exempted) expected to use British resources in support of their continental homelands. As this generally saw Britain enter into coalitions against France, the French response was to continue to foster the aspirations of the exiled Stuarts and support Jacobite uprisings in the British Isles. One off-shoot of all this was European rivalries that played out more dramatically across the Atlantic, especially where New France, and Britain’s American colonies came into contact.

This situation became particularly acute after 1747. Once again, European catalysts were of special significance. This was especially true regarding the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, which ended the War of Austrian Succession. It failed to settle disputes over trade and settlement in the New World between the two nations.¹ The French held many strategic locations in North America, especially important rivers such as the St. Lawrence, numerous lakes, and inland waterways between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River.² French control of these areas limited British settlement to land along the Atlantic Ocean.³ At the same time, the French had been long allied with the various Native American nations in the New World. From the beginning, the French had a more positive relationship with Native Americans than their British counterparts. The French

¹ Peters, *Pitt and Popularity*, 37.

² Furneaux, *Seven Years’ War 1756-1763*, 15.

³ Green, *William Pitt*, 67.

and Native Americans effectively confined the British Colonies to the coast. The narrow area between the Atlantic Ocean west to the Appalachian Mountains, however, could no longer contain and support the ever growing population of the British colonies.⁴

Unlike New France, the British colonies in the New World were heavily populated. The population of the Thirteen Colonies at the turn of the eighteenth century numbered only two hundred and fifty thousand. By 1760 it had grown to over two million people.⁵ Because of this, several colonies were eager to push beyond their western borders along the Appalachian Mountains. This aspiration was tacitly supported in Westminster, although the ramifications of expansion were not always appreciated.⁶ As the colonists looked westward, they encountered the French and their native allies. Should conflict arise, it was unclear whether Britain's colonies could fight for themselves as they lacked cohesion and a common force.

The French had claimed much of the land beyond the Appalachian Mountains based on claims by explorers such as Jacques Marquette and Robert de LaSalle. The French also allied themselves with various Native American tribes in the Great Lakes and Mississippi Valley by the mid-eighteenth century. The French had established a line of forts stretching from Montreal to New Orleans.⁷ Both sides were quickly growing more concerned that their rival was encroaching on their respective claims. A flash point occurred when Virginia and Pennsylvania together formed the Ohio Land Company in 1747. The company established various trading posts in the Ohio Valley and traded with

⁴ Ibid, 67.

⁵ Clarence L. VerSteeg, *The Formative Years 1607-1763* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1964), 152.

⁶ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2000), 17.

⁷ Peters, *Pitt and Popularity*, 37.

various Native American groups in the region. They also began surveying the land for settlement. The French saw this as an encroachment on their claimed territory.⁸

The French had also been active in the regions of Ohio, the Great Lakes, and Nova Scotia.⁹ In response to their perception of British encroachment on their territory, the French sent three thousand soldiers to the Ohio Valley region. Both sides erected forts in the disputed territory.¹⁰ The French established Fort Duquesne in present day western Pennsylvania, and it was no small establishment. It was an impressive military fort that sent the message the French were there to stay.¹¹ In response, Virginia Governor Robert Dinwiddie sent George Washington with a small militia force to the area. In the governor's instructions to Washington, he stated that: "The French have unjustly invaded my land on the Ohio, and have sent flying parties of French and Indians to rob and murder our back settlers to the west."¹² Dinwiddie instructed Washington to; "...conduct the necessary mission to drive the French from the Ohio."¹³ Specifically, Washington and his group were there only to deliver a message to the French in the area. This message instructed the French to halt construction of forts in the region and to resign from those already completed, as well. The French refused the request. In response, the French captain, Jacques Legardeur de Saint-Pierre, firmly responded that the land was that of the French, and that the French claim was incontestable.¹⁴ Washington and his men marched back to Virginia to deliver the French response to Governor Dinwiddie.

⁸ Daniel Marston, *Seven Years' War* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2001), 10.

⁹ Middleton, *Bells of Victory*, 2.

¹⁰ Marston, *Seven Years' War*, 10.

¹¹ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 49.

¹² Jared Sparks, ed., *The Writings of George Washington, Volume II* (Boston, MA: Charles Tappan, 1846), 184-186.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 41-45.

In response to the French refusal to evacuate the Ohio Valley, Washington and his men next built Fort Necessity at the river forks of the Ohio and Monongahela Rivers. The proximity of the Virginia militia and the French force held the potential for conflict. Washington and members of his party soon discovered a group of French scouts in an area known as Great Meadows. Washington believed the French were attempting a stealth attack, and shots were fired between the French and his forces.¹⁵ These would be the first North American shots in what was known as the Seven Years' War in Europe and the French and Indian War in America.

The French were outraged by the attack in what they believed to be their territory in the Ohio Valley. Their response to Great Meadows was to attack Fort Necessity in July of 1754. Washington was forced to surrender, losing thirty men, with another seventy five wounded, while the French only lost three men. It was an absolute disaster for young Washington and his militia, who were allowed to retreat to Virginia while the French destroyed Fort Necessity.¹⁶

When Washington returned to give his report to Robert Dinwiddie, the governor was aghast.¹⁷ The entire incident showed that the colonies would need the support of the British in order to defend themselves from the French in an all out war to secure territory in the disputed lands of the Ohio Valley. They needed British regulars, artillery, and the Royal Navy if they had any chance of withstanding French attacks on the frontier. The colonists were too inexperienced, ill- trained, ill-equipped, and small in number to face the powerful French troops and their Native American allies.

¹⁵ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 65.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 65.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 66.

While the British colonial population was much larger than French population, the French fighters and their Native American allies outnumbered the colonial militias. Pitt had a similar opinion and fear about the British colonists against the French and their Native American allies:

Our colonists, although wealthier and more numerous than those of France, were infinitely inferior to the latter in point of military discipline. Almost all the French colonists were expert soldiers. The Indians were generally attached to their interests, and whilst our possessions were defenceless, their own were guarded by a chain of forts.¹⁸

It also was difficult raising militia troops in the colonies. The Virginia Governor Dinwiddie wrote to Governor James Glen of South Carolina informing him of Washington's defeat. He informed Governor James Glen that: "...they were taken by surprise."¹⁹ He tried to urge joint colonial efforts, noting: "I think we are not to be idle and tacitly allow the Enemy to continue their unjust Encroachm'ts."²⁰ In the end, Dinwiddie failed to rally support from the Virginia House of Burgesses and other colonial legislatures.²¹ He lamented to the President of the Board of Trade, the Earl of Halifax, about the unwillingness of the colonies to join together against the French threat. Dinwiddie noted: "...the supine and unaccountable obstinacy of the assemblies of different colonies on this continent."²² Fortunately for the colonies, the government in London understood the need for a coordinated strategy.²³ Domestic and foreign politics would now impact the British response in the New World as well.

¹⁸ Thackeray, *History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt*, 267-268.

¹⁹R.A. Brock, ed., *The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie, Volume I*. (Richmond, VA: Virginia Historical Society, 1883), 377-379.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 66.

²² Brock, *The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie, Volume I*, 366-369.

²³ Furneaux, *Seven Years' War 1756-1763*, 15.

Responding to French actions in the New World impacted politics on the continent of Europe. Domestically, King George II, with his connection and devotion to Hanover, was worried about a possible French attack on his homeland if conflict continued between Britain and France in the New World.²⁴ As tensions escalated across the Atlantic, the political situation in Europe was changing. Between the years of 1755 and 1756, alliances were shifting and reversing.²⁵

In January 1755, troops, supplies, and money were sent from Britain to the colonies.²⁶ Two regiments of the Irish Infantry went to Virginia under the leadership of General Edward Braddock. The instructions for Braddock involved defending British claims against French encroachments. This effort would be carried out in three phases. The first was to remove the French from the Ohio Valley region. The second was to then move north into the colony of New York to remove the French from Fort Fredrick at Crown Point. Finally, the third phase would be to remove the French from newly constructed forts near what is today, Nova Scotia, Canada.²⁷

The Duke of Newcastle, serving as Prime Minister for the first time between 1754 and 1756, supported the plan. However, he hoped to avoid war. Braddock's mission would take time, and Newcastle hoped that he could still negotiate with the French. However, shifting alliances in Europe and the efforts of the king's son, the Duke of Cumberland, to hasten the attack on the French prevented Newcastle from avoiding war.²⁸

²⁴ Peters, *Pitt and Popularity*, 37.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 48.

²⁶ Marston, *Seven Years' War*, 10.

²⁷ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 68.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 68-69.

In June 1755, General Braddock attempted to seize Fort Duquesne from the French in the Ohio Valley.²⁹ The British had set out for the French fort on April 26. Narrow, difficult trails; dangerous waterways; and mountainous landscapes made the march to the French fort difficult for Braddock and his eight hundred troops.³⁰ Furthermore, they lacked training and experience in forest military encounters. Washington described the experience in a letter to his mother: “We were attacked by a party of French and Indians, whose number, I am persuaded, did not exceed three hundred men; while ours consisted of about one thousand three hundred well-armed troops, chiefly regular soldiers, who were struck with such a panic.”³¹

Braddock and his troops were easily defeated by the French and their Native American allies.³² In less than three hours of fighting, half of the British troops were killed or wounded. General Braddock succumbed to his wounds the following day.³³ The first attempt by the British at removing the French from the Ohio country failed miserably. Governor Dinwiddie wrote to his friend Lord Halifax expressing his disappointment in Braddock’s defeat. He was surprised by the outcome: “I never doubted of the Gen’l’s success.”³⁴ This attack seemed certain to invite French counter attacks.

Significantly, Braddock’s defeat elicited one of William Pitt’s first pronouncements on the American theater. Now in the last year of his position as Paymaster General, he stated that war was needed: “...for the long-injured, long-

²⁹ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 100.

³⁰ Furneaux, *Seven Years’ War 1756-1763*, 18-22.

³¹ Letter from George Washington to Mother – George Washington. “Braddock’s Defeat.” *The National Center, Historical Documents*. <http://www.nationalcenter.org/Braddock%27sDefeat.html>

³² Marston, *Seven Years’ War*, 10-11.

³³ Furneaux, *Seven Years’ War 1756-1763*, 23.

³⁴ Sparks, *The Writings of George Washington, Volume II*, 98-99.

neglected, long-forgotten people of America.”³⁵ He believed Britain had been wasting money and resources fighting in Europe and that attention should be focused instead on North America. He ridiculed the failed attempt of the British in North America: “Two miserable battalions of Irish, who scarce ever saw one another, to be sacrificed in America.”³⁶ This was the beginning of Pitt’s vocalization of a North American strategy; believing the best chance of British victory involved focusing efforts there rather than Europe. As soon as he was given the opportunity in 1757, he moved towards prioritizing this vision. His system would be to hold the line against France where it was strongest in Europe while simultaneously attacking her weakest point in North America.³⁷ In a letter to the King, he stressed the importance of immediate action in North America against France: “We need to act with greatest vigour in those parts throughout the ensuing campaign, and all necessary preparations are making for sending a considerable reinforcement of troops, together with a strong squadron of ships for that purpose, and in order to act offensively against the French in Canada.”³⁸ However, leaders in Britain were not yet ready to support Pitt’s strategy.

To aid in the protection of British territory and settlers in the New World, the government in London encouraged the colonies to join together to assist in their own protection against the French and their Native American allies.³⁹ Specifically, Lord Halifax, president of the Board of Trade, sent instructions for the colonies to gather to

³⁵ Peters, *Pitt and Popularity*, 39.

³⁶ Thackeray, *History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt*, 268.

³⁷ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 212.

³⁸ William Pitt’s Letter to King George II, February 19, 1757, printed in Frances Thackeray, *A History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt*, Earl of Chatham, 273.

³⁹ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 77.

promote the security of the British colonies.⁴⁰ Representatives from the colonies met in Albany from June 19 through July 11. These delegates showed little sense of urgency to act for their common defense. The Albany Congress developed the Albany Plan of Union. One of the main components of the Albany Plan was to: "...raise and pay Soldiers, and build Forts for Defence of any of the Colonies, and equip Vessels of Forces to Guard the Coasts and Protect the Trade on the Ocean, Lakes, or Great Rivers."⁴¹ Representatives from the Congress brought the plan back to their respective colonies for ratification. Not a single colonial legislature ratified the plan developed by the Albany Congress. Pennsylvania and Virginia, which were directly impacted by warfare on the frontier, did not approve a plan for colonial defense against the French and their Native American allies.⁴² The Albany Congress failed to bring together the colonies for their common defense.⁴³ This short sightedness and lack of unity would continue until the colonies came together in rising up against the mother country years later. Colonial statesman, Benjamin Franklin, who worked diligently to develop the Albany Plan, expressed his frustration in a letter to a representative in London: "The colonies would not accept such a plan unless Parliament imposed one."⁴⁴ And he hoped they would as he was concerned for the safety of the British colonies. Meanwhile, in May 1756, war was declared.

It is now necessary to turn our attention to imperial politics and to understand the rise of William Pitt in the context of this war. In 1754, Prime Minister Henry Pelham

⁴⁰ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 38.

⁴¹ "The Albany Plan of Union." *The Founders Constitution*, University of Chicago. <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch7s1.html>

⁴² Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 84.

⁴³ Furneaux, *Seven Years' War 1756-1763*, 19.

⁴⁴ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 85.

suddenly passed away. This was the opportunity that Pitt needed to finally move up into a higher, long- desired, political position. Thomas Pelham-Hobbes, the Duke of Newcastle and the prime minister's brother, succeeded him. Pitt was briefly brought into the cabinet by Newcastle. However, this administration was short- lived. Pitt's growing opposition to the continental war and protection of Hanover was a major reason for his dismissal.⁴⁵ He had stated in Parliament, "She [Maria Theresa, Queen of Austria] has men, and brave men, in abundance of her own. She wants money alone to arm and support them. The only manner, therefore, in which we ought to support her, and our other allies upon the continent, is with our money and our ships."⁴⁶

The dismissal of Pitt and others was briefly interrupted by the Devonshire administration as the King wished to create his own ministry on his own terms.⁴⁷ In the end, George II was forced to acquiesce and accept a Pitt-Newcastle administration. Pitt's popularity grew after his dismissal, and many were eager for his return to his position.⁴⁸ The King was not happy, but he accepted the new ministry after his failed attempts of creating his own during the interim period between the Devonshire and Newcastle-Pitt ministries.

Pitt entered office as Secretary of State and War Minister in 1758. By this time, the British had suffered many defeats in North America at the hands of the French, who were led by General Louis-Joseph de Montcalm. The French claimed victories in present day New York State, including important locations at Oswego, Fort William Henry, and

⁴⁵ William Cobbett, ed., *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 14*, (London: Bagshaw, 1813), 733.

⁴⁶ Thackeray, *History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt*, 149.

⁴⁷ William B. Willcox and Walter L. Arnstein, *The Age of Aristocracy 1688-1830*. (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1966), 117.

⁴⁸ Peters, *Pitt and Popularity*, 42.

Fort Ticonderoga. The British failed to re-capture Louisbourg near Nova Scotia, ensuring continued French control of the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. Pitt complained that: “The posture of public affairs was, in all respects, deplorable. Three quarters of the globe were witness to the losses and calamities which Great Britain had sustained in the course of a single year. In Europe, we had been stripped of Minorca. In America, Oswego was taken from us. In Asia, we lost Calcutta, the principal settlement in Bengal.”⁴⁹ In spite of these setbacks, Pitt believed that the war could be won in North America.⁵⁰ Under his leadership, Britain would focus her main resources and attention towards what he believed to be the shamefully neglected theater in North America, and away from the European theatre. That aspect of the war, nonetheless, requires brief exploration.

The latest phase of the European conflict grew from the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, which ended the War of Austrian Succession in 1748.⁵¹ The war originated over the succession of Maria Theresa to the Austrian throne. Due to the interconnectedness of the thrones of Europe and the intricate alliance system of the continent, many nations were involved in order to protect their own interests. Britain and the Netherlands joined Austria in fighting Prussia, France, and Spain. That treaty failed to resolve the tensions that drove the continent to war in the first place. It would be more appropriate to call the treaty an armistice. Both sides were exhausted by the war.⁵²

The treaty changed very little in Europe. It essentially was a cease fire. Disputed territories between France and Britain in Asia and North America were not addressed in

⁴⁹ Thackeray, *History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt*, 267.

⁵⁰ Middleton, *Bells of Victory*, 2.

⁵¹ Daniel Baugh, *The Global Seven Years' War 1754-1763* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2001), 35.

⁵² Franz A.J. Szabo, *The Seven Years' War in Europe, 1756-1763* (New York, NY: Pearson/Longman, 2008), 2.

the treaty, which would only delay conflict once again across the globe.⁵³ For the most part, any territory seized during the war was returned. One exception was Austria's valuable territory of Silesia. Prussia was allowed to retain this territory acquired during the war. This greatly upset the Austrians. Many believed another war would break out in time, although no one would have predicted that Europe would engage in yet another war as a result of disputes along the Appalachian Mountains in North America.⁵⁴

Britain primarily felt the impact of the conflict on the continent for two major reasons. One was due to the King's ancestral tie to the German state of Hanover.⁵⁵ This connection greatly impacted Britain's domestic and foreign policies dating back to the accession of George I in 1714.⁵⁶ The second reason was Britain's interest in the Austrian Netherlands as it was the country's commercial foothold on the continent.⁵⁷ Therefore, there were both dynastic and economic stakes at play on the European continent, and any British ministry would need to balance these against priorities in other theatres such as North America. The murky nature of European affairs often made this difficult.

Alliances were shifting in Europe.⁵⁸ The traditional alliances changed in the years leading up to the Seven Years' War particularly after January 1756, when Prussia and Britain allied themselves in the Treaty of Westminster. Concern over the safety of Hanover from French aggression was one of the driving forces for the new alliance. In the end, it alarmed many nations in Europe, most notably Austria and France. Prior to 1756, Prussia's traditional ally was France. Now Prussia had joined forces with France's

⁵³ Thackeray, *History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt*, 265.

⁵⁴ Szabo, *The Seven Years' War in Europe 1756-1763*, 3.

⁵⁵ Green, *William Pitt*, 81.

⁵⁶ Simms and Riotte, *Hanoverian Dimension in British History*, 11.

⁵⁷ Szabo, *The Seven Years' War in Europe, 1756-1763*, 12.

⁵⁸ Ruville, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 34.

rival in Europe and the New World.⁵⁹ Britain, on the other hand, traditionally was allied with Austria. This greatly upset the Austrians who were still angered over their loss of Silesia to Prussia in the previous war. In response, Austria forged an alliance with the French. Eventually Russia would join an alliance with France and Austria.⁶⁰ For the moment, King George II was appeased because Prussia had agreed to protect Hanover from the French. This was important as the King would reject going to war without a promise of protection of Hanover.⁶¹

Pitt opposed the obligation to protect Hanover stating in Parliament in May of 1754, “If Hanover was made our first object, and we proceeded upon this system, it would lead us to bankruptcy. It was impossible to defend Hanover by subsidies. An open country could not be defended.”⁶² He much preferred to see Britain’s power enlarged on the sea and in the New World rather than Europe. Despite Pitt’s objections, a new alliance system was created as Europe and the rest of the world moved closer to war.

The three wars, including the War of Austrian Succession, typically impacted the colonies in the New World. However, the Seven Years’ War marked a change.⁶³ Colonial issues between the French and the British, rather than continental ones, drove European countries to war again. The shots fired in the Ohio Valley in 1754 provided the spark needed to light the powder keg of Europe into war.

⁵⁹ Peters, *Pitt and Popularity*, 58.

⁶⁰ Marston, *Seven Years’ War*, 15.

⁶¹ Furneaux, *Seven Years’ War 1756-1763*, 29.

⁶² William Pitt’s Speech in Parliament printed in William Cobbett, ed., *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 14*, 704.

⁶³ Szabo, *The Seven Years’ War in Europe, 1756-1763*, 11.

In Europe, Frederick of Prussia, Britain's new ally, began an offensive attack on the neutral German state of Saxony.⁶⁴ Frederick took this action to avoid being surrounded by his enemies.⁶⁵ He feared he would be encircled by the Austrians in the south, the French in the east, and the Russians in the west. Britain sent reinforcements and supplies to their new Prussian ally. Pitt spoke out against these measures in Parliament: "A naval war could and ought to be supported; but a continental war, upon this system, we could not."⁶⁶ In the Mediterranean Sea, the French attacked the British base at Minorca. After the loss of Minorca, Britain officially declared. On May 17, 1756, Britain declared war on France.⁶⁷

Britain would continue to endure losses during the early stages of the war, not just in Europe and North America, but also in Asia where they were forced to abandon Calcutta in India to the French.⁶⁸ These losses were an opportunity for Pitt, who frequently spoke out against the actions and failures of the government.⁶⁹ He argued for his platform of defending Britain around the world. In a debate in Parliament, he voiced his frustration with the direction of the war and the constant initiative to protect Hanover: "We are pressed into the service of an electorate."⁷⁰ He wanted to see a change of the course of the war. He argued for the importance of the war in the New World rather than Europe. Once again in Parliament he argued for: "The maintenance of our just and

⁶⁴ Furneaux, *Seven Years' War 1756-1763*, 31.

⁶⁵ Szabo, *The Seven Years' War in Europe, 1756-1763*, 18.

⁶⁶ William Pitt's Speech in Parliament printed in William Cobbett, ed., *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 14*, 704.

⁶⁷ Szabo, *The Seven Years' War in Europe, 1756-1763*, 16.

⁶⁸ Furneaux, *Seven Years' War 1756-1763*, 40.

⁶⁹ Peters, *Pitt and Popularity*, 50.

⁷⁰ William Pitt's Speech in Parliament printed in William Cobbett, ed., *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 14*, 663.

necessary war in North America.”⁷¹ He stressed the importance of only sending subsidies to the British allies in Europe while sending British troops to fight in the North American theatre of the war. “Our money, therefore, will be of most service to our allies, because it will enable them to raise and support a great number of troops than we can supply them with for the same sum.”⁷² Efforts would be focused in North America rather than Europe where Pitt believed a complete victory over the French was possible. In 1756 the Duke of Newcastle invited him into his cabinet as Secretary of State. Now, prosecution of the war would be Pitt’s responsibility.

⁷¹ William Pitt’s Speech in Parliament printed in William Cobbett, ed., *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 14*, 664.

⁷² Thackeray, *History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt*, 150.

Chapter 2 - Pitt's Role in the War

The British experienced severe losses across the globe in the early stages of the Seven Years' War. The army suffered lost in North America at key strategic locations including; Forts Necessity, Duquense, Oswego, and William Henry. Along with failures at those locations, the British Army and Navy failed to re-capture Louisbourg from the French. Louisbourg held great strategic importance, as will be discussed later in this chapter. The British also suffered embarrassing losses in Europe, especially with the loss of Minorca. Minorca served as an important naval base in the Mediterranean.

With the death of the Prime Minister, Henry Pelham, the King sought new leadership to guide Britain through the on-going global war. Transition to the new ministry was rocky at best. The King had hoped to form his own administration but was unsuccessful. The King was now forced to accept the Pitt-Newcastle Administration with Pitt in the position of Southern Secretary of State. It was during his tenure in this position that Britain reversed its fortunes, won decisive victories, and in the end, a new global empire. However, this was accomplished without regard to financial costs. As we will see, the victories that Pitt oversaw would create a financial crisis as well.

On June 29, 1757, Pitt was officially sworn in as the Southern Secretary of State.¹ In this position, he would have full command of the war, and could now focus on interests in North America rather than on "fruitless continental campaigns."² That, however, was almost hampered by the King's fixation on Hanover.³ George II was firm in asserting Britain's continued protection of Hanover from foreign threats, essentially

¹ Furneaux, *Seven Years' War 1756-1763*, 34

² Green, *William Pitt*, 76.

³ Middleton, *Bells of Victory*, 2.

meaning that Britain's involvement in the war on the continent was unavoidable.⁴

However, Pitt could also set priorities, and this meant that moving forward, Britain would send the decreasing levels of assistance to her German allies.⁵ He wished to defend and promote British shipping, trade, and prosperity rather than Hanoverian issues in Europe. In order to do this, the war would need to be greatly expanded in North America. His plans for North America called for enlarging the navy and raising more British regulars along with more provincial troops. This initiative, coupled with subsidies to support Britain's ally Prussia, was all very costly.

Pitt's focus included both naval and land-based operations.⁶ He had hoped Prussia would be able to tie down French forces in Europe, and allow the British to focus their efforts on conquering North America.⁷ There were also economic reasons for a North American strategy. Pitt saw a need to defend the American colonies from French encroachment and to protect colonial trade.⁸ He had always been a staunch supporter of the economic idea of mercantilism, noting: "English interests are best served not by active part in dynastic combinations of Europe, but by concentrated efforts in America and India."⁹

As the new ministry took hold, Pitt remarked that it was inheriting "a gloomy scene for this distressed, disgraced country."¹⁰ Where fighting capacity was concerned, both the Royal Army and Royal Navy were in poor condition. The army was small and weak. The British army was much smaller in comparison to other nations, in part,

⁴ Marston, *Seven Years' War*, 13.

⁵ *Ibid*, 15.

⁶ Green, *William Pitt*, 74.

⁷ Furneaux, *Seven Years' War 1756-1763*, 42.

⁸ Baugh, *The Global Seven Years' War 1754-1763*, 102.

⁹ Green, *William Pitt*, 44.

¹⁰ Furneaux, *Seven Years' War 1756-1763*, 49.

because of her long-standing domestic fears of standing armies. In her continental wars, Britain relied mostly on foreign mercenaries from Holland, Hanover, and Hesse-Cassel.¹¹ Pitt condemned this practice and declared it an embarrassment to the country.¹²

As a first step toward addressing these situations, Pitt developed various measures to better prepare for war. His first effort was the Militia Act that was passed in June of 1757.¹³ The act would provide training for over thirty thousand men for home defense. No longer would foreigners be charged with this vital operation. At the same time, he also pushed to expand both the British Army and Royal Navy for overseas actions, including an increased budget for war supplies.¹⁴ This would only strengthen the country and the Empire.

Pitt's efforts were not without controversy or opposition, particularly in light of European affairs. On the continent, the early success of Britain's ally Prussia quickly began to fade. Frederick, who had led a successful offensive campaign in the early stages of the war, failed to achieve enough quick or decisive victories. This was crucial for his war strategy as he was surrounded by enemies in Europe. At the Battle of Kolin, Frederick lost nearly half of his army. He was forced to withdraw from Bohemia, which he had conquered in the early stages of the war. The French occupied various portions of German states, including Hanover, Hesse, and Brunswick. Frederick was then forced to fight a defensive war against the French, Austrians, and Russians, something he had hoped to avoid when the war began. Frederick begged his British ally for support. However, Pitt resisted requests or pleas for troops to be sent to Europe. This put him at

¹¹ Szabo, *The Seven Years' War in Europe, 1756-1763*, 33.

¹² Middleton, *Bells of Victory*, 4.

¹³ Szabo, *The Seven Years' War in Europe, 1756-1763*, 33.

¹⁴ Green, *William Pitt*, 97.

odds with some cabinet colleagues. Newcastle believed that: "... the only practical thing to be done was to employ our whole force in a German war."¹⁵ Time and time again, Pitt resisted both his ally's pleas for troops and his fellow statesmen's entreaties on Prussia's behalf. Pitt championed the idea of sending money instead of soldiers to support Prussia.¹⁶ But this alternative also meant that he could focus Britain's focus against France in North America.

The effort was not without controversy. The King openly called for a continental peace so that Hanover could be protected. The Duke of Newcastle worried that: "We shall lose the electorate this year, and God knows what next."¹⁷ Pitt held firm in his beliefs, however. He once again did not send troops, but he did send subsidies to Fredrick to assist his efforts against the French. He explained that this was to aide Britain's ally and not simply for the protection of the Hanover. Pitt knew how important it was to sustain Prussian efforts to allow him to focus on the French in North America. Phillip York, Lord Hardwicke, who served in the ministry, understood that Pitt was worried that Prussia might make peace with France. If that occurred Pitt's strategy would fail as France could then employ all of her forces against Britain in the New World.

King George II continued to be concerned over the safety of his homeland of Hanover. He even authorized his son the Duke of Cumberland, to secure neutrality or peace for Hanover with France. This attempt at peace was a complete disaster, and it infuriated the King and forever changed the relationship between the King and his son. Fortunately, Fredrick was then able to string two victories together at Rossbach and

¹⁵ Baugh, *The Global Seven Years' War 1754-1763*, 267.

¹⁶ Peters, *Pitt and Popularity*, 104.

¹⁷ Sir Julian Stafford Corbett, *England in the Seven Years' War: A Study in Combined Strategy, Volume 1* (Indiana University: Longmans & Green, 1907), 185.

Leuthen. One November 5, 1757, Fredrick defeated the French at Rossbach. A month later he defeated a much larger Austrian army at Leuthen on December 5, 1757.¹⁸ At the same time, the Russians retreated in the east. These events saved the war for both Prussia and Britain.

With the renewed efforts of Fredrick, Pitt could focus his attention on North America. With Hanover now protected, Pitt convinced the King to support his goal of ousting the French from North America. Before Parliament in December of 1757, the King declared his intentions: "It is my fixed resolution to apply my utmost efforts for the security of my kingdoms, and for the recovery and protection of the possessions and rights of my crown and subjects in America and elsewhere; as well by the strongest exertions of our naval force, as by all other methods."¹⁹ Pitt, eager to forget the early defeats around the world, seized upon the opportunity and immediately set to work on plans for the campaigns of 1758.

His first priority was to continue maintaining troops in North America. Some had wanted to withdraw troops for two reasons. One reason was the lack of success against the French in North America. The second reason was that many believed the troops were needed back in Europe. Pitt was successful in raising a larger army and keeping British troops in place in America. Under his leadership the British Army raised over fifty thousand troops to be assigned to the various campaigns throughout North America.

In January of 1757, orders were given to raise two battalions of Highland Scots to be commanded by General Archibald Montgomery and Simon Fraser. Pitt believed the hardy Scots would be of great assistance where Britain needed it the most, in North

¹⁸ Furneaux, *Seven Years' War 1756-1763*, 55.

¹⁹ King George II's Speech to Parliament, December 1st 1757, printed in Frances Thackeray, *A History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 316.

America.²⁰ The use of Highland Scots did not come without controversy. The King and his son, the Duke of Cumberland, at first resisted the use of Scottish troops because of the Rebellion of 1745, which had culminated at the Battle of Culloden in 1746. The Highland Scots were used against the French in both Canada and the Ohio Valley. By 1758, the long needed infusion had been sent to North America to lead the charge against the French.²¹ In total, there were twenty-three British battalions compared to twelve French battalions. Over twenty-four thousand British regulars and twenty-two thousand provincial troops were set to implement Pitt's aggressive war strategy against the French in North America.²²

Upon the commencement of the Pitt-Newcastle Ministry in 1757, news reached Britain that General John Campbell, the Earl of Loudoun, had called off the attack at Louisbourg. This brought about Pitt's reorganization of the armed forces. (Seizing Louisbourg was a major key to Pitt's strategy in North America; as will be discussed later in this chapter.) One of his first actions as war minister was the removal Loudoun from his position as Commander in Chief of the King's Forces in America. Pitt was extremely disappointed by the failure and lack of aggressive action by the general. In a letter from Pitt to Loudon in December of 1757, he instructed the general to return to Britain and informed him that he would be replaced by General James Abercrombie, his former deputy commander.²³ Pitt now informed Abercrombie that he would have over fourteen

²⁰ Thackeray, *History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt*, 272.

²¹ Furneaux, *Seven Years' War 1756-1763*, 56.

²² Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 24.

²³ Letter from William Pitt to Lord Loudon – Dec 30 1757, printed in Kimball, ed., *Correspondences of William Pitt*, Volume 1 (New York: Macmillan Company, 1906), 133.

thousand men for the siege of Louisbourg and that the attack should start as soon as the season allowed.²⁴

Pitt developed a pattern when it came to his generals in North America. If they were not achieving success, they would be replaced by those who could achieve victories.²⁵ Pitt paid close attention to the character of the officers he chose to place in leadership positions. He was eager and determined to promote young and daring officers with proven ability, believing they could best execute his ambitious designs.²⁶ He was in need of officers who would follow his orders and who were willing to take risks in order to achieve victory.²⁷ He eventually found these qualities in General Jeffrey Amherst and Brigadier James Wolfe.

In order to expel France from Canada, Pitt's plan rested on capturing Quebec. Quebec was the largest and strongest settlement in all of New France. If Quebec fell to the British, that would decide the fate of all of New France. Pitt's plan for capturing Quebec was to first take control of the St. Lawrence River. If the British were able to essentially shut down the St. Lawrence to the French, that would cut off their supply route and lines of communication for all of New France.²⁸ In order to take control of the St. Lawrence, British forces would need to take control of Louisbourg as it was the entry way to all of New France. Once they controlled Louisbourg, they could proceed onto Quebec. Once Quebec fell, the British had the ability to expel France from the whole North American continent.

²⁴ Letter from William Pitt to General Abercromby - Dec 30 1757, printed in Kimball, ed., *Correspondences of William Pitt*, Vol 1, 143.

²⁵ Winston S. Churchill, *A History of the English Speaking Peoples: Volume 3 The Age of Revolution*. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1957), 148.

²⁶ Thackeray, *History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt*, 356.

²⁷ Baugh, *The Global Seven Years' War 1754-1763*, 263.

²⁸ Ruville, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 249-251.

In order for Pitt's aggressive war strategy to work, colonial cooperation was both desirable and sought. In a letter to the governor of Pennsylvania, Pitt promised that troops, ships, and supplies were on their way to fight the French in the New World.²⁹ By 1758, approximately twenty-five thousand British regulars had been sent to North America to lead the charge against the French.³⁰ Pitt encouraged colonial involvement with the war. He wanted to improve the relationship between Britain and her colonies and saw a successful war as a way of achieving this. In a letter to Abercrombie, he instructed the new commander to: "...cultivate the best harmony and friendship possible, with the several Governors of our colonies and provinces."³¹

Pitt made policy changes in order to enlist the support of colonial assemblies and colonists as well. Previously, colonial troops were reduced from provincial generals and field officers to the rank of senior captains. This led to deep colonial resentment of the British Army.³² To encourage enlistment of colonists, colonial officers were granted equal status. No longer would they be inferior to their British counterparts. Pitt also promised colonial assemblies would not be responsible for the financial costs of the war effort. These promises were made in letters to governors, stating the war was at the: "...expense the King has made for them."³³ The government in London would foot the bill for all expenditures related to the war effort in the colonies. Pitt made these concessions

²⁹ William Pitt to the Governor of Pennsylvania – Feb 4 1757, found in William Pitt Family Papers, 1757-1804, DAR.1925.08, Darlington Collection, Special Collections Department, University of Pittsburgh, Box 1, Folder 1.

³⁰ Furneaux, *Seven Years' War 1756-1763*, 56.

³¹ Letter from Pitt to General Abercrombie – Dec 30th 1757 from St. James, printed in Frances Thackeray, *A History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 327.

³² Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas*, 18.

³³ Letter from William Pitt to Governors – Dec 9 1758, printed in Kimball, ed., *Correspondences of William Pitt*, Volume 1, 414.

in hopes to secure colonial support for the British war efforts in North America as he believed cooperation was needed in order to be successful.³⁴

American colonists did respond to these efforts.³⁵ Requests were met, especially in Massachusetts where the colony raised over seven thousand provincial troops. New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia also raised additional troops to support British war efforts. However, the response was not nearly what one would expect when overall colonial security was being threatened by a foreign power. General John Forbes wrote to Pitt in the spring of 1758 informing him of the difficulty in recruiting colonial forces to support the war effort in North America. According to Forbes, both the Maryland and Virginia assemblies were slow in determining how many men would be sent and delayed in filling the quota.³⁶ This would be a problem that would plague the British in North America. The colonial governments were also eager to be repaid for their efforts in the war. This will be discussed below in greater detail.

Although it would not be without its setbacks, 1758 would demonstrate the efficacy of Pitt's strategy in North America as he attempted to engineer the defeat of France in Canada. Both naval and land-based forces would be required, and it was essential that this be undertaken in stages. Action plans were developed for a three pronged attack on Canada. The main effort was based in the Northeast with the targets of Louisbourg and Quebec. General Jeffrey Amherst was granted command of the land-forces for the assault on Louisbourg along with Brigadiers Wolfe, Whitmore and

³⁴ Churchill, *A History of the English Speaking Peoples: Volume 3*, 154.

³⁵ Furneaux, *Seven Years' War 1756-1763*, 74.

³⁶ Letter from General Forbes to William Pitt – May 19 1758, printed in Kimball, ed., *Correspondences of William Pitt*, Vol 1, 245.

Lawrence. It would be an amphibious attack.³⁷ Once Louisbourg was taken, troops would continue on to Quebec.

Another point of focus for the British was in the Northern colonies near Crown Point and Lake Champlain. Here the newly appointed Commander in Chief, James Abercrombie, was assigned to attack Canada by the way of Crown Point and to proceed on to Montreal and Quebec. The area of Crown Point was important as it was located between Lake Champlain and Lake George. Controlling the portage between the two major waterways was vital for the British. By seizing these waterways, the British could control transportation and communication in the region. The third area of attack was in the Northwest, the Ohio-Great Lakes region. The campaigns in this region would be led by General Forbes. According to his orders from Pitt he was to work with the "... most efficacious towards removing and repelling the dangers that threaten the frontier of any of the southern colonies on the continent of America."³⁸ Once Forbes and his men were successful in removing the enemy in the region, they were to move northward into Canada towards Montreal.

British capture of Canada depended on General Amherst's success at Louisbourg. Louisbourg was a fortress located on the island of Isle Royale (now Cape Breton Island), which was located at the entrance to the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. It was of great value strategically, militarily and economically. American colonists, with the assistance of the British, had seized Louisbourg during the War of Austrian Succession, but were forced to return the territory as a part of the terms of peace established by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chappelle. This had greatly upset many American colonists who believed it was

³⁷ Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas*, 24.

³⁸ Letter from William Pitt to General John Forbes – December 30th 1757, printed in Frances Thackeray, *A History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 328.

important for commerce and fisheries. Now, if the British were able to seize Louisbourg, it would cut all of New France and allow the British to control the St. Lawrence and continue on to Quebec.

General Jeffrey Amherst was chosen over General Abercrombie by Pitt to lead the land-forces as he had greater trust and respect for the brave, daring, young general. Admiral Edward Boscawen was in charge of the naval forces, and was instructed to sail to Halifax with a large fleet to intercept French supplies and possible reinforcements.³⁹ Boscawen and his fleet, along with Amherst and over eleven thousand troops and some provincial troops, arrived at Louisbourg on June 2, 1758. Weather and maritime conditions made landing on the island impossible for almost a week's time. The troops were then divided into three groups. Brigadier Wolfe led one of the groups. He and his men experienced the worst assault from French forces. He did not give up, however, and inspired his men to continue despite the carnage. By the end of the day, all three groups had settled onto the island and lay siege to Louisbourg. Admiral Boscawen and his fleet destroyed all five of the French ships in the harbor. Without reinforcements and supplies, French troops were forced to surrender on June 26, weeks after the siege began.⁴⁰ The loss of Louisbourg was a horrible blow to the French. No longer could reinforcements and supplies be sent to the rest of New France. The interior of New France had been completely cut off.

Three weeks later news of the victory reached Britain. Operations would move onto the second stage, seizing full control of the St. Lawrence for an assault on Quebec. However, the celebration was short lived as news of the fall of Fort Ticonderoga reached

³⁹ Letter from William Pitt to Admiral Boscawen, printed in Frances Thackeray, *A History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 325.

⁴⁰ Thackeray, *History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt*, 354-356.

Britain. The then Commander in Chief Abercrombie led the attack on Fort Ticonderoga, as well. Located in close proximity to Lake George, the fort was a strategic location in what is now upstate New York. In the failed assault on the fort, Abercrombie lost over two thousand men along with General Howe.⁴¹ This was a shocking defeat as the British Army nearly doubled the French forces at the fort. Abercrombie's failure would eventually lead to his replacement by General Amherst the following year.

In spite of the positive developments in North America, Pitt's strategy was not wholly embraced. The Duke of Newcastle wrote to MP John White expressing his concerns for continuing the war. He hoped to "seize the first opportunity of making a reasonable peace."⁴² During cabinet meetings, there were constant calls to end the war. However, Pitt disregarded any push for peace. He argued against withdrawing troops, stating in Parliament that Britain, her allies, and her colonies "would become prey" to France and perhaps even the Spanish.⁴³ His behavior towards other statesmen and their differing opinions turned some away from Pitt.⁴⁴ Before Parliament, he defiantly asked, "Is there an Austrian amongst you? Let him stand forward and reveal himself."⁴⁵ He recognized the growing expenses of the war but argued they were just and necessary against Britain's greatest enemy.

⁴¹ Ibid, 358.

⁴² Letter from the Duke of Newcastle to John White, M.P. – July 29 1758, printed in Mary Bateson, ed., *A Narrative of the Changes to the Ministry 1765-1767: Told by the Duke of Newcastle in a series of letters to John White, M.P.* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1898), 14.

⁴³ Letter from Mr. Pitt to Mr. Bussy - July 24 1761, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 15.* (London: Bagshaw, 1813), 1223.

⁴⁴ Willcox & Arnstein, *The Age of Aristocracy 1688-1830*, 173.

⁴⁵ William Pitt in Parliament, November 23rd 1758, printed in Frances Thackeray, *A History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 365.

While some concerned themselves with the pursuit of peace, news of additional victories reached Britain. In August of 1758, Britain was rewarded with another victory at Fort Frontenac located at the eastern edge of Lake Ontario. General Abercrombie commissioned Colonel John Bradstreet of Maine to lead three thousand provincial troops to attack the fort. The troops were successful against the French. In a letter to General Abercrombie, Bradstreet described his victory at the French fort and the supplies seized by Bradstreet and his troops. "... sixteen small mortars, with an immense quantity of provisions and goods, to be sent to troops gone to oppose Brigadier General Forbes."⁴⁶ These supplies would be important to General Forbes in his assault on Fort Duquesne. The victory was also important for the British because now the French communication between Canada and troops in the Ohio Valley was severed.

Late in the fall, the British were rewarded with a third victory in the area where the conflict originated. Troops in the Ohio Valley defeated the French at Fort Duquesne. Scottish General, John Forbes was in charge of the operations in the Ohio Valley. He arrived in Philadelphia in April 1757, to seize the French fort. Forbes was forced to delay the expedition until the end of June to wait for supplies and the needed provincial troops. Instead of taking his forces along the route used by Braddock, he opted for a more direct route starting in Bedford.

The new road was still just as difficult and General Forbes planned to make camp for the winter and attack the French in the spring. Intelligence was given to the general that French fort was poorly equipped and lightly guarded.⁴⁷ The British troops began their

⁴⁶ Letter from Colonel John Bradstreet to General Abercrombie, August 31, 1758, printed in Frances Thackeray, *A History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 363.

⁴⁷ Irene Stewart, ed. *Letters of General John Forbes: Relating to the Expedition against Fort Duquesne in 1758*. (University Park, Pennsylvania: Penn State Press, 2006), 5.

approach towards the fort and the French retreated, burning the fort as they fled. Forbes claimed victory in a letter to Pitt, "... by my having obliged the Enemy to burn and abandon Fort Du Quesne, which they effectuated on the 25th; and of which I took possession the next day... So give me leave to congratulate you upon this great Event, of having totally expelled the French from this prodigious tract of Country."⁴⁸

The British renamed the fort Pittsburg in honor of the war minister, William Pitt. In his letter Forbes stated: "I have used the freedom of giving your name to Fort Du Quesne."⁴⁹ The news of these victories gave Pitt the political capital he required to forestall calls for peace. Despite his concern with the growing expense of the war, Newcastle now supported Pitt's view. He said, "There is plenty of money in the City at present, and a great inclination to lend it."⁵⁰ And so the war continued, and Britain would be rewarded with a year of victories in 1759.

Pitt continued to study maps and letters from his generals in the New World. He looked forward to 1759, and began developing plans for new campaigns and sending letters with instructions to his generals in North America. In 1759, he moved into the second stage of his war strategy, opening the St. Lawrence for the assault on Quebec. If Quebec fell, then all of New France would fall. Pitt arranged for supplies and men to be sent to the colonies for the efforts against the French.⁵¹ He ordered General Abercrombie to prepare for the attack on Quebec by the St. Lawrence River as early as the season permitted, but emphasized that the operations would be led by General Amherst and

⁴⁸ Letter from General Forbes to William Pitt, November 27, 1757, printed in Irene Stewart, ed. *Letters of General John Forbes: Relating to the Expedition against Fort Duquesne in 1758*, 6.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 6.

⁵⁰ Letter from the Duke of Newcastle to John Page, November 26, 1757, printed in Daniel Baugh, *The Global Seven Years' War 1754-1763*, 273.

⁵¹ Ruville, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 249-251.

Brigadier Wolfe. Pitt intended to remove Abercrombie from his position during the winter months, in favor of the younger general, Amherst.⁵²

In a letter to General Amherst, Pitt stated, “The King has come to a resolution to allot an adequate proportion of his forces in North America, amounting to 12,005 men, to make an attack upon Quebec by the River St. Lawrence.”⁵³ Pitt also sent letters to the governors of Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey. In these letters he promised the continued “preservation and defense” of the colonies.⁵⁴ Orders were also sent to colonial governors for provisional troops to assist the British.⁵⁵ Men were supplied to support the British efforts; however, the numbers were minimal when compared to the number of eligible men the colonists could have raised for support.

In 1759, Britain and her Prussian ally were rewarded with a number of victories in both Europe and North America. In Britain, people rejoiced.⁵⁶ The progression began with a victory in the West Indies, where the British successfully captured the island of Guadalupe. Along with Guadalupe, Martinique, St. Lucia, Grenada, and St. Vincent were taken. By now, France had lost many of its Caribbean colonies, and this brought economic consequences.⁵⁷ The Caribbean territories seized from the French were wealthy sugarcane producing islands, Guadalupe being the richest of them all.

⁵² Letter from William Pitt to General Abercrombie – December 29 1758, printed in Kimball, ed., *Correspondences of William Pitt*, Volume 1, 443.

⁵³ Letter from William Pitt to General Amherst – December 29 1758, printed in France Thackeray, *A History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 364.

⁵⁴ Letter from William Pitt to Governors – Dec 9 1758, printed in Kimball, ed., *Correspondences of William Pitt*, Volume 1, 414.

⁵⁵ Ruville, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 254.

⁵⁶ Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 1.

⁵⁷ Furneaux, *Seven Years' War 1756-1763*, 110.

The tide of the war continued to go Britain's way in North America, as well. By using a three pronged approach, Pitt was able to divide the already smaller French forces. He stressed this in a letter to General Amherst: "... as nothing can contribute so much to the success of the operations to be undertaken in different parts of North America, and particularly of the attempt on Quebec, as putting the forces early in motion, on the other frontiers of Canada, and thereby distracting the enemy and obliging them to divide their strength."⁵⁸ In 1759, the British Army did just that, attacking the French throughout North America. In June the British took back Fort Ticonderoga. In July they captured both Fort Niagara and Crown Point, two important strategic locations. The British now had control of the lower lakes. Pitt wrote to General Amherst expressing his great pleasure in hearing the news of the seizure of Niagara, Ticonderoga, and Crown Point.⁵⁹

The siege and victory at Quebec proved to be slow and difficult. Pitt secured Brigadier Wolfe to lead the assault on Quebec after his bravery during the siege of Louisbourg. In February 1759, Wolfe set sail back to North America to prepare for the attack on Quebec. Quebec was a natural fortress. It was located on a cliff overlooking the St. Lawrence and St. Charles Rivers.⁶⁰ Sand banks along the cliffs prevented large vessels from coming close to shore. It was almost impregnable.⁶¹ The French had the strategic advantage. Wolfe wrote to Pitt from British headquarters at Montmorenci along the River St. Lawrence prior to the commencement of the siege of Quebec about the difficulties and obstacles that stood at Quebec: "The obstacles we have met with, in the operations of

⁵⁸ Letter from William Pitt to General Amherst – December 29 1758, printed in Frances Thackeray, *A History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 374.

⁵⁹ Letter from William Pitt to General Amherst – September 29 1759, printed in Kimball, ed., *Correspondences of William Pitt*, Volume 2 (New York: Macmillan Company, 1906), 172.

⁶⁰ Furneaux, *Seven Years' War 1756-1763*, 124.

⁶¹ Thackeray, *History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt*, 437.

the campaign, are much greater than we had reason to expect, or could foresee; not so much from the number of the enemy, as from the natural strength of the country.”⁶²

The siege of Quebec was long and hard, spanning three months. Wolfe used the cover of nightfall to begin the attack. As day broke on September 13, 1759, Wolfe and his troops had successfully climbed the cliffs and fighting intensified as troops met at the Plains of Abraham. During the first day of the siege, Wolfe was wounded three times and eventually succumbed to his injuries. Before his death, he encouraged the troops to keep fighting as the French attempted to flee. General Thomas Townshend took over command of the siege. Five days later Quebec surrendered. It was surrounded with no hopes of reinforcements.⁶³ Wolfe was hailed by the British as a hero for his efforts in Quebec.⁶⁴

Many Britons and colonists alike were excited by the victories over the French. The London Magazine described the victories thusly: “Great Britain may now be justly said to extend from the Southern to the Northern Pole – from the rising to the setting sun.”⁶⁵ Not surprisingly, these victories brought renewed calls for a negotiated peace, especially in Europe. Newcastle and his supporters became quite vocal on the subject.⁶⁶ The Duke of Bedford, for example, opined: “The German war, unnecessary and unjustifiable at first is become much more so since.”⁶⁷ Lord Temple told Parliament, “Easing the nation of a load of expence, be the likeliest means under the blessing of God,

⁶² Brigadier Wolfe to William Pitt – September 2 1759, printed in Frances Thackeray, *A History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 438.

⁶³ Thackeray, *History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt*, 448.

⁶⁴ Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 10.

⁶⁵ Furneaux, *Seven Years' War 1756-1763*, 174.

⁶⁶ Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 12-13.

⁶⁷ Duke of Bedford's Speech to Parliament, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 15*, 1217.

to procure a safe and honourable peace.”⁶⁸ In contrast, Pitt believed that France must be decisively defeated everywhere. He famously described France’s precarious position: “I have brought the country to its knees; now I shall not rest till I have her laid on her back.”⁶⁹

In spite of the aforementioned differences over the desirability of a quick peace, Pitt and Newcastle complimented one another. From the onset of the Newcastle-Pitt administration, clear roles were defined. Newcastle was able to control the political machine ensuring the support and votes.⁷⁰ Pitt’s dominant personality did not always attract friends or allies while Newcastle, by contrast, had strong political support and numerous allies.⁷¹ Newcastle also had immense influence over high ranking officials. Newcastle had gained the favor of the king and granted access to the closet, meaning he could meet with the King privately to discuss matters.⁷² The King and his friends’ support of Newcastle were vital to Pitt’s successes, as well, because they secured votes for Pitt’s aggressive war plans, especially on the North American continent.⁷³

Newcastle needed Pitt because he was not a strong executive. Pitt, by contrast, was a great war time administrator. In the early stages of the war, when things seemed to be at their bleakest, the Prime Minister continued to deliver the parliamentary votes necessary for his War Minister’s aggressive policies, particularly in the New World.

⁶⁸ Lord Bedford’s Speech to Parliament, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 15*, 1219.

⁶⁹ Abu-Shumays, 4. Historian Stanley Ayling argued that Pitt had a long desire to completely humiliate France.

⁷⁰ Willcox & Arnstein, *The Age of Aristocracy 1688-1830*, 117.

⁷¹ Middleton, *Bells of Victory*, 13.

⁷² Baugh, *The Global Seven Years’ War 1754-1763*, 18.

⁷³ Willcox & Arnstein, *The Age of Aristocracy 1688-1830*, 119.

Then, as defeats turned into victories, Britons on both sides of the Atlantic learned that their government's conduct of the war could lead to profits.

The British victories around the world created economic opportunities. With many French West Indian colonies falling under the control of the British, new benefits arose from sectors such as the sugar trade. War proved to be a tonic for imperial trade. Tobacco flowed into Britain from the Southern colonies, while the steady elimination of the French from the fur trade brought new benefits to the Northern colonies. Naval stores from the colonies such as timber, hemp, resin, turpentine, pitch and tar supplied the Royal Navy throughout the wars of the eighteenth century, and the Seven Years' War was no different.⁷⁴ The many wars Britain was involved in throughout the eighteenth century, stimulated the colonial economy. Some British industries also saw profits rise as more affluent Americans increased their purchases of British manufactured goods. Orders for British manufactured goods from the colonies poured into Britain. On both sides of the Atlantic, the war seemed to be popular and profitable; however, the costs were not well understood. In time, paying for the costs of the war and the ongoing imperatives of imperial defense would drive a wedge between Britain and her American colonies. Expenses were rising for the British. The cost of British regiments in the colonies after the war stood at over three hundred thousand pounds a year. While the yearly interest alone for the money borrowed to pay for the war was over four million pounds.⁷⁵ For now, however, impending victory in North America masked future divisions.

⁷⁴ Richard C. Simmons, *The American Colonies: From Settlement to Independence*. (New York, NY: W W Norton and Company, 1981), 169.

⁷⁵ Timothy J Botti. *The Envy of the World: A History of the U.S. Economy and Big Business* (New York, NY: Algora Publishing, 2006), 34.

Year	National Debt	Government Revenue	Government Spending
1739	46,954,623	5,870,000	5,210,000
1748	78,293,313	7,199,000	11,943,000
1755	74,571,849	6,938,000	7,119,000
1762	146,682,844	9,459,000	20,040,000
1775	135,943,051	11,112,000	10,365,000

Source: Alvin Rabushka, *Taxation in Colonial America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 725

After the French surrendered Quebec to the British in late 1759, their troops moved westward to the settlement of Montreal after a failed attempt at seizing back Quebec. The British attacked the settlement with over eighteen thousand troops. The troops arrived from all directions, south from Lake Ontario via the St. Lawrence, north from Quebec also via the St. Lawrence, and south from Lake Champlain via the Richelieu River. What remained of the French troops retreated from Montreal rather than participating in a long, difficult siege. Thus, Montreal was surrendered and fell to the British.

While the British were experiencing their best year in 1759, it was one of the worst years for their Prussian ally in Europe.⁷⁶ Frederick's brother Ferdinand had driven the French back. However, the army was suffering from strenuous campaigns against the French, Austrians, Russians, and even the Swedes.⁷⁷ Frederick feared for his nation. He was eager for peace. He had hoped that the British successes around the world would help him in peace negotiations as he continued to suffer defeats on the continent. He hoped Prussia would benefit from British victories against the French in the New World.⁷⁸ He believed it was time to establish peace with his army in such a fatigued state.

⁷⁶ Szabo, *The Seven Years' War in Europe, 1756-1763*, 236.

⁷⁷ Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 4.

⁷⁸ Ruville, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 284.

Pitt was not deterred, and moved for the British to attack the French at Belle Ile. He attacked the French coast to help distract the French for Fredrick, who was nearly completely defeated.⁷⁹ In 1758, the British fleet destroyed the French fleet at the Battle of Cartagena. By 1760, Britain had taken control of the Mediterranean Sea. They had, in fact, destroyed the French fleet.⁸⁰ This allowed the British Navy to freely roam the seas; therefore, the empire could expand and protect its territorial possessions.⁸¹ This was a major success of Pitt's role as war minister.

With the French completely driven out of Canada, all that remained of France's North American holdings was the Louisiana Territory.⁸² In total, the British under Pitt's leadership had seized Canada, Guadalupe, Martinique, Dominica, St. Lucia, Grenada, and part of San Domingo. Pitt received much praise for his efforts during the war. Andrew Mitchell, a British diplomat who served in Prussia during the war, congratulated Pitt for his victories and recognized Pitt's role in Britain's success when he stated "which is your own work."⁸³ Pitt set his eyes on driving the French completely out of the Western Hemisphere. He now established plans for attacking Louisiana. However, King George II's death postponed further efforts. When George II died in October of 1760, Canada and India had been won. There were victories in the West Indies and Africa, and the French Navy had been essentially driven from the sea. This marked the height of Pitt's

⁷⁹ Furneaux, *Seven Years' War 1756-1763*, 186.

⁸⁰ Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 7.

⁸¹ Chuck Lovatt, "The Seven Years' War, and the Ascension of Pitt the Elder," *English History Authors*, accessed October 10, 2014, <http://englishhistoryauthors.blogspot.com/2014/04/the-seven-years-war-and-ascension-of.html>

⁸² Furneaux, *Seven Years' War 1756-1763*, 124.

⁸³ Letter from Andrew Mitchell to Mr Pitt – Nov 10 1760, printed in Taylor & Pringle, ed., *Correspondences of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*. (London: Spottiswoode, 1838)

career.⁸⁴ However, with the changes to the monarchy, there were changes coming to the ministry.

The new King lost no time expressing his desires for peace to Parliament: “I mount the throne in the midst of an expensive, but just and necessary war. I shall endeavor to prosecute it in a manner most likely to bring about an honourable and lasting peace in concert with our allies.”⁸⁵ The reality was that George III was not as interested in the war as his father had been. He did not have the same connection to Hanover, and unlike his predecessor, he had been raised in England and was seen as a true Briton.⁸⁶ Therefore, he did not share their prioritization of the security and protection of Hanover. He was also much more interested in increasing his powers as King. This had important political ramifications. Dating back to George I’s accession in 1714, the Hanoverian dynasty had been dependent on the support of the Whig Party in Parliament, and a progression of ministries dominated by Whigs.⁸⁷ George III now wanted to chart a more independent political course. However, until the war was won, he continued to depend upon the ministry he had inherited, including his Secretary of State and War Minister, William Pitt.

There had been attempts at peace, as early as 1759 after Britain’s string of victories. However, Pitt was able to continue the war effort, as he went on ahead with plans while preliminary negotiations began between Britain and France. More formal negotiations took place in 1761. Britain was in a good position for bargaining. However,

⁸⁴ Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 32.

⁸⁵ King Speech to Council - Pitt to Mr, Bussy July 24 1761 – printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 15*, 1355.

⁸⁶ Ruville, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 321.

⁸⁷ Churchill, *History of the English Speaking Peoples: Volume 3*, 163.

Fredrick had been struggling in Europe. This would impact the negotiations. Britain would perhaps be forced to make some concessions in order to help Prussia.⁸⁸ However, France suffered greatly in North America and was anxious to end the devastating war. Pitt's character and personality were not compatible with making peace. All of his life he was a man of the opposition. Negotiations and compromise were not strong suits of Pitt.⁸⁹ He would only support peace as long as all the territory conquered would be retained by Britain.⁹⁰

The Duke of Newcastle felt exactly the opposite, believing peace was absolutely necessary for Britain no matter what the circumstances were. He believed the country could not sustain the expensive war effort any longer.⁹¹ Eventually peace negotiations were left to the King's new minister, the Earl of Bute. The Earl had a long standing relationship with the King's mother, the Princess Dowager, who kept her son sheltered growing up. Bute was given the position as Groom of the Stool and had complete control over the prince's household, including his upbringing and education.⁹² Bute was ill-prepared for the role he would take in the early stages of King George III's rein. However, when it came to peace, he agreed with Newcastle. He was just as eager for peace and would be willing to make concessions if it ended the long and costly war.

In August 1761, the Family Compact was signed, uniting the Bourbon crowns of Spain and France. In the alliance, Spain pledged its support for the French if peace was not attained by May 1762.⁹³ This alliance upset Pitt tremendously. As he stated in a letter

⁸⁸ Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 81-82.

⁸⁹ Green, *William Pitt*, 177.

⁹⁰ Ruville, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 365.

⁹¹ *Ibd*, 366.

⁹² Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 59.

⁹³ Green, *William Pitt*, 240-241.

to Bussy, a British ambassador, “Peace so much desired is far distant.”⁹⁴ Pitt even argued for a preventative war against Spain in hopes of completely destroying the Bourbon dynasty once and for all.⁹⁵ Part of his reasoning was that the British had been successful in removing the French threat in the New World, but the Spanish one still remained.⁹⁶ He also saw opportunities for imperial aggrandizement if Spanish holdings, such as Cuba and the Philippines, could be acquired.

Lord Bute was first to oppose action against the Spanish complaining that Mr. Pitt’s plans were rash and unadvisable. The Duke of Bedford agreed with Bute and spoke out again against the continuation of the war. He contradicted Pitt’s aggressive stance: “A continental war was never proper for England... now we are at war without allies.”⁹⁷ Pitt’s ally, the Duke of Newcastle, abstained from the discussion in the cabinet meeting; however, in private communications he expressed his concern with declaring war against Spain.⁹⁸ He worried about the increased financial burdens of expanding the scope of the already lengthy and costly war.⁹⁹ In cabinet meetings Pitt continued to press the immediate need for war against Spain, arguing that Spain’s actions were menacing to the British. It seemed that Pitt was alone in this viewpoint. Even after further deliberations in cabinet meetings, members still disagreed with Pitt and his stance on declaring war on Spain. Mansfield worried how the neutral nations of Europe would react to a war

⁹⁴ Pitt to Mr, Bussy July 24 1761, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 15*, 1060.

⁹⁵ Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 104.

⁹⁶ Green, *William Pitt*, 181.

⁹⁷ Duke of Bedford’s Speech Parliament, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman in Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 15*, 1217.

⁹⁸ Thackeray, *History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt*, 594.

⁹⁹ Ruville, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 412.

between Britain and Spain. Admiral Anson, who was involved with the capture of Louisbourg, worried that the British fleet was not ready for war against the Spanish.¹⁰⁰

The King himself was ready for peace rather than increasing the scope of the war. The King in a written response to the House of Commons stated his happiness with the pursuit of peace: “The assurance of your steady and vigorous support must add the greatest weight to my endeavors for the public good, and will be the surest means of bringing the war, in which we are engaged, to such a conclusion, as is the constant object of my wishes, and will most effectually provide for the honour, happiness and security of my kingdom.”¹⁰¹ Pitt was alone in his stance.

Divisions within the government over continuing or ending the war isolated Pitt.¹⁰² In October 1761, he officially resigned as Secretary. However, his removal from the cabinet was inevitable as the king was eager to create his own ministry. In a letter from Pitt to the Town-Clerk of the City of London, he explained his two main reasons for resigning his post. Pitt explained he had “a difference in opinion with regard to measures to be taken against Spain.”¹⁰³ He resigned, most importantly, he said: “in order not to remain responsible for measures which I was no longer allowed to guide.”¹⁰⁴ Pitt’s resignation gave more power to the King’s confidant, the Earl of Bute.

In the end, the British achieved victory over the French. As Pitt had predicted, the Spanish did enter the war. However, the British were able to defeat them. The King had

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 412.

¹⁰¹ King’ response to House of Commons, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 15*, 1112.

¹⁰² Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 107.

¹⁰³ William Pitt to William Beckford, October 15, 1761, printed in Kimball, ed., *Correspondence of William Pitt Vol 1*, 158

¹⁰⁴ William Pitt to William Beckford, October 15, 1761, printed in Kimball, ed., *Correspondence of William Pitt Vol 2*, 245, 158.

hoped to avoid war with Spain, in order to secure peace, but he eventually realized the futility of his opposition to a war with Spain: “I have found myself indispensably obliged to declare war against Spain.”¹⁰⁵ During the war, it was Pitt’s dominant and energetic personality and Newcastle’s political strength which made them a strong force in Britain. Britain’s alliance with Fredrick had forced the French to fight on two fronts, one in Europe and another in the New World.¹⁰⁶ Keeping the French tied up in Europe had allowed for British victories in the New World. At the same time, Pitt’s alliance with Spain kept the Spanish neutral in the war, both in Europe and the New World, at least for the majority of the war until the Family Compact was signed.¹⁰⁷

Pitt remained steadfast in his beliefs throughout the war, even when he was tested. Throughout the war, he felt pressure to recall soldiers to protect the home front and aid Britain’s ally Fredrick in Europe. Many leaders in Britain worried about a possible French invasion along the English coast throughout the war and wanted to recall troops to protect the shorelines. However, Pitt was adamant, and never during his entire tenure did he recall a single man from service.¹⁰⁸ He refused at times to send reinforcements to Fredrick, causing considerable strain in the alliance. When he did send reinforcements, he sent as few as he possible so he could continue his focus on campaigns in the New World.¹⁰⁹ While he was appeasing his ally on the continent, he remained true to his promise to the colonies to provide support against the French.

¹⁰⁵ The King’s Speech Concerning a War with Spain, January 19, 1762, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 15*, 1125.

¹⁰⁶ Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 32.

¹⁰⁷ Middleton, *Bells of Victory*, 217.

¹⁰⁸ Green, *William Pitt*, 148.

¹⁰⁹ Ruville, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 180-181.

This focus on North America was extremely expensive. The massive efforts in North America drained the treasury. The high costs of transporting men and supplies to North America and even travel on the continent itself added to the rising costs. His efforts in the global war made it one of the mostly costly wars in British history. Funding was needed to repay the debt accumulated from the war. As peace was established, leaders in Britain focused their efforts on the greatly depleted treasury. However, Pitt was not a part of this recovery effort.

Table 4.2: Cost of major British wars, 1689-1783 (in millions of British pounds, £)

Grand Alliance (1688-1697)	49
Spanish Succession (1702-1713)	94
Austrian Succession (1739-1748)	96
Seven Years' War (1756-1763)	161
American War (1776-1783)	236

Source: Jurgen Brauer and Hubert van Tuyl, *Castles, Battles, and Bombs: How Economics Explain Military History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 140.¹¹⁰

It is evident that Pitt's leadership throughout the war made gave Britain the strongest and largest empire in the world. When he entered office, he inherited a dismal state of affairs. Britain had suffered losses across the globe and was forced to rely on foreign mercenaries for its own protection. However, when Pitt took the reins, he developed a successful war strategy and led the British to victories across the globe.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ This chart is included at this point in the thesis to show the costs placed on the British treasury as a result of the major wars of the eighteenth century, including most importantly the Seven Years' War. This visualizes the high costs of Pitt's war strategy employed during the Seven Years' War compared to previous wars.

¹¹¹ Schweizer, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham 1708-1778: A Biography*, 12.

However, he did not have the foresight to plan for the future relationship between Britain's colonies and the mother country. The aftermath and effects of Pitt's Seven Years' War would contribute to the eventual breach in the relationship between the colonies and Britain in the 1770s. The expense of his aggressive campaigns, especially in North America, strained the treasury. Politicians and citizens alike worried about the financial situation. London would now look to the colonies to raise revenue and to help repay the debts incurred during the Seven Years' War. The British Empire and Pitt's career simultaneously reached their zenith. However, these successes had come at a great cost and now the bills were coming due. Ironically, the man who had done so much to win the war would be absent from efforts to secure the peace. As will be seen, his leadership would be missed.

Chapter 3 – Impact of the Seven Years’ War/French & Indian War

As a result of the Treaty of Paris, the British Empire was enlarged, expanding across multiple continents. However, the great global victories came with a cost. This chapter analyzes the financial repercussions of Pitt’s efforts during the Seven Years’ War. Throughout, Pitt was unconcerned with the financial implications of his policies. He resigned from office just prior to the Treaty of Paris, and therefore he was absent during the crucial period immediately after peace. A new imperial policy was needed for the greatly enlarged Empire, but Pitt had not envisioned a plan for addressing these new realities. As we shall see, new leaders began to orchestrate very different policies that forever impacted the relationship between Britain and her colonies.

The terms of the Treaty of Paris were signed on February 10, 1763. Many territories exchanged hands as a part of the agreement. France agreed to return Minorca in the Mediterranean Sea to the British. It also ceded all of Canada, Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, Grenada, and Senegal to Britain. In Europe, France would evacuate its positions in the German states of Hanover, Hesse, Brunswick, and Prussia. In return for all of this, Britain promised to return Guadalupe, Belle Island, Desiderade, Mariegalante, Martinique, St Lucia, and Goree to France.¹ The French were allowed to maintain control of New Orleans, while the Spanish took control of the Louisiana Territory, a large area stretching from the Mississippi River west to the Rocky Mountains. In exchange for control of Louisiana, the Spanish ceded Florida to the British. The treaty secured for Britain a large empire stretching across the globe, and many celebrated the conclusion of the war. Pitt was at the center of that celebration. A London bridge was named in his

¹ “The Treaty of Paris 1763.” *The Avalon Project, Yale Law School*, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/paris763.asp.

honor.² Fort Duquesne in the Ohio Valley was renamed Fort Pitt and eventually became known as Pittsburgh. He received praise on both sides of the ocean. In the Lords' Address on the Preliminary Articles of Peace, the majority spoke of "the satisfaction which we have received at the foundation laid by the Articles for a Treaty of Paris."³ The political nation also indicates its desire to see the war end. However, one man in particular would drastically disagree with the terms of peace.

Pitt was extremely upset by the Treaty of Paris. He viewed the treaty as too lenient toward the French, and he was bitterly disappointed that so much territory had been returned to them, especially after the British had seized essentially all of New France. The terms of peace went against his hope and goal of utterly destroying the French both on land and at sea. Pitt never again wanted to see the French as a threat to the Empire and its prosperity, and he advocated the destruction of the Bourbon monarchy, even if that meant fighting another war against Spain. However, Pitt was no longer in a position of power and was forced to accept the terms of the peace treaty. He had resigned from office prior to the conclusion of the war and the ensuing peace negotiations in Paris. However, he returned to Parliament when the peace treaty was debated.

Henry Fox, a member of the Whig Party and previous Secretary of War and Paymaster General, spoke in favor of the treaty: "That we are convinced that posterity, from their own experience, will hereafter agree with us, in esteeming that peace to be no less honourable than profitable, by which there will be ceded to Great Britain such an

² Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 33.

³ The Lords' Address on the Preliminary Articles of Peace 1762, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 15*, 1255.

addition of territory, attended with so great an extension of our commerce.”⁴ Many members of Parliament agreed with this statement on the peace treaty.

Pitt was not numbered in that company. In spite of suffering from another attack of gout, he dragged himself to Parliament on December 9, 1762, where he spoke while leaning on a crutch, for over three hours against the treaty.⁵ He feared that “the seeds of a future of war” were sown in the peace treaty. He stated in his speech that “peace was insecure, because it restored the enemy to her former greatness... The peace was inadequate because the places gained were no equivalent for the places surrendered.”⁶ In the end peace was approved by the House of Lords in a vote of three hundred nineteen to sixty five, and two hundred twenty seven to sixty three in the House of Commons.⁷

Pitt had failed to sway members of Parliament. Most legislators and citizens were ready for peace. The original purpose of the war was to secure the colonies on the North American continent and increase trade within the empire. Those two goals had been achieved so Parliament voted to accept the terms of peace. It would have been impossible to retain all of the territories seized around the globe. However, Pitt was angered by the fact that Britain was returning territories to the French. It was apparent that most did not agree with him and perhaps both his influence and his health were declining. The great patriot and statesmen from the Seven Years’ War was diminished in stature and in influence.

⁴ Mr Fox’s Speech to Parliament, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 15*, 1255.

⁵ Black, *Pitt the Elder*, 238.

⁶ William Pitt Speech’s to Parliament – December 9, 1763, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 15*, 1270.

⁷ Green, *William Pitt*, 274.

After the conclusion of the Seven Years' War, Pitt's deteriorating health became more apparent. Physically he suffered gout related pain, while at the same time his mental health began to decline. Following his speech against the approval of the Treaty of Paris on December 9, 1762, he would be absent from Parliament until March of 1763.⁸ At home, he demonstrated increasingly erratic behavior, and his friends feared that his political career had reached its end. Meanwhile, the empire he had fought to protect and expand began to fracture, especially in America.

Victory had been expensive for Great Britain. At the beginning of the war, the national debt had been seventy-two million pounds. However, the costs continued to rise each year of the war. In 1757, the cost was eight million five hundred and nine thousand pounds. It increased to over ten million in 1759, to thirteen million in 1760, to almost fifteen million in 1761. Towards the end of the war, the debt soared to over one hundred and fifty million pounds.⁹ The debt had been doubled by the costs of the war.

Pitt had consistently pressed for the war to continue beyond its original goals, and this made extraordinary demands on the British treasury. The loans for the war were at a high interest rate, which only served to drive up the cost.¹⁰ Pitt did not focus on any of this. His focus was on military preparations rather than financial ramifications, but these would now impact Britain and its empire. As the following Table illustrates the logistics of the wars Britain was involved in throughout the late seventeenth and eighteenth century. It highlights expenditures throughout the wars, the annual revenue the government accrued from taxes, as well as the debt at the beginning and conclusion of

⁸ Black, *Pitt the Elder*, 241.

⁹ Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 48-29.

¹⁰ Middleton, *Bells of Victory*, 111.

each of the wars. The table shows the astounding debt at the end of the Seven Years' War.

Throughout the Seven Years' War, the nation willingly gave men and money to support the cause against the French in Europe, Asia, and North America. British taxpayers were told that the conflict was a struggle to protect their overseas settlements and trade.¹¹ Pitt played to this and was influential in securing money from Parliament for the war effort.¹² He believed everything he championed was worth it for the greater good of the British Empire, and he constantly asked for more troops and supplies.¹³ Pitt was aware of the growing costs of the war, however, at the time, he did not want to worry about these costs. In this, he ignored pleas to establish peace from his fellow statesmen such as the Duke of Newcastle.¹⁴

In addition to being prime minister, Newcastle ran the treasury and was responsible for securing loans to fund the war. He complained constantly over the rising expenses.¹⁵ However, Pitt ignored Newcastle's concerns. He stated in Parliament that it was "wrong and unjust to represent Great Britain in so deplorable a state, as unable to carry on the war." He continued, explaining that "England never was better able to support a war than the present."¹⁶

Many historians believe it is right to criticize Pitt here for his naïve understanding of finances and his belief that Britain had endless credit for financing the war.¹⁷ How

¹¹ Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 33.

¹² Green, *William Pitt*, 112.

¹³ Ruville, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 170.

¹⁴ Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 42.

¹⁵ Black, *Pitt the Elder*, 235.

¹⁶ William Pitt Parliamentary Debate, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 15*, 1224.

¹⁷ Middleton, *Bells of Victory*, 213 & Peters, *Pitt & Popularity*, 143.

could one not be concerned about the increasing costs of the war? At the time he had the support of the citizens and most government leaders for the war. The war was Pitt's main focus and concern was to see France completely and utterly defeated.

With the end of the war, however, the proverbial piper would have to be paid. Furthermore, the changed realities of peace-time efforts to cover wartime debts would be undertaken by a new ministry serving under a new king. After a brief ministry, partly due to his lack of political experience, Lord Bute resigned.¹⁸ George Grenville, Pitt's brother-in-law, then became Prime Minister. Grenville, like Pitt, had been educated at Eton and Oxford. He also began his political career in the House of Commons. In 1741, he was elected to Parliament from the borough of Buckingham, a position he held for the rest of his life. Early in his career he allied himself with Pitt in the opposition, speaking out against Walpole and King George II's affiliation with Hanover.¹⁹ While serving as a MP, he was recognized for his efforts and rewarded with a number of positions within the government, mainly treasury positions. It was during his time in the Pelham and Newcastle administrations that he became familiar with the finances of Britain and the Empire. His alliance with Pitt would be broken as Grenville allied himself with Bute upon the accession of George III. He served as the Secretary of State of the Northern Department in Bute's administration.²⁰ Upon Bute's resignation, Grenville became prime minister.

Grenville and the leaders who followed him would be responsible for acts such as the Sugar, Quartering, Currency, and Stamp Acts. The Board of Trade's position, which had reigned supreme over colonial policy, fell out of favor. Other executive departments,

¹⁸ Churchill, *History of the English Speaking Peoples: Volume 3*, 161.

¹⁹ Sidney Lee, ed., *Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1899), 557.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 558.

the Secretary of State, ministers, and Parliament would become more involved. This was also a turning point in the administration of the colonies.

The economic constraints incurred by the British Empire after the Seven Years War led to difficult decisions that had to be made by Parliament. The growing debt problem stemming from Pitt's aggressive war strategy could not be ignored and needed to be addressed immediately. Britain somehow needed to make up for the debt accrued fighting the war and then acquire financing for a larger empire in the New World. Leaders at Westminster recognized that new revenues were needed immediately in order to alleviate the strain on the treasury.

In general, the cost of the American colonies was ever increasing. Contrary to popular belief in history classrooms across the United States, the issue of money spent to protect the colonies was nothing new in the period after the Seven Years' War. This had been an issue in Parliament prior to the war in the early to mid 1700s. Prior to the Seven Years' War, administration of the colonies cost approximately seventy thousand British pounds annually. However, this issue came to the forefront after the war, particularly during the Grenville Administration.²¹ The cost of civil and military establishments was increasing to over three hundred and fifty thousand British pounds and continually growing. This amount was five times larger than fifteen years prior for the civil and military establishments in the colonies. These expenses were in addition to the debt incurred financing the actual war effort itself. The financial issue was the most difficult problem that developed after the long war with France.

The financial situation after the war led British leaders in Parliament to enact legislation to repay the enormous war debt. There were three main sources of revenue in

²¹ Green, *William Pitt*, 219.

Britain. They were the land tax, the malt tax, and the tonnage and poundage tax on imports and exports. Together these taxes brought in between seven and eight million pounds a year, not nearly enough to cover the rising cost of the war.²² Parliament recognized that British taxpayers had been heavily burdened during the war, and did not want to put additional financial strain on the landowning class.²³ Increasing taxes on the British taxpayers would be too burdensome; they had already borne most of the burden of the debt and taxes.²⁴ Citizens living in Britain were paying approximately eighteen pounds in taxes, while colonists in the New World were only paying approximately eighteen shillings in taxes.²⁵ The colonists essentially were paying one-fiftieth of the taxes British citizens were at the time.²⁶ The debt from the war and the costs of running and maintaining a large empire three thousand miles across the Atlantic Ocean forced new leaders in Britain to make difficult decisions, especially as the debt accumulated and reached over one hundred and thirty million British pounds.²⁷

The colonies were prospering, and their wealth was growing. Politicians and citizens alike looked to the colonists as a reasonable source of revenue to help offset the enormous costs of the war. It seemed reasonable that the colonists should help contribute to the finances of the Empire. After all it was partly for their own defense and well-being. Not only was the government interested in eliminating the war debt, but it also wanted to secure money for the costs of the administration, maintenance, and protection of the

²² Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 47.

²³ Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Background of the American Revolution* (New , CT: University Press, 1975), 130.

²⁴ Oliver M. Dickerson, *American Colonial Government 1696-1765* (New York NY: Russell & Russell Inc, 1962), 51.

²⁵ Marjorie J. Squire, *British Views of the American Revolution* (Boston, MA: D.C. Heath & Company, 1965), 9.

²⁶ Donald Barr Chidsey, *The Great Separation: The Story of the Boston Tea Party and the Beginning of the American Revolution* (New York, NY: Crown Publishers, Inc, 1965), 28.

²⁷ Squire, *British Views of the American Revolution*, 10.

Empire.²⁸ Many in Britain believed the colonists could afford these new costs.

Merchants and manufactures had long recognized the growing wealth of the colonies.

Colonists were even importing luxury goods from Britain, giving the image of prosperity and wealth in the colonies.²⁹ No longer were they just importing and purchasing basic supplies for survival.

Parliament was aware of the growing wealth of its American Colonies. The colonists had not been asked to contribute previously despite the prosperity they were experiencing. Leaders in Britain made changes to its traditional colonial policy as a new imperial policy was needed for the changed empire. The new acts were to collect revenue from the colonies for their maintenance and protection. This was a major change in British colonial policy. These acts imposed direct taxes onto the colonies, a drastic change from the policy that had dominated the British colonial policy since the late sixteen hundreds.³⁰ Pitt was absent as major changes were made to the colonial policy between Britain and her colonies.

Prime Minister Grenville, and eventually, Chancellor of the Exchequer Charles Townshend wanted to put as little of the burden as possible on the landowning class at home. At the same time they wanted to avoid an internal or direct tax on the colonists.³¹ Ministers who came to power after 1763 found themselves in a very difficult situation following the Peace of Paris.

Grenville, Townshend, and others, were well aware of the fact that imperial trade had created enormous benefits and growth on both sides of the Atlantic. Now the difficult

²⁸ Dickerson, *American Colonial Government 1696-1765*, 164.

²⁹ John Derry, *English Politics and the American Revolution* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1976), 54.

³⁰ Jack P. Greene, *The Reinterpretation of the American Revolution 1763-1776* (New York, NY: Harper and Row Publishers, 1968), 187.

³¹ Andrews, *The Colonial Background of the American Revolution*, 135.

task was how to harness the imperial trade to maximize it for peace-time benefit. Grenville had no intention of threatening the liberty of American colonists. His agenda was to solve the financial problems of the Empire. He wanted to avoid increasing the landed gentry's taxes as they had born the brunt of the costs for the protection of the colonies. The two were tied together by prosperity of their commercial relationship. Colonial trade was growing steadily throughout the eighteenth century. The British recognized the importance of this profitable mercantile relationship. In 1700, colonial trade was worth approximately five hundred pounds; by 1770, it was worth over two million eight hundred pounds. As the Revolution approached colonial trade was more prosperous than it had ever been.³² According to Governor Thomas Pownall, the Atlantic commercial empire was of immense importance for both wealth and power for the British Empire.³³ Once the Grenville Administration established itself, the British initiated reforms in the relationship between Britain and her colonies, thus the imperial crisis began which ultimately led to the American colonists declaring independence from Great Britain.

In addition to the defense of the colonies, enumeration and the bounties offered by the current colonial system also contributed to the British debt.³⁴ The colonies had benefited from the mercantile system established by the various Navigation Acts. The intentions of the various acts of trade were to regulate commerce and bring in further

³² Michael Pearson, *Those Damned Rebels: The American Revolution As Seen Through British Eyes* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2000), 17.

³³ Thomas Pownall, *The Administration of the Colonies 1768* (New York, John Carter Brown Library, 1993), 13.

³⁴ Dickerson, *American Colonial Government 1696-1765* (New York, NY: Russell & Russell Inc, 1962), 51.

revenue for the Empire.³⁵ As a part of the Navigation Acts a list of enumerated goods was established. Goods such as sugar, tobacco, indigo, and cotton were to be sent to Britain first and then exported. This assured markets for goods for both Britain and the colonies. They both also benefited from the bounties, sums paid to colonial producers for certain goods, established by the Navigation Acts.³⁶ Bounties were offered on such goods as lumber and indigo.³⁷ In total between the years 1706 and 1776, London paid colonial producers over one million four hundred pounds, roughly over one hundred and seventy million dollars today.³⁸ Shipping and trading increased as a result of the Navigation Acts. They did not harm and inhibit colonial trade or the colonial economy.³⁹ It actually encouraged the development of the British colonies.

Protection of the colonies in North America and on the high seas and endless bounties offered to the colonies were nonetheless expenses financed by the British treasury. It was the economic system that was imposed by the various acts of trade and protection of the British Army and Navy that allowed for the success and prosperity of the American colonies.

There was now more than ever the need for the colonies to contribute to imperial defense. However, the cooperation of the colonies during the war was less than ideal. In order to assure colonial cooperation, Pitt promised colonial leaders of unwavering British support for their defense against the French. Directing the war, Pitt only asked for a small number of men compared to the number of British redcoats sent to the New World.

³⁵ Jack P. Greene, *Great Britain and the American Colonies, 1606-1763* (New York NY: Harper Paperbacks, 1970), 191.

³⁶ Derry, *English Politics and the American Revolution*, 33.

³⁷ Oliver M. Dickerson, *The Navigation Acts and the American Revolution* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1951), 14.

³⁸ Botti. *The Envy of the World*, 22. .

³⁹ Dickerson, *The Navigation Acts and the American Revolution*, 9.

General Forbes wrote to Pitt about difficulties gaining support from the colonies towards their own protection. One instance, Forbes stated, “I shall be well pleased if I get more than half of their number.”⁴⁰

Pitt communicated frequently with colonial leaders. In order to secure support, he had to stress the crown’s commitment to reimburse the colonies for their contributions. In a letter to Pitt, Governor Thomas Pownall of the Massachusetts Bay colony expressed his concern over the costs of the war. He informed Pitt of his concern: “for proper compensation for these services according to the active vigour and strenuous efforts we have made.”⁴¹

The colonial leaders failed to recognize the plight of the British treasury for a war fought for the protection and benefit of their citizens. All the while, the British treasury was spending an enormous amount of money, and the colonies were simply concerned with their own economic situation. However, Pitt reassured in letters to the various colonial governors their loyalty to protecting the colonies and repaying them for the costs their colonies incurred as a result of the war. It was at the “expense of the King.”⁴² Repaying colonial governments added to the rising debt of the British treasury.

As a result, Britain did deserve some financial contributions from the colonies as the colonies contributed few men and financial aid to the war effort that greatly benefited them. The British had fought a war for their defense and continued to have a military presence after the war in the New World for their continued protection. However, the

⁴⁰ Letter from General Forbes to William Pitt – Dec 19 1758, printed in Kimball, ed., *Correspondence of William Pitt* Vol 1, 245.

⁴¹ Letter from Governor Pownall to William Pitt – Dec 8 1758, printed in Kimball, ed., *Correspondence of William Pitt* Vol 1, 412.

⁴² Letter from William Pitt to Colonial Governors, – Dec 9 1758, printed in Kimball, ed., *Correspondence of William Pitt* Vol 1, 414.

British were left with a challenge regarding how to preserve the Empire and the constitution as well as deal with the financial strains on the treasury.⁴³ This problem would plague leaders on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean in the decade that followed the Seven Years' War.

Leaders at Westminster, for two main reasons, believed the time had come for the colonists to contribute towards the imperial Empire. First, the colonies were the major beneficiaries of the imperial trade policies. The colonies' wealth continually grew due to the connection with Britain and the commercial system that was established and modified throughout their history. The colonists enjoyed a higher standard of living than residents of the British Isles. The per capita annual income was one of the greatest in the world. The annual growth in income per capita in the colonies was approximately .3% to .6%. This was a significant yearly increase.⁴⁴

The second reason why leaders at Westminster believed the colonists should contribute was the colonists benefited immensely from the British global victory in the Seven Years' War. The colonies no longer had to fear French threat anywhere in North America. Now the colonies were poised to expand westward. For example, the new lands west of the Appalachians in the Ohio Valley that were acquired by the peace in Paris would directly benefit the colonists.⁴⁵ However, on the other side of the ocean, the colonies' mother country was struggling from the effects of the war. Grenville truly understood the financial troubles of the Empire.

⁴³ Ian Christie. "The Earl of Chatham and American Taxation, 1774-75". *The Eighteenth Century* Vol 20, No 3. (Autumn 1979): 250.

⁴⁴ Bushman, Richard L. "Review of The Economy of British America, 1607-1789 by John J. McCusker & Russell R. Menard." *Technology and Culture*, Vol 28, Number 2. (April 1987): 358.

⁴⁵ Andrews, *The Colonial Background of the American Revolution*, 131.

In the King's speech on the opening of the Parliamentary session he pressed Parliament to take action on the financial situation of the Empire: "The heavy debts contracted in the course of the late war, for many of which no provision is yet made, call for your utmost attention, and the strictest frugality."⁴⁶ The House of Commons addressed the King's message stating they would: "diligently weigh every regulation which may be proposed for the improvement of public revenue, as the most effectual method to reduce the national debt, to relieve your Majesty's subjects from the burthens of the late war, and to confirm and strengthen public credit."⁴⁷ Members of Parliament worked to address the main concern of many in the Empire, the large debt from the war.

Prime Minister Grenville developed a comprehensive plan for dealing with the financial issues and presented it to Parliament. He looked to create an indirect tax that was both legal and more enforceable, unlike previous acts of trade. He believed it was time to readjust the imperial policy towards the American colonies.⁴⁸ The previous colonial system had outgrown its effectiveness as the colonies had grown far beyond their early establishment a century ago in terms of their size, population, wealth, and even strength.⁴⁹ The new plan was well-received by both the members of Parliament and the British people.⁵⁰ Previous economic measures such as the Navigation Acts and Molasses Acts did not provide enough money to pay for debts incurred by the expensive war. However, there were some that were concerned about changing imperial policy. Pitt was

⁴⁶ King's Speech to Parliament – printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 15*, 1337.

⁴⁷ Commons Address of Thanks, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 16* (London: Bagshaw, 1813), 1255.

⁴⁸ Willcox & Arnstein, *The Age of Aristocracy 1688-1830*, 162.

⁴⁹ Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Period of American History: England's Commercial and Colonial Policy, Volume IV* (New Haven, CT: University Press, 1938), 366.

⁵⁰ Oscar Theodore Barack and Hugh Tallmage Lefler, *Colonial America: 2nd Edition* (New York, NY: MacMillian Company, 1968), 464.

one of them. In contrast to his ability to gather support for the war, he was unable to stop or rally support against Grenville's policy until it was too late.

At the same time, the British did not know how the Native Americans and French colonists living within the British Empire would react to their new situation. Would there be attacks from the remaining French and Native Americans on the British colonists? That was a serious issue that Parliament needed to address. For that reason, many believed there was a need for a British military presence in the colonies to protect the colonists.⁵¹ However, this military presence in the New World would once again be another expense the British faced, especially as the increased amount of land control by Britain led to more territory to be protected. This contributed to the difficult position of the British in the post Seven Years' War era.

Parliament first passed the Sugar Act of 1764. It hoped to collect forty-five thousand pounds each year.⁵² Leaders in Britain proposed the Stamp Act to alleviate the growing financial problem. Leaders estimated that the Stamp Act would bring in sixty thousand pounds of revenue. This was by no means an excessive amount of money; however, Britain needed to do something about its debt from the war and to offset the growing costs of the administration of the colonies that amounted to over one million pounds. Colonists had constantly reiterated the fact that they were equal to their counterparts back in Britain. James Otis, a colonist, stated, "...the colonists... born here are freeborn British subjects, and entitled to all the essential civil rights... from the British constitution... design to secure the liberties of all the subjects to all

⁵¹ Derry, *English Politics and the American Revolution*, 52.

⁵² *Ibid*, 54.

generations.”⁵³ He believed colonists’ basic rights were deprived. The argument could be made then that they should pay a similar amount as their British brethren if they were truly equal. The colonists were enjoying the benefits of the British Empire; it seemed only fair they contribute to the growing cost of the Empire.

Grenville moved forward with his plans for raising revenue from the colonies. They had already been reimbursed for their expenses from the war as promised by Pitt during the war. Grenville refused to increase taxes on Englishmen, who had long been burdened with high taxes. He had hoped and preferred that colonial legislatures would develop a tax to help support the Empire, but they did not. Therefore, Grenville moved forward with his Stamp Act tax. Grenville assumed that the colonists would accept this new act enacted by Parliament.⁵⁴ Many in Parliament agreed with Grenville and passed the Stamp Act. In February of 1765, it passed the House of Lords with virtually no debate, and easily passed two hundred forty five to forty nine in the House of Commons.⁵⁵ However, this is not to say that there were not people who had reservations about the act or who disapproved of the taxation of the American colonists.

The Stamp Act was the first major imperial taxation legislation involving the colonies.⁵⁶ As stated in the legislation, its purpose was: “defraying the expenses of defending, protecting, and securing the British colonies and plantations in America.”⁵⁷ This act required that all legal and commercial documents such as merchant papers have

⁵³ James Otis, “The Rights of the British Colonists Asserted and Proved, 1764,” *US History.Org* <http://www.ushistory.org/us/9b.asp>

⁵⁴ Derry, *English Politics and the American Revolution*, 55.

⁵⁵ Green, *William Pitt*, 292.

⁵⁶ K Capper Johnson, *Aspects of Anglo-American Relations: The Historical Significance of American Revolution in the Development of the British Commonwealth of Nations* (Oxford: Queen’s College, 1928), 10.

⁵⁷ “The Stamp Act” America’s Homepage: *Historic Documents of the United States*, accessed October 14, 2014, http://ahp.gatech.edu/stamp_act_bp_1765.html.

an affixed seal or stamp on them. Also included in the requirements of the Stamp Act were legal documents, newspapers, pamphlets, and even playing cards. British citizens had long been subjected to a Stamp tax of their own. The revenue that would be raised would be directly used for paying down the debt from the Seven Years' War, as well as for providing future defense.⁵⁸ The Stamp Act fees were minimal, a light tax to attempt to recoup some of the costs from the war.⁵⁹ This was made quite clear to the colonists. This was not intended to be any sort of permanent burden. There even was a year's grace period prior to the collection of the tax. The tax applied to all British colonies, not just the American colonies. Parliamentary proceedings on the Stamp Act explain the goal of this action: "An act for granting and applying certain stamp duties, and other duties, in the British colonies and plantations in America, towards further defraying the expenses of defending, protecting, and securing, the same."⁶⁰ Grenville's Act was nonetheless a change from the previous mercantile policy. This was a more encompassing imperial policy.

Grenville made an honest attempt to make the British Empire financially sound.⁶¹ He did not wish to antagonize the American colonists with his plan for recouping the costs from the war. Leaders in Britain thought it was only reasonable to request that the American colonists contribute to the Empire. The majority of the war efforts Pitt had engineered were focused in North America, and he had resisted many attempts for peace

⁵⁸ Bernard Donoghue, *British Politics and the American Revolution, Path to War 1773-1775* (London: McMillan and Company Ltd, 1964), 4.

⁵⁹ Andrews, *The Colonial Background of the American Revolution*, 134.

⁶⁰ Parliamentary Records, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 16*, 35-36.

⁶¹ Dickerson, *American Colonial Government 1696-1765*, 166.

and recalling troops from North America back to the front in Europe. It was the colonists who directly benefited from the efforts of Pitt and the British government.

Pitt was now absent from the debate on the Stamp Act. After speaking out against the peace treaty, he remained secluded at home, experiencing one of his worst attacks of gout.⁶² When Parliament voted on the Stamp Act, it was passed easily.⁶³

A friend of Pitt's, Lord Chesterfield, wrote to his son about Pitt during the time of the passage of the Stamp Act that "he is absolutely a cripple all the year, and in violent pain at least half of it."⁶⁴ Pitt's illness led to his absence during this absolutely crucial period. Perhaps, if he had been well, he could have delayed the vote or swayed some members of Parliament as there were members who were hesitant to approve the Stamp Act. The Stamp Act, however, would rock the relationship between the colonies and her mother country.

Pitt disagreed with the taxation policies of Parliament after the Seven Years' War. He was outraged by the Stamp Act but was powerless to prevent its passage because of his declining health. There was very little to no opposition in either House of Parliament to the Stamp Act. One who did oppose it was Colonel Isaac Barre, a member of the House of Commons and friend of Pitt. He was outraged by the treatment of the American colonists: "Children planted by your care! No! Your oppression planted them

⁶² Green, *William Pitt*, 290.

⁶³ Parliamentary Records, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 16*, 34.

⁶⁴ Letters from Lord Chesterfield to Son – Oct 25, 1765, printed in Bradshaw, ed., *The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield* (London: Swan Sonnenschein and Company, 1905), 1329.

in America; they fled from your tyranny... They grew by your neglect of them... now your prey upon them.”⁶⁵

According to Edmund Burke, an Irish statesman and eventually an opponent of taxation on the American Colonies, noted: “I never heard a more languid debate in this House. No more than two or three gentlemen, as I remember, spoke against the act... In the House of Lords, I do not recollect that there was any debate or division at all.”⁶⁶ The King praised Parliament’s actions in a speech at the closing of Parliament’s session:

“The many bills which you have formed for the improvement and augmentation of the revenue in its several branches, and the early care which you have taken to discharge a part of the national debt, are the most effectual methods to establish the public credit upon the surest foundations, and to alleviate by degrees the burdens of my people.”⁶⁷

However, the King’s happiness would not continue as news from the colonies poured in.

It is well known that the colonial response from London’s taxation efforts sowed the seeds for the American Revolution. American colonists were quick to express their disapproval of the actions of Parliament in London. Colonial governments objected to the Stamp Act. Patrick Henry of Virginia introduced several resolutions against it in Virginia’s House of Burgesses. In one resolution, he claimed colonists had the same rights as citizens living in Britain: “That by two royal Charters, granted by King James the First, the Colonists aforesaid are declared entitled to all the Liberties, Priviledges, and Immunities of Denizens and natural Subjects, as if they had been abiding and born within

⁶⁵ Colonel Barre Speech in Parliament on Stamp Act, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 16*, 38-39.

⁶⁶ Edmund Burke’s Speech on American Taxation, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 16*, 40.

⁶⁷ The King’s Speech at the Close of the Session – May 25, 1765, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 16*, 82-83.

the Realm of England.”⁶⁸ Continuing his argument against the Stamp tax in another resolution, he claimed taxes could be enacted “...by persons chosen by themselves to represent them.”⁶⁹ Five of Henry’s resolutions were passed by the House of Burgesses.

Soon Henry’s resolutions were reprinted throughout the colonies. They appeared in newspapers in two major cities, Boston and New York, along with *The Newport Mercury* in Rhode Island and *The Maryland Gazette*. Other colonial legislatures now passed their own resolutions against the Stamp tax. In Pennsylvania one resolution evidenced extreme colonial displeasure: “That the vesting and Authority in the Courts of Admiralty to decide in Suits relating to the Stamp Duty, and other Matters foreign to their proper Jurisdiction, is highly dangerous to the Liberties of his Majesty’s American Subjects, contrary to Magna Charta, the great Charter and Fountain of English Liberty, and destructive of one of their most darling and acknowledged Rights, that of Trials by Juries.”⁷⁰ Meanwhile the Massachusetts Colonial Assembly passed its own resolutions, including the following: “That no man can justly take the property of another without his consent; and that upon this original principle the right of representation in the same body, which exercises the power of making laws for levying taxes, which is one of the main pillars of the British constitution, is evidently founded.”⁷¹ News that colonial legislatures had enacted legislation denying the constitutionality of the Stamp tax reached Britain. The Lords of Commissioners of Trade and Plantations in a report on December of 1765 to Parliament complained of the colonial reaction to the Stamp Act: “That the assemblies

⁶⁸ “Patrick Henry’s Resolutions Against the Stamp Act, May 29-30, 1765” *Red Hill, The Patrick Henry National Memorial*, <http://www.redhill.org/speeches/stampact.htm>

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ “Resolutions and Boycotts against the Stamp Act.” *The National Humanities Center 2010/2013, Americans in Class*, <http://americainclass.org/sources/makingrevolution/crisis/text3/stampactresponse1765.pdf>

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

of both Massachusetts Bay and New York, had their resolutions and proceedings treated the acts and legislature of Great Britain with the most indecent disrespect.”⁷²

Throughout the colonies, especially in the northern region, colonists protested the tax with the rallying cry, “No taxation without representation!” In addition to passing resolutions arguing against the constitutionality of the Stamp Tax, throughout the colonies non-importation agreements or boycotts of British goods began. At the New York City Merchants Meeting, the group passed a non-importation agreement on October 31, 1765. The agreement read: “Resolved, That in all orders they send out to Great Britain for goods or merchandise of any nature, kind, or quality whatsoever, usually imported from Great Britain, they will direct their correspondents not to ship them unless the Stamp Act be repealed. . . It is further unanimously agreed that no merchant will vend [sell] any goods or merchandise sent upon commission from Great Britain that shall be shipped from thence after the first day of January next unless upon the condition mentioned in the first resolution.”⁷³

Multiple reports from the Board of Trade from 1765 identified colonial anger generated by the Stamp Act. A letter from the colonies to the Board of Trade describes the colonial reaction to the tax: “(It) was discovered hanging upon a tree, in a street in the town, an effigy, with inscriptions, shewing that it was intended to represent Mr. Oliver the secretary, who had lately accepted the office of stamp distributor.” The letter also

⁷² Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations Report – December 11, 1765, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 16*, 121.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

states that the sheriff's officers could not take it down, "without imminent danger of their lives."⁷⁴

At the same time, representatives from nine of the thirteen colonies met in New York City. This meeting would become known as the Stamp Act Congress. The Congress passed a series of resolutions in which delegates pledged their loyalty to the King, while at the same time asserting their rights as British citizens. They argued against the constitutionality of the Stamp Act. They petitioned the King to have Parliament repeal the Stamp Act asking him "...to procure the repeal of the act for granting and applying certain stamp duties."⁷⁵ Once the tax was repealed the representatives believed it would return peace and prosperity throughout the realm.

As we have seen, the majority of British statesmen supported the Stamp Act at the time of its passage. There was little debate as many statesmen believed that, "...support is due in return for protection that every subject should contribute to the common defense"⁷⁶ Many statesmen worried about the added cost of continued protection of the colonies after war. Estimates ranged from three to four hundred thousand pounds annually for the protection and defense of the now larger American colonies by installing approximately ten thousand troops throughout the region. However, as unrest broke out in the colonies, leaders in Britain faced a difficult and novel situation.

Ministry and colonial political leaders held potentially irreconcilable differences on costs of imperial defense on one hand, appearances of arbitrary taxation on the other. The American colonists denied the right of Parliament to legislate and tax them in this

⁷⁴ Board of Trade Report – August 15, 1765, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 16*, 126.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Cobbett, *The Parliamentary History of England*, 34.

new fashion. Leaders in Britain essentially refuted the colonial argument, believing that colonial legislatures were subordinate to Parliament. When colonists protested against the measures taken to collect funds for the Empire, the government and its leaders were shocked. They did not foresee the negative colonists' reaction towards the new trade and tax regulations. Some in Britain viewed the colonial reaction and subsequent protest and rebellion as an insult to Britain. This was especially true for Grenville, who believed that protection and obedience were reciprocal. The British offered protection to the colonists, and in return the colonists should be obedient to the British.⁷⁷

The colonies did not have an army or navy of any kind; they would have been easily defeated by the French and their Native American allies. Prior to the British arrival in North America, Washington and his colonial militia had failed miserably against the French and the Native American allies. Without British intervention in the situation in the Ohio Valley, the colonists would have been on their own to defend themselves from the French and their Native American allies. In addition to providing for their defense, the colonists also reaped tremendous advantages as a result of Britain evacuating the French from North America.

On one level, lack of American enthusiasm for novel financial contributions should not have been surprising. As previously discussed in chapter two, throughout the Seven Years' War, colonial cooperation with Britain was less than expected. There were many requests made to colonial legislatures for troops to assist the British Army. Generals frequently reported back to London that legislatures failed to raise a sufficient number of troops, nor did they do so in a timely manner. The colonies seemed to

⁷⁷ Squire, *British Views of the American Revolution*, 23.

decouple Britain's military efforts in North America from any sense of imperial obligation.

There was clearly an established pattern of colonial unwillingness to help pay for expenses such as imperial defense. Colonists were able to contribute to their own defense as evidenced by their ability to purchase and increase the demand for British goods throughout the eighteenth century. When it came to assisting the British cause in the war, colonists were only willing to contribute when promised redress of their costs by the British government. This was promised by Pitt in letters to colonial leaders throughout the duration of the war. Therefore, by rarely pressing the issue of colonial contribution, it set the foundation for colonial resistance to contributing to the imperial needs. Now, when the time came for colonists to contribute to post war recovery efforts, they resisted. Just as he had effectively ignored the financial costs of the Seven Years' War in pursuit of victory, Pitt had also insulated colonies from understanding the costs of the war. Now when asked to pay to contribute to the Empire as their counterparts at home did, colonists refused. This forced leaders to then tax the colonists to generate revenue for colonial defense.

Leaders in Parliament needed to respond to the colonial reaction to the Stamp Tax. Benjamin Franklin, speaking to Parliament, tried to explain why colonists reacted as they did: "The Stamp Act says, we shall have no commerce, make no exchange of property with each other, neither purchase nor grant, nor recover debts; we shall neither marry nor make our wills, unless we pay such sums and thus it is intended to extort our money from us, or ruin us by the consequence of refusing to pay it."⁷⁸ Paying for seals

⁷⁸ Ben Franklin's Examination by Parliament, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 16*, 144.

for documents such as marriage licenses, wills, deeds and contracts were all forced upon the colonists without their consent. They saw this as a denial of their rights as British subjects.

Not all British statesmen agreed with Grenville's plan to alleviate the financial strain caused by the Seven Years' War. William Pitt would return to political life from the illness that kept him home during the crucial period after his war. He was needed to restructure British colonial policy. All in all, British leaders were forced to re-evaluate the measures imposed by the Grenville ministry and determine the best course of action to deal with the rising costs of the administration of the American colonies.

Chapter 4 – Crisis with the Colonies

As we have seen, the victory Pitt had worked tirelessly to achieve over the French in 1763, changed the Empire, but Pitt was unable to develop an imperial vision when it came to the colonies across the Atlantic Ocean. He resigned from office as peace was negotiated and agreed upon in Paris, and the new King, George III, formed a peacetime ministry without Pitt.

When Pitt left office at the end of the Seven Years' War, he had helped to create the largest and strongest empire in the world. Britain was a colonial powerhouse with territory stretching across the globe, but his overall vision was frustrated.¹ Throughout the peace negotiations, Pitt saw the importance of the North American continent for the Empire. He supported the removal of the French from Canada for the protection of the British colonies and trade between those colonies and the mother country.² Both Britain and the colonies had long benefited from their economic connection, and Pitt wished to see this connection continue. However, the new ministry would be forced to focus on the economic impacts of the war. This would set in motion a series of events that would forever change the Empire. We will see that the King would recall Pitt to office to serve his country again, but when he returned in 1766, great damage had already been done to the relationship between Britain and her colonies. The situation was quite precarious. As events transpired, Pitt would prove unequal to the task of preventing a drastic imperial fracture. Pitt would not be the effective leader during peacetime as he once was during wartime.

¹ Peters, *Pitt and Popularity*, 43.

² Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 84.

Upon the commencement of Pitt's ministry in 1766, the King had elevated him to peerage as 1st Earl of Chatham. Pitt's acceptance of a peerage would greatly impact the rest of his career. The *London Gazette* announced his title in an article which read: "St. James's Place, July 30. The King has been pleased to grant unto the Right Honourable William Pitt, and heirs male, the dignity of a Viscount and Earl of Great Britain, by the name, style and title of Viscount Pitt, of Burton-Pynsent, in the county of Somerset, and Earl of Chatham, Kent."³ The impact of a transition from the House of Commons to the House of Lords would greatly affect Pitt's abilities within the government and court of public opinion. Friends and supporters disliked his move from the House of Commons to the House of Lords. Many Britons felt betrayed by Pitt's actions. The "Great Commonor" was no more after accepting an earldom. His political allies felt he had more authority and creditability within the Commons, as they believed he could not be as an effective leader in the Lords, especially due to his failing health.⁴

The colonies had changed demographically, economically, and politically since their establishments, sometimes over a century ago. Chatham failed to understand both the financial issues of the Empire and the growing disconnect between Britain and her colonies.⁵ The colonists had in fact transplanted British social, political, and economic institutions to the colonies.⁶ Despite that, over time the colonies had developed their own distinct identity. British culture had merged with others as the colonies were a safe haven for refugees from across Europe. The population was made up of a variety of different nationalities, ethnicities, and religious groups. By 1760, two-thirds of the population in

³ John Almon, *Anecdotes on the Life of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, Paternoster-Row, 1810), 30.

⁴ Black, *Pitt the Elder*, 263-264.

⁵ A note to the reader - Moving forward William Pitt will be referred to as Earl of Chatham.

⁶ VerSteeg, *The Formative Years 1607-1763*, 53.

the colonies was American-born. Many were second, third, and fourth generation Americans.⁷ This generation did not have as strong a connection to the mother country as the earlier generations. Many had never stepped foot anywhere in Europe, including Britain. By the mid-eighteenth century the population had exploded in the colonies. The population of the colonies was doubling every thirty years.⁸ Thus the colonies developed their own culture and heritage.⁹

The colonists were no longer the just transplanted Britons. Colonists were wealthier and more powerful than the previous generations.¹⁰ They were more successful, prosperous, and growing.¹¹ The colonies were economically and politically mature.¹² They saw themselves as equal to Englishmen living in the mother country, believing they were entitled to the same rights.¹³

The growing divide between the colonies and the mother country cannot be denied. This was exacerbated by events that occurred in the aftermath of the Seven Years' War. When changes to the Empire were made, the colonists refused to accept what Parliament enacted as a result of the war. After the crisis associated with the Stamp Act, conditions had forever changed between Britain and her colonies. The colonists were not willing to contribute towards the Empire by the methods imposed by Grenville and Townshend, nor were they willing to accept previous commercial regulations that had been established over the past century. The relationship was forever changed as compromise became almost impossible. Chatham championed conciliation, though he

⁷ Barack and Lefler, *Colonial America*, 264.

⁸ Chidsey, *The Great Separation*, 28.

⁹ Ubbelohde, 105.

¹⁰ Andrews, *The Colonial Background of the American Revolution*, 128.

¹¹ Dickerson, *American Colonial Government 1696-1765*, 147.

¹² Greene, *The Reinterpretation of the American Revolution 1763-1789*, 182.

¹³ Derry, *English Politics and the American Revolution*, 37.

was in the minority on both sides of the Atlantic. He nonetheless did so until his last breath.

There was much unrest throughout the colonies after the passage of the Stamp Act, with protests and riots occurring throughout 1765. Letters and petitions were sent to Parliament against the Stamp Act and shared with members throughout the year. Merchants, manufacturers, ship owners, and seamen throughout Britain joined with their American counterparts in protesting the new duty, especially after the American colonists organized boycotts of British goods. Changes needed to be made to halt the actions of the colonists, and the King looked to Chatham for assistance. According to the Duke of Newcastle, in June of 1765, the Duke of Grafton was sent to Pitt to bring him to the King. Grafton found him “very lame with the gout in both of his feet.” The seriousness of the illness prevented him from accepting the king’s call.¹⁴ With Chatham sidelined indefinitely, the King looked to Lord Rockingham to step in as Prime Minister. This continued the cycle of ministerial instability throughout the crucial decade.

As soon as Rockingham accepted the position, Grenville was forced to resign after the uproar his Stamp Act caused throughout the Empire. Now four distinct factions existed in the Parliament. Two allied groups were led respectively by the ousted Lord Grenville and the Duke of Bedford, while the Duke of Newcastle led what remained of the Old Whig party, which with Chatham, had dominated the wartime ministry.¹⁵ Lord Rockingham’s faction was in control of the new ministry, and Chatham nominally allied himself with that faction.

¹⁴ Letter from the Duke of Newcastle to John White – June 29 1765 Claremont, printed in Mary Bateson, ed., *A Narrative of the Changes to the Ministry 1765-1767*, 24.

¹⁵ Brown, *William Pitt Earl of Chatham*, 348.

Rockingham had been advised by Lord Shelburne to end the enforcement of the Stamp Act as it was detrimental to commerce. Lord Shelburne, who was very familiar with the economic relationship between Britain and the colonies from his days on the Board of Trade, emphasized to Rockingham the need to “open commerce and restore tranquility to America.”¹⁶ Chatham, insofar as his health permitted, worked with Rockingham and his administration to achieve this end. He spoke out against the tax in letters to friends as well as in debates in Parliament. In a letter to Lord Shelburne in December of 1765, he told his friend and colleague of his concerns regarding the damage the Stamp Act tax had brought to the relationship between Britain and her colonies: “I fear the very air of this mother-country breathes too much partial resentment against those unhappy men, provoked to madness.”¹⁷ In spite of his debilitations he was determined to contribute to the debates, telling his friend Thomas Nuthall that he would return to speak out against the state of American affairs even ‘if I have to crawl or be carried.’¹⁸

January of 1766, proved crucial to dissection of the Stamp Act. Grenville, in the opposition, still spoke in support of the measure. He stated it was in the authority of Parliament to tax the American colonies. He reiterated the need for the colonies to contribute their fair share to imperial defense, particularly in light of the benefits they had received from the late war: “The nation has run itself into an immense debt to give them

¹⁶ Lord Shelburne Speech in Parliament – January 1766, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 16*, 65.

¹⁷ Letter from William Pitt to Shelburne – Dec 1765, printed in Taylor & Pringle, ed., *Correspondences of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*.

¹⁸ Letter from William Pitt to Thomas Nuthall – Jan 9 1766, printed in Taylor & Pringle, ed., *Correspondences of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*.

this protection; and now they are called upon to contribute a small share towards the public expense.”¹⁹

Chatham’s position was somewhat precarious. On the one hand, he could hardly gainsay the need to pay the costs accrued during the war. At the same time, he believed the Stamp Act had represented an arbitrary tax on the American colonies, and he was not prepared to abandon principles for financial expediency. He believed Parliament had no right to tax the colonies without representation. However, he firmly believed that Parliament had the right to regulate commerce as it always had. Therefore, duties could be imposed.²⁰ He thus urged Parliament to “bound the colonies by her laws, by her regulations and restrictions in trade, in navigation, in many in everything else – except that of taking their money of their pockets without their consent.”²¹ In this speech Chatham was making a distinction between taxes for the purpose of collecting revenue and duties for the purpose of regulating trade. Each year, he argued, Britain took in over two million pounds from its trade with the American colonies. That, he believed was payment enough for protection.²² Grenville responded, “A tax is a tax... there was no distinction between internal and external taxation.”²³

Chatham resumed his speech in response to Grenville’s rebuttal. He applauded the colonists’ response to what he believed was an unjust tax. Furthermore, he believed he had imperial precedent on his side. He drew members’ attention to Wales, which was not

¹⁹ George Grenville. “Parliament’s Right to Tax the Colonies, January 14, 1766.” *University of Maryland, Baltimore County*, http://www.umbc.edu/che/tahlessons/pdf/Was_the_Stamp_Act_Fair_RS_04.pdf

²⁰ Basil, *The Life of William Pitt*, 182

²¹ William Pitt, “William Pitt’s Defense of the American Colonies.” *Experience the Life of Politics, Colonial Williamsburg*, <http://www.history.org/Almanack/life/politics/pitt.cfm>

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Grenville Speech in Parliament – January 14, 1766, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 16*, 101.

taxed until it was officially incorporated into the United Kingdom in 1536. Why, he wondered, should America be any different?²⁴ The colonies lacked representatives in Parliament; therefore, they could not be internally taxed for the purpose of collecting revenue. He dismissed the idea that American colonists were virtually represented: “There is an idea in some, that the colonies are virtually represented in the House. I would fain know by whom an American is represented here?”²⁵

Chatham believed in the supremacy of Parliament as well as in the principle of representation. In his speech against the Stamp Act, he asserted that Parliament should repeal the offending legislation, but that it could still assert its authority over the colonies. His overriding belief was that imperial trade offered the panacea necessary to alleviate the debt, while keeping the colonies in a position subservient to London. He was convinced that “the whole commercial system of America may be altered to advantage.”²⁶ However, he did not offer any suggestions or solutions as to how the system could be changed to appease both sides. He also failed to recognize that the moneys generated by trade with the colonies were insufficient for meeting imperial military needs, and fell short of levels needed to recoup the enormous debt created during the war.

In the end, the Stamp tax was repealed as Chatham had been able to sway enough votes to attain that result. The repeal passed seventy-three to sixty-one in the House of Lords.²⁷ However, he did not have the same power he once had earlier in his career, nor did he have an economic plan to actually raise revenue with the Stamp Act now dead.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Green, *William Pitt*, 320.

Those in the opposition, the Bedfortites and Grenvilites, warned that the action of Parliament to repeal the Stamp Act could potentially lead to a colonial revolt against all acts of trade previously established.²⁸ They were right in their worries as it seemed that colonists were against any measure established by Parliament to raise new revenues.

Despite the repeal of the Stamp Act, Parliament would continue to assert its right to both legislate for and tax the colonies.²⁹ The Rockingham Administration's next attempt to achieve those ends was the Declaratory Act, which was meant to maintain the idea of colonial subordination to the British crown and Parliament. The Act stated that the crown and Parliament had full authority to make laws for the colonies, and it was passed on the same day the Stamp Act was repealed, March 17, 1766.³⁰

The purpose of the act was to deal with the inconsistency of colonial recognition of Parliament's authority in the colonies.³¹ This in effect bound the colonies to Britain and reiterated colonial subordination to the crown and Parliament. Interestingly, the act never directly used the words "taxation" or "taxes". The Act established that while colonial charters gave the colonists the ability to govern themselves, this did not make the colonial governments independent of Parliament.³² The act specifically stated: "The British parliament had, hath and of right ought to have full power and authority to make laws to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever."³³ The act passed, but was never enforced by the Rockingham administration.

²⁸ Dickerson, *The Navigation Acts and the American Revolution*, 274.

²⁹ Johnson, *Aspects of Anglo-American Relations*, 11.

³⁰ Squire, *British Views of the American Revolution*, 21.

³¹ Barack and Lefler, *Colonial America*, 507.

³² Derry, *English Politics and the American Revolution*, 70.

³³ "The Declaratory Act, March 18 1766." *US History.org*, <http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/related/declaratory.htm>

Leaders in Britain also learned the colonists' distinction between internal and external taxes, which they believed prepared them for future legislation and methods of raising revenue. Colonists were willing to accept external taxes such as duties that were established by the various acts of trade, but they were adamantly against all internal taxes for the purpose of raising revenue. Benjamin Franklin, who was a friend of Chatham's, agreed on the difference between internal and external measures.

Speaking before Parliament, Franklin asserted the difference during the debate over the Stamp Act: "I think the difference is great. An external tax is a duty laid on commodities imported; that duty is added to the first cost... makes a part of the price. If people do not like it at that price, they refuse it; they are not obligated to pay it. But an internal tax is forced from the people without their consent, if not laid by their own representatives."³⁴ It was clear that policies that had worked in the British West Indies and some policies that had even worked at one point in the American colonies were no longer acceptable.³⁵ There was a need to make a fundamental change in British policy and administration of the colonies.

This was a turning point in the relationship between Britain and her American colonies. Prior to 1763, colonists had rarely objected to any of the major policies, regulations, or laws imposed by the British Parliament. Some examples of colonial acquiescence to Parliament's authority to legislate in the colonies were the series of Navigation Acts, the Woolen Act of 1699, Coinage Act of 1708, Post Office 1710, Debt Act and Hat Act of 1732, Paper Money Act of 1751, and the Sugar Act of 1754.³⁶ By

³⁴ Ben Franklin Examination by Parliament, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 16*, 144.

³⁵ Derry, 83.

³⁶ Andrews, *The Colonial Background of the American Revolution*, 55-57.

contrast, the American colonists reacted negatively and almost immediately to the passage of the Stamp Act. Parliament was flooded with repeal petitions from both colonists and British merchants.³⁷

The colonists organized boycotts of British goods to show their unhappiness with the Stamp Act, and the colonial boycott led to further financial difficulties in Britain. Merchants and manufacturers were devastated by the boycott of British goods. One man's petition to Parliament spoke of the merchants of London's concerns about the unfolding recession. The petition stated that the Stamp Act "had so far interrupted the usual and former fruitful branches of their commerce."³⁸ Many were shocked by the reaction of the colonists and the unified front that they displayed during the Stamp Act Congress in October of 1765. It was especially unsettling because an attempt at unity in Albany was rejected just a few years earlier.³⁹ Now the colonists were exhibiting a more united front than ever before.

The repeal of the Stamp Act and the introduction of the Declaratory Act did not solve the economic and financial difficulties. Britain still needed to deal with the debt from the Seven Years' War and the revenue needed for continued defense and administration of the empire.⁴⁰ However, with their "victory" over the Stamp Act, it seemed that the colonists were not willing to accept economic and commercial regulations similar to the ones in place prior to the mid eighteenth century. Somehow leaders in Britain needed to balance the needs and wants of both the mother country and

³⁷ Barack and Lefler, *Colonial America*, 506.

³⁸ Merchant Petition – January 17 1766, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 16*, 133-135.

³⁹ The Albany Plan of Union was previously discussed earlier in Chapter 1, pages 23-24.

⁴⁰ Derry, *English Politics and the American Revolution*, 87.

her colonies. The cement of the Empire, the Navigation Acts and commercial system, seemed to be crumbling.⁴¹

Even if the new regulations were similar in nature to the previous acts of trade, the colonists were not willing to accept them. There was permanent damage done to the economic relationship. Colonial boycotts hurt the already suffering economy. Lord Chesterfield wrote to his son of the concerns about the damaged trade relationship as a result of the Stamp Act and colonial boycotts: “Our trade with them will not be, for some years, what it used to be.”⁴²

The period of the Rockingham administration contributed to the apparent peace and equilibrium between the Britain and the colonists, but it was chimerical. The administration had asserted the principle of imperial supremacy over the colonies with the Declaratory Act, but this contained no new policies to address the financial situation.⁴³ Therefore, the colonists had little to protest, and a period of uneasy peace developed. The colonists were certainly suspicious of the Declaratory Act, but so long as the Rockingham administration ignored the root problem, calm prevailed.

This proved to be dangerous procrastination. Not only did the government need to worry about the financial constraints and the lack of a strong imperial policy, a growing concern was that it seemed American colonists would not be happy with any regulation or legislation that Westminster enacted relating to them. This was a concern of Lord Lyttelton, a MP, who believed that Parliament should never have agitated the colonies with the Stamp Act in the first place. He worried now that colonists would be resistant to

⁴¹ Dickerson, *The Navigation Acts and the American Revolution*, 157.

⁴² Lord Chesterfield to Son – February 11, 1766, printed in Bradshaw, ed., *The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield*, 1335.

⁴³ Donoghue, *British Politics and the American Revolution, Path to War 1773-1775*, 9.

any measures enacted by Parliament: “But it is said they will not submit to the Stamp Act as it lay an internal tax: if this be admitted, the same reasoning could extend to all acts of parliament. The Americans will find themselves cramped by the Acts of Navigation, and oppose that too.”⁴⁴ Chatham agreed believing that “Grenville antagonized the Americans.”⁴⁵

The attitude of colonists seemed unjust after a century or more of good relations and mutual benefits to both parties involved. It seemed as though the colonists forgot what the British offered in terms of military protection from enemies such as France and Native American groups, as well as the economic advantages gained by their ties to the British. This became a serious issue for the British moving forward, as it seemed every move by the imperial government upset the colonists. Lord Mansfield told Parliament, “The British legislature have in every instance exercised their right of legislation over them without any dispute or question until the 14th of January last.”⁴⁶ Mansfield, like Chatham and Lyttleton, worried that colonial resistance was strengthening. With each attempt at establishing an imperial policy after the Stamp Act, colonists reacted with anger which further strained the relationship.

The King, unhappy with the administration, turned to Chatham. He hoped, that in spite of his infirmities, the great war minister could settle the peacetime crisis by forming a government as prime minister. Hearing of this, Rockingham resigned his position after failing to find a resolution with the colonies. The Declaratory Act was passed, but it failed to result in concrete policies. Nonetheless, seeds of distrust amongst the colonists

⁴⁴ Lord Lyttleton Debate in Parliament, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 16*, 166-168.

⁴⁵ Derry, *English Politics and the American Revolution*, 86.

⁴⁶ Lord Mansfield Debate in Parliament, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 16*, 174.

had been sown.⁴⁷ The King was putting great trust in Chatham but should have recognized that he had never been a particularly adept parliamentary manager, and that his health would inevitably force him to rely on subordinates. Contemporaries were mindful of these risks. A letter from William Gerard Hamilton to John Calcraft, offers an insight on Chatham's leadership: "He is certainly the best minister in the world, but for those who wish to share in the rule and government of the country, he is the worst."⁴⁸

Chatham, nonetheless, launched his administration with broad authority and some popular support. Many were excited about his return to office and were confident he would succeed. Lord Chesterfield wrote to his son, and quoted Grafton's assessment of Chatham: "He knew but one man who could give them that strength and solidarity; that, under this person he should be willing to serve in any capacity, not only as a general officer, but as a pioneer, and would take up a spade and a mattock."⁴⁹ One of Chatham's goals was to end factions, and so he worked on creating an administration based on merit rather than party.

Lord Camden was made Chancellor, the Duke of Grafton was made the head of the Treasury, the Earl of Shelburne was made Secretary of State in the Southern Department, while General Conway was made Secretary of State for the Northern Department.⁵⁰ Most importantly, Charles Townshend was made Chancellor of the Exchequer. This appointment would forever impact the relationship between Britain and her American colonies.

⁴⁷ Greene, *Great Britain and the American Colonies, 1606-1763*, 193.

⁴⁸ Letter from Hamilton to Calcraft - February 11, 1766, printed in Taylor & Pringle, ed., *Correspondences of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*: 377-78.

⁴⁹ Lord Chesterfield to Son - June 13, 1766, printed in Bradshaw, ed., *The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield*, 1339.

⁵⁰ Thackeray, *History of the Right and Honourable William Pitt*, 86.

Chatham had the support of the King and great popularity in the American Colonies.⁵¹ However, he seemed to be losing his support at home when he accepted peerage and became the Earl of Chatham. Again Lord Chesterfield described the loss of popularity of the “Great Commoner”: “Mr. Pitt has, by his dignity of earl, lost the greatest part of his popularity, especially in the city; and I believe the opposition will be very strong.”⁵² Lord Chesterfield was correct as many Englishmen who had celebrated Pitt as the “Great Commoner” disliked seeing him as a titled peer.⁵³ Nonetheless, his great priority was to repair the rift with the American colonies. It is here that a particular contrast must be drawn between Chatham’s aspiration for accommodation with the American colonies on the one hand, and the physical and political limitations he faced on the other. The centerpiece of his program vis-à-vis America must be described first.

Chatham hoped to create an American Department and therefore establish a third Secretary of State Position for America.⁵⁴ He wanted to create this position to alleviate the workload for the Secretary of State for the Southern Department whose responsibilities were already great. This person could focus solely on the American colonies. While it is impossible to know whether the establishment of a cabinet-level position to manage American affairs would have diminished or delayed the crisis with the colonies or not, two points are worth our consideration. The first is that such an executive position would have been consistent with Chatham’s aforementioned insistence on imperial oversight of the colonies, while relieving American anxieties regarding

⁵¹ Charles R. Ritcheson, “The Elder Pitt and the American Department,” *The American Historical Review* Vol 57, No 2 (January 1952), 383.

⁵² Lord Chesterfield to Son – August 14 1766 – printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 16*, 234.

⁵³ Black, *Pitt the Elder*, 248.

⁵⁴ Ritcheson, “The Elder Pitt and the American Department,” 382.

parliamentary legislation. In an imperial context, the government of Ireland stood as a near template.⁵⁵ We have already seen that Chatham was steadfast in his belief that revenues generated from excises and imperial trade offered the solution to the financial crisis. These need not entail introducing new taxes on the Americans via the Westminster Parliament, which had been the great cause of American concerns surrounding the Stamp Tax. Chatham's diminished health prevented him from carrying the proposal any further.

Nonetheless, and this is the second point, the essential kernels of Chatham's concept did not die entirely and would be revived nearly two decades later by his Southern Secretary of State, Lord Shelburne. In 1782, now Prime Minister, Lord Shelburne, offered the victorious Thirteen Colonies a commercial treaty that would have opened British ports to American ships in return for unfettered British access to American markets. This de-facto proposal for a "customs union" (which faced tremendous domestic opposition and soon died) was unquestionably inspired by Chatham's belief in trade as the glue that held the old empire together.⁵⁶ In the end, however, it was Prime Minister Chatham's incapacities in 1766 and 1767 which laid waste to these earlier measures.

His growing health problems, combined with his loss of popularity after accepting earldom, prevented him and his administration from accomplishing what they set out to do at the onset of the ministry. As soon as Chatham's administration was established, he was sidelined by another severe episode of gout. In a letter to the King in July, he

⁵⁵ R.B. McDowell, 'The Protestant Nation 1775-1800 in, T.W. Moody and F.X. Martin, eds., *The Course of Irish History* (Dublin: Roberts Rinehart, 1994), 232.

⁵⁶ Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812*. (New York: Alfred A Knopf 2010), 31. I am grateful to Dr. Andrew Nicholls for this reference.

expressed his hope to recover quickly and return to London immediately.⁵⁷ In the end, Chatham would be almost invisible during his own administration, leaving its members leaderless and without direction.⁵⁸ Lord Chesterfield described the administration in another letter to his son: “I can give you no account of our political world, which is in a situation that I never saw in my whole life. Lord Chatham has been so ill these last months that he has not been able, some say unwilling, to do or hear any business... they cannot, or dare not, do any without his direction... so everything is now at a stand. This situation cannot stand much longer.”⁵⁹ Chatham was aloof, unpredictable, and inconsistent during his brief administration.⁶⁰

During his time away from office, he was described as sitting at a table all day, head bowed and faced covered. The slightest noises frightened him and made his body tremble. Talk of politics caused his whole body to convulse.⁶¹ In a letter to his wife, he informed her that meetings were too much for his condition. He told her he was to “shut his door till I am quite free from fever.”⁶² He spent weeks and months at a time ill at his home, especially in late 1766 and early 1767, and experienced a lengthy period of manic depression and insanity.⁶³ He was incapable of taking action, making decisions, and giving advice or counsel.⁶⁴ His bouts were more frequent and lengthier than in the past.

⁵⁷ Letter from William Pitt to King – July 8 1766, printed in Taylor & Pringle, ed., *Correspondences of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*.

⁵⁸ Green, *William Pitt*, 295.

⁵⁹ Lord Chesterfield to Son, April 6, 1767 - printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 16*, 1255, 376.

⁶⁰ Schweizer, “Review of Pitt the Elder by Jeremy Black”, 711.

⁶¹ Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 302.

⁶² Letter from William Pitt to Lady Chatham – July 17 1766, printed in Taylor & Pringle, ed., *Correspondences of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*.

⁶³ Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 240-242.

⁶⁴ Green, *William Pitt*, 295.

The gloom and melancholy worsened with each experience with his illness.⁶⁵ He was no longer healthy enough for lengthy and heated debates for which he had once been known, and which were instrumental in his rise to power.⁶⁶ His speeches once gained followers and support for his agenda and policies, but now, he no longer could speak as passionately as he once had earlier in his career. He could not compose coherent letters, orders, or advice.⁶⁷ Letters were often received in the penmanship of his secretary or Lady Chatham. He wrote to Colonel Barre stating that he could barely gain the strength to work a few hours.⁶⁸ These were not the characteristics of a man who could save the British Empire. His illness kept him a recluse for over a year. These absences and instability led to the eventual downfall of the Chatham Administration.

The priority of Chatham's administration was to implement a policy for the large and powerful Empire he helped to create. As a result of his illness and subsequent absences, Chatham failed to seize the opportunity to develop and establish a new colonial policy that would save the British Empire and be suitable and accepted by both Britain and her colonies. Continental and American colonial policies were floundering and in disarray as no action had been taken since the repeal of Stamp Act and Parliament enacting of the Declaratory Act.⁶⁹ No imperial policy was developed or presented. He failed to end the divide between political factions between the Grenvillites, Bedfordites, and Rockinghamites within Britain. He faced enormous opposition from these political

⁶⁵ Green, *William Pitt*, 295.

⁶⁶ Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 215.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 234.

⁶⁸ Letter from William Pitt to Colonel Barre – September 20, 1766, printed in Taylor & Pringle, ed., *Correspondences of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*.

⁶⁹ Schweizer, "A Review of Pitt the Elder by Jeremy Black", 711.

factions. Chatham's declining health made the administration often times leaderless.⁷⁰ In a speech years later, Edmund Burke stated that "his whole system was on a wide sea, without chart or compass."⁷¹ Instead other members of his administration planned their own policies while Chatham was incapable. These policies would continue to strain the relationship that Chatham hoped to repair during his administration

Chatham's illness allowed for the rise of Charles Townshend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who would propose a new act that would eventually be named after him. Townshend began his political career as many others had in Parliament. In 1748, he was granted a position on the Board of Trade. In the years leading up to his appointment as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he served in various positions in the government, including the First Lord of the Treasury and Paymaster General, a position previously held by Chatham.⁷² After rejecting a position in the Grenville administration, Townshend accepted Chatham's offer to become Chancellor of the Exchequer in August of 1766.⁷³ When Chatham went into seclusion at his home as a result of illness, Townshend launched his own agenda. In Parliament he proposed a new act in an effort to recoup the cost of both the late war and the growing costs of defense and administration of the colonies. Duties would be placed on various products imported by the colonies, such as lead, paper, glass, paint, and tea.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Schweizer, "A Review of Pitt the Elder by Jeremy Black", 711.

⁷¹ Edmund Burke, "Speech on Conciliation with the American Colonies." The Founders Constitution, University of Chicago, <http://press.pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch1s2.html>.

⁷² Lee, ed. *Dictionary of National Biography*, 118.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 119.

⁷⁴ Robert M. Calhoon, *Revolutionary America: An Interpretative Overview* (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 54.

Townshend's plan for the colonies was the exact opposite of Chatham's views and intentions.⁷⁵ Had Chatham been well, Townshend's rise and policies could have been prevented.⁷⁶ Burke commented that whenever Chatham was forced to withdraw from office due to his persistent illness, "Principles directly contrary of his own were sure to predominate."⁷⁷ This is exactly what happened with Chatham and Townshend. Townshend reversed Chatham's work with America.⁷⁸ Townshend's measures were in effect efforts to hide the taxes as external measures, similar to the various Acts of Navigation rather than internal tax such the controversial Stamp Tax. He hoped colonists would view them as duties and not as direct taxes. Chatham wanted time to review and research the policies but Townshend forged ahead while his chief was incapacitated.⁷⁹

The Duke of Grafton, serving as Treasurer for the Chatham Administration, was the de facto leader of the ministry, and frequently reached out to Chatham for advice, especially on the plans Townshend was laying. However, Chatham often did not respond. Other members of the administration also reached out to Chatham. Lord Shelburne reached out to the Prime Minister to warn him of Townshend's plans as they knew Chatham would be opposed to the taxes Townshend attempted to disguise as commercial duties. Chatham managed to travel to London. However, his travels exhausted him and weakened his effectiveness. He failed to remove Townshend and replace him with Lord North as he had hoped.⁸⁰ He would remain secluded in London for while Townshend continued his efforts. All the while his administration was leaderless

⁷⁵ Ritcheson, "The Elder Pitt and the American Department," 383.

⁷⁶ Green, *William Pitt*, 295.

⁷⁷ Edmund Burke, "Speech on Conciliation with the American Colonies."

⁷⁸ Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 230.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 234.

⁸⁰ Green, *William Pitt*, 343.

and divided. Shelburne and Grafton were opposed to the measures of the Townshend Act. His administration soon began to crumble as Shelburne began the trend of members of the administration resigning their positions. Shelburne was a key loss as he was a great source of knowledge on the colonies after serving with the Board of Trade for many years. Without Chatham present, the Townshend duties passed by one hundred eighty votes to ninety-eight.⁸¹ Instead of repairing the relationship during Chatham's own administration, relationships were further strained as a result of the Townshend duties. It is ironic that the breach between the colonies and Britain actually grew during the Chatham administration.

The Townshend Acts or duties were passed in 1767 by Parliament. They created duties on goods such as lead, paper, paint, tea and glass that were imported from Britain by the colonists. They would most directly impact cities and trading towns, especially in the northern colonies such as New York and Massachusetts.⁸²

On one level, this new package was familiar to American colonists. This was trade regulation similar to various measures that had been passed in the previous century without colonial resistance. What Townshend and his supporters failed to appreciate, however, were the changing political realities that impacted Westminster's capacity to legislate for the American colonies.

The Townshend Acts evoked the same response in the colonies that the Stamp Act did two years before. Even though this was not a direct tax as the Stamp Act had been, the colonies still vehemently protested the Townshend Acts. They once again protested believing their rights were being denied. They clamored again, "No taxation

⁸¹ Green, *William Pitt*, 346.

⁸² Dora Mae Clarke, *British Opinion and the American Revolution* (New York, NY: Russell & Russell, 1966), 56.

without representation!” Along with rioting and protesting, the colonists also reinstated non-importation or boycotts of all British goods. Merchants in Boston first instituted a non-importation of British goods. According to the Boston Non-Importation Agreement, merchants and traders would “... not send for or import any kind of goods or merchandise from Great Britain... will not purchase of any factors, or others, any kind of goods imported from Great Britain.”⁸³ Soon other colonial cities such as New York and Philadelphia adopted the same measures.

Merchants in New York City followed their fellow colonists in Boston by reinstating the non-importation agreement as a result of the Townshend duties. The non-importation agreement in New York City reads, “... and this City to restrict the Importation of Goods from Great Britain until the acts of Parliament laying Duties on Paper, Glass, & c. were repealed... and thinking it our Duty to exert ourselves by all lawful Means to maintain and obstruct our just Rights and Privileges, which we claim under our most excellent Constitution as Englishmen, not to be taxed but by our own Consent or that of our Representatives...”⁸⁴ Once again, colonists were rejecting the actions of Parliaments as they believed their fundamental rights as Englishmen were being denied.

The famous patriot leader Samuel Adams instituted the Massachusetts Circular Letter. In the letter Adams wrote: “...that the Acts made there, imposing duties on the people of this province, with the sole and express purpose of raising a revenue, are infringements of their natural and constitutional rights; because, as they are not

⁸³ “Boston Non-Importation Agreement, August 1, 1768.” *The Avalon Project, Yale Law School*, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/boston_non_importation_1768.asp

⁸⁴ “New York City, Tradesmen’s Revolves, 5 September 1768” *The National Humanities Center 2010/2013, Americans in Class*, <http://americainclass.org/sources/makingrevolution/crisis/text4/townshendactsresponse1767.pdf>

represented in the British Parliament, his Majesty's commons in Britain, by those Acts, grant their property without their consent.”⁸⁵ Another colonial leader from Pennsylvania, John Dickinson, called for unity among the colonies: “The cause of one is the cause of all.”⁸⁶ The unified front of the colonists would eventually force leaders back in London to reevaluate the duties enacted under the Townshend Acts.

Chatham was once again against this measure to tax the colonies without their consent. Herein lies the inconsistencies of Chatham and his position. He was more than well aware of the government’s debt that resulted from his global war and understood that the debts needed to be paid. At the same time he recognized that the colonies must contribute their fair share towards to maintenance and defense of the empire. However, as time went on, Chatham hardened in his belief that London could not legislate for, or tax, the American colonies.

Chatham had proven that he could win a global war but was unsure how to manage the effects of that war during peacetime. He failed to develop an imperial policy for the administration for the greatly enlarged Empire nor did he deal with the financial issues of the Empire. Now ill-health and incapacities would all but remove him from the equation. In the immediate aftermath of the passage of the Townshend Acts, Chatham failed to return to office. Shelburne wrote to Lady Chatham inquiring about her husband’s thoughts about the current colonial policy and relationship with the colonies. However, Lady Chatham responded that she “wished she could know her husband’s

⁸⁵ “Massachusetts Circular Letter” *The Avalon Project, Yale Law School*, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18_century/mass_circ_let_1768.asp

⁸⁶ John Dickinson. “Letters From a Farmer in Pennsylvania, to the inhabitants of the British colonies” *Massachusetts Historical Society, The Coming of the Revolution 1764-1776*, http://www.masshist.org/revolution/imageviewer.php?item_id=707&img_step=1&tpc=&pid=2&mode=transcript&tpc=&pid=2#page1

opinion, but his state of health prevented it.”⁸⁷ Chatham remained in seclusion until 1768. Lord Chesterfield commented to his son, “Lord Chatham has neither seen nor spoken to anyone, and has been in the oddest way in the world.”⁸⁸ He finally agreed to see Grafton, who was appalled by his condition. Chatham continued to refuse to meet with the King. He even refused to let his wife see him, having his meals served to him through a hatch.⁸⁹ Clearly, Chatham was unable to direct a country and an Empire as he secluded himself at home for the majority of his administration. His administration was described as “ridiculous” by many statesmen.⁹⁰

After two years out of the public eye due to his ever declining physical and mental health, he returned in the spring of 1768 after being absent the majority of his administration.⁹¹ He had recovered from his illness and returned to London only to resign his position on October 14, 1768, ending the Chatham Ministry. His administration lasted two years and three months, but Chatham actually served only eight months.⁹² The Chatham ministry failed after neglecting to achieve the goals set forth to improve both foreign and domestic affairs. In fact, the relationship with the colonies was further damaged as a result of his absence, factions were further divided, and Britain was on the outside of Continental European affairs.

After the fall of Chatham’s Administration, he was an outsider in British politics. He tried to be visible and was heard in Parliament from time to time. He was not finished

⁸⁷ Letter from Lady Chatham to Shelburne – December 13 1767, printed in Taylor & Pringle, ed., *Correspondences of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*.

⁸⁸ Lord Chesterfield to Son – March 12, 1768, printed in Bradshaw, ed., *The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield*, 1149.

⁸⁹ Green, *William Pitt*, 350.

⁹⁰ Lord Chesterfield to Son – July 1, 1768 - printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 16*, 377.

⁹¹ Green, *William Pitt*, 303.

⁹² Ruville, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 243.

with politics even though after 1768 he did not hold political office. He was not content to retire and continued to speak and debate in Parliament using his oratory skills after his resignation. However, his body and mind were weakened by his frequent and lengthy illnesses. He returned to court in time to voice his displeasure about the affairs of the colonies to the King and politicians.⁹³ He often tried to argue the difference between internal and external taxation. He consistently opposed any new duties on the colonies, but without political office, he was powerless.

Having his start in Parliament in 1756, Fredrick, Lord North was eventually commissioned to the Treasury Board in 1759. It was during his time on the Treasury Board that he became attuned to the finances of Britain and her Empire. He stayed on throughout the brief ministries of both Bute and Grenville, eventually resigning as the Rockingham administration began. He returned to government during the Chatham Administration. He would succeed Townshend as Chancellor of the Exchequer. After the fall of Chatham and Grafton's administration, the king looked to North to become Prime Minister. On January 30, 1770, North accepted the position, becoming King George III's sixth prime minister in less than a decade. Lord North was a very intelligent minister. He was extremely loyal to the King, and at same time he had a good working relationship with many of his peers.⁹⁴

A relative period of calm existed in the colonies during the first few years of North's administration, even with the remaining duty on tea that continued after the repeal of most of the Townshend duties. However, when North became involved with the bankrupt East India Company, relations between Britain and her colonies were

⁹³ Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 256.

⁹⁴ Chidsley, *The Great Separation*, 105

strained even further. To save the East India Company, the excess eighteen million pounds of tea would be sent to the colonies for sale. Originally, it was to be sold directly to the colonies without the duty. However, North refused to completely remove the duty as he did not want to remove it for a matter of principal. As a result the Tea Act of 1773 was passed. This reduced the previous duty nearly by half. Even with the added duty, the tea was sold in the colonies at a bargain price, however, colonists were not satisfied, and instead they were outraged. Word spread throughout the colonies that new legislation was passed by Parliament that imposed duties and the period of calm between Britain and her colonies quickly ended.

The crisis that re-ignited the debate came to be known as the Boston Tea Party, which occurred on December 16, 1773. Public opinion in Britain registered shock at the actions of the Bostonians, and Chatham was stunned by the news coming from the colonies. He, nonetheless, argued for moderation towards the colonies.⁹⁵ In June 1774, he told members of Parliament that the colonies were provoked to act against the Tea Act. When the Stamp Act had been repealed a decade earlier, it had removed the cause of previous conflict between Britain and her colonies. Now, however, the renewed efforts to tax the colonies were forcing open rebellion.⁹⁶ According to Chatham, the colonists were educated and knowledgeable about the British constitution; therefore, they knew their rights as Englishmen and were willing to fight when their rights were encroached upon as they were by another attempt at taxation by Parliament.⁹⁷ The colonists believed

⁹⁵ Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 295

⁹⁶ William Pitt, "Earl of Chatham's Speech to Parliament, June 17, 1774," *The American Revolution, 1763-1783, The Library of Congress*, <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/amrev/rebelln/earl.html>

⁹⁷ Ibid.

their rights were denied as they were taxed by a Parliament that lacked colonial representation: “They (colonists) are subjects of this kingdom, equally entitled with yourselves to all the natural rights of mankind and the peculiar privileges of Englishmen. Equally bound by its laws, and equally participating of the constitution of this free country.”⁹⁸

Even though he was not happy by the news from Boston, Chatham was not supportive of coercive measures being imposed on the colonists. He believed coercion would only alienate the colonies further from their mother country instead of mending the broken relationship between the two. He urged Parliament not to provoke the colonies any further.⁹⁹ However, he was no longer in a position to control or implement policy as North’s government moved to impose order in America. North took decisive action after the Tea Party, something he believed was needed after failures of previous administrations. North’s administration’s response became known as the Coercive Acts, and these were enacted by a series of laws passed by Parliament in the first half of 1774. These measures pushed Britain and her colonies further apart.

On March 31, 1774, the first of the Coercive Acts was passed by Parliament. This act was the Boston Port Act.¹⁰⁰ The Boston Port Act closed down the Boston Harbor for punishment for the “tea party” in December of 1773. This act stated that the Boston Harbor would be closed until the colonists paid for the all the damaged tea. Once the tea was paid for, the port would be reopened immediately and easily.¹⁰¹ Chatham spoke out

⁹⁸ William Pitt’s Speech in Parliament – January 1766, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 16*, 99.

⁹⁹ Brown, *William Pitt Earl of Chatham*, 374.

¹⁰⁰ Martin Kallich and Andrew MacLeish, *The American Revolution Through British Eyes* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1962), 37.

¹⁰¹ Pearson, *Those Damned Rebels: The American Revolution As Seen Through British Eyes*, 24.

against the punishment. He argued that punishment of all of Boston was unjust. It was wrong to punish the innocent for the actions of a few.¹⁰²

The second Coercive Act was known as the Massachusetts Government Act. This act was passed on May 20, 1774. The act states, “Be it therefore enacted that from and after August 1, 1774, so much of the charter (1691) which relates to the time and manner of electing the assistants or counsellors for the said province, be revoked, ... and that the offices of all counsellors and assistants, elected and appointed in pursuance thereof, shall from thenceforth cease and determine.”¹⁰³ The act stripped the colony of its charter and appointed a royal governor to seize government control of the colony. No longer could colonists in the colony elect their leaders; previously elected leaders were stripped of their positions. It prohibited any meetings throughout Boston and the whole colony of Massachusetts. This struck a chord with American colonists, as they viewed their rights to self-govern being stripped.

The third Coercive Act was known as the Administration of Justice Act. This act was passed on June 2, 1774. This act created an independent administration of justice to question and to try any person accused in the Massachusetts Bay colony and other New England colonies. It also granted British soldiers immunity to any criminal prosecution in the colony of Massachusetts. This would immediately impact the British soldiers who were tried for murder after the “Boston Massacre” in March of 1770. The Boston Massacre was the name given by the colonists to a skirmish between British troops and Bostonians in March of 1770 which resulted in the death of five colonists.

¹⁰² William Pitt, “On the Bill Authorizing the Quartering of British Soldiers on the Inhabitants of Boston.” *The Speeches of Lord Chatham, Classic Persuasion*, <http://www.classicpersuasion.org/cbo/chatham/chat12.htm>

¹⁰³ “Massachusetts Government Act” *US History.Org*, <http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/related/mga.htm>

The British policy of coercion was not intended to be a permanent policy in the colonies.¹⁰⁴ The government had hoped that coercion would restore order in the colonies, as a short term solution to the problem of colonial misbehavior. However, instead of isolating Bostonians in Massachusetts in hopes they would give in, it further united the colonies against the mother country. The unifying of the colonies and the widespread colonial boycott of British goods was proof that discontent could be found in more than just Boston or the New England area. It was the hope of colonial leaders that a non-importation and non-consumption agreement would force British Parliament to revise its policy towards the colonies.

Although the focus of this thesis is not primarily concerned with America, it is important to give the reader a brief background on the formation and aims of the Continental Congress. In response to the Coercive measures enacted by Parliament, the Continental Congress met in Philadelphia to develop a coordinated response. It was here that representatives from twelve of the thirteen colonies, fifty-six members in all, met to discuss the course of action for the colonies. A resolution stated the Congress's unhappiness with the coercive policy describing them as: "several late, cruel, and oppressive Acts have been passed respecting the town of Boston and the Massachusetts Bay."¹⁰⁵ In order to gain the attention of leaders in London members, of the Continental Congress resolved: "That from and after the first day of December next, we will not import into British America, from Great Britain or Ireland, any goods, wares or

¹⁰⁴ Derry, *English Politics and the American Revolution*, 110.

¹⁰⁵ Extracts from the votes and proceedings of the American Continental Congress: held at Philadelphia on the 5th of September 1774. *Massachusetts Historical Society, the Coming of the Revolution 1764-1776*, http://www.masshist.org/revolution/image-viewer.php?item_id=666&img_step=1&tpc=&pid=2&mode=transcript&tpc=&pid=2#page1

merchandize whatsoever, or from any other place any such goods, wares or merchandize, as shall have been exported from Great-Britain or Ireland.”¹⁰⁶

Chatham was upset by the colonists’ actions; however, he argued in Parliament that the government’s response to colonial action was unjust.¹⁰⁷ Chatham and other politicians argued against the continuation of coercion as they worried the British and the American colonists were moving closer to war and separation. He believed that the Parliament’s actions were not the proper methods to fix the relationship between the colonies and their mother country. He stated, “The mode which has been pursued to bring them back to a sense of their duty in the parent state, has been so diametrically opposite to the fundamental principles of sound policy, that individuals, possess’d of common understanding, must be astonished at such proceedings.”¹⁰⁸ He stated that Parliament had provoked the colonies time and again, beginning with the Tea Act of 1773. He added, “That this country had no right under heaven to tax America.”¹⁰⁹

In his speech to Parliament in June 1774, he responded specifically to the news of the Boston Tea Party. He was upset by the actions of the colonists but understood why they were forced to act. The colonists were only trying to protect their rights as British citizens. However, in the end Parliament passed the Coercive Acts. The mood of Parliament and the ministry was clear as the coercive measures were passed 182 to 49 despite Chatham’s objections to them.¹¹⁰ Chatham’s influence continued to decline.

As Chatham predicted, the Coercive Acts only pushed the colonies further away from the mother country. Chatham returned to Parliament in January of 1775 and

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ William Pitt, “On the Bill Authorizing the Quartering of British Soldiers on the Inhabitants of Boston.”

¹⁰⁸ William Pitt, “Earl of Chatham’s Speech to Parliament, June 17, 1774.”

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Chidsey, *The Great Separation*, 164.

advocated for the recalling of British troops from Boston. He believed this was necessary if there was any hope at restoring peace between the colonies and Britain. He believed that the presence of troops in Boston only “irritates and vexes the colonists.” In addition to removing the troops, he stated that the coercive measures passed by Parliament a year earlier had to be repealed.¹¹¹ However, in the end, he was in the minority. He could barely rally support for his motion, and it lost sixty-eight votes to eighteen.

In spite of his calls for moderation, Chatham had yet to pose any concrete suggestions to alleviate the unfolding crisis. This changed in March, however, when he proposed legislation in the House of Lords to be called the Provisional Act.¹¹² He described the purpose of his plan was for the “prevention of continued ruinous mischief,” between Britain and her colonies.¹¹³ Once again, his proposal stressed the support of laws of navigation and trade for regulating commerce, not taxes for the purpose of collecting revenue.¹¹⁴ No revenue measures would be placed on the colonies without their approval, he argued, and he urged the utilization of the American Congress in Philadelphia. This was a new development in that a major British statesman was giving tacit recognition to the Congress’ legitimacy: “...it shall and may be lawful for Delegates from the respected provinces... to meet in General Congress at Philadelphia.”¹¹⁵ He also he wished to see Parliament and Congress work together for the purpose of the Empire. He implored the Continental Congress to develop means to contribute to the ‘defense, extension, and

¹¹¹ Pitt, William, ““Earl of Chatham’s Speech to Parliament, January 20, 1775,” *The Speeches of Lord Chatham, Classic Persuasion*, <http://www.classicpersuasion.org/cbo/chatham/chat13.htm>

¹¹² William Pitt, *Plan Offered by the Earl of Chatham, To the House of Lords, Entitled, A Provisional Act*. (London: J. Almon, 1775), 333.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, 333.

¹¹⁴ Brown, *William Pitt Earl of Chatham*, 372.

¹¹⁵ William Pitt, *Plan Offered by the Earl of Chatham, To the House of Lords, Entitled, A Provisional Act*, 334.

prosperity' of the British America.¹¹⁶ Instead of Parliament enacting measures for raising revenue to provide for the defense and administration of the colonies, he hoped the American Congress could develop methods of raising revenue. Therefore, Parliament would not be paying for the colonies and would not need to raise revenue for their protection and administration.

Chatham was urging the British to grant American colonists the same rights as British citizens. At the same time he recognized the right and the need of the British to regulate commerce to secure the prosperity of the Empire. He did not agree with the colonists that British troops should not be on colonial soil without the consent of the colonial governments. Despite calling for removal of British troops from Boston, he believed Parliament had the authority to use troops for the purpose of security and protection of the Empire.¹¹⁷ It was one thing for the British troops to be in the colonies for the security and protection of the colonists and quite another for the purpose of controlling and intimidating British colonists.

Chatham agreed with the colonies on the issues of the unjust use of vice admiralty courts and the absence of the right to trial by jury. He also urged Parliament to repeal the Coercive Acts of 1774 and instead enact his Provisional Act.¹¹⁸ He did not see how either side would benefit from the enforcement of these acts, stating that they were "grievous acts."¹¹⁹ Before the House of Lords, he advised them: "to adopt a more gentle mode of governing America."¹²⁰ He disagreed with the actions of the people of Boston, believing

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 334-335.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 334.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 336.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 336.

¹²⁰ Pitt, William, "'Earl of Chatham's Speech to Parliament, May 27, 1774," *The Speeches of Lord Chatham, Classic Persuasion*, <http://www.classicpersuasion.org/cbo/chatham/chat12.htm>

that they should pay restitution for the damaged tea. However, he was opposed to the severity of the Coercive Acts.¹²¹ He specifically argued against the first Coercive Act: “By blocking up the harbor of Boston, you have involved the innocent trader in the same punishment with the guilty profligates who destroyed your merchandise”¹²² Chatham’s Provisional Act stayed true to his previous stances on the relationship between Britain and her colonies. He continued to believe “that this country had no right under heaven to tax America.”¹²³ Nonetheless, he once again failed to understand the true sense of the crisis between mother country and colonies.

The Provisional Act gained one important ally in America in the person of Chatham’s old friend, Benjamin Franklin. There were some aspects of the act that Franklin agreed with, including the support of the repeal of the Coercive Acts and the idea of recognizing the legitimacy of the Continental Congress and colonial grievances.¹²⁴ However, many of Franklin’s colleagues in the Continental Congress had moved on from efforts to compromise with the British.¹²⁵ Most importantly, leaders in Britain were not accepting of Chatham’s proposals and the Provisional Act was met with strong opposition. Leaders in London were hardening in their views on the American colonies. There was a growing movement of returning to taxation and the possibility of using force to make the colonies recognize the supremacy of Parliament and the King.¹²⁶

The Earl of Sandwich, a statesman who had previously held the positions of Secretary of State and ambassador to the Netherlands, spoke out against the Provincial

¹²¹ Green, *William Pitt*, 341.

¹²² Pitt, William, ““Earl of Chatham’s Speech to Parliament, May 27, 1774,” *The Speeches of Lord Chatham, Classic Persuasion*, <http://www.classicpersuasion.org/cbo/chatham/chat12.htm>

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ Donoghue, *British Politics and the American Revolution, Path to War 1773-1775*, 222.

¹²⁵ Green, *William Pitt*, 347.

¹²⁶ Brown, *William Pitt Earl of Chatham*, 382.

Act, as a concession by Parliament to America. He stated that Parliament could not repeal the Coercive Acts, and that to enact the Provincial Act was, "...to concede was at once to give up the point" He believed that "America had already formed the most traitorous and hostile intensions," and that Britain needed to stand strong against the rebellious colonists.¹²⁷ Even some who used to agree with Chatham could not agree with his Provincial Act. Lord Lyttleton stated, "His (Chatham) knowledge was as extensive as his intentions were good and great; he could not probably agree with the noble earl in many of his ideas."¹²⁸ Chatham was in the minority and his proposed Provisional Act was too little, too late. By this point war between Britain and her colonies was unavoidable.¹²⁹

In the wake of his defeat over the Provisional Act, Chatham once again fell ill. As the crisis in American grew into outright rebellion and war, he was forced to the side lines and played little active role in politics until the end of his life. In America, blood had already been shed in 1775 at Lexington and Concord; and King George III had declared the colonies in a state of open rebellion against their mother country. He instructed the military to bring the traitorous colonists to justice.¹³⁰ The North ministry moved forward with the war as directed by the King, and the opposition was weakened with the deaths of Grenville and Bedford and Chatham's incapacitation.¹³¹ There were constant changes to the King's ministry every few years. The King's ministries began with Newcastle upon his accession to the throne but quickly moved on to his confidante

¹²⁷ Earl of Sandwich in Parliament, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 18*. (London: Bagshaw, 1813), 204.

¹²⁸ Lord Lyttleton in Parliament, printed in William Cobbett, ed. *The Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest, in 1066 to the Year of 1803: Volume 18*, 205.

¹²⁹ Williams, *The Life of William Pitt*, 312.

¹³⁰ King George III, "A Proclamation, by The King, for Suppressing Rebellion and Sedition, August 23, 1775." *America's Homepage: Historic Documents of the United States*, http://ahp.gatech.edu/proclamation_bp_1775.html Accessed 10/14.

¹³¹ Donoghue, *British Politics and the American Revolution, Path to War 1773-1775*, 15.

Lord Bute, then to Grenville, followed briefly by Rockingham, Chatham, Grafton and finally North in 1770. As a result, there was no consistent approach to creating an imperial policy. The failure to achieve one would cause Britain to lose her valuable American colonies. Chatham had the opportunity to finally create a plan for the Empire he worked to create, but his blind spot regarding the financial ramifications of the war, prevented him from having the chance to understand and develop a logical and realistic imperial plan.

He was not yet permanently silenced, however. After a two year absence from Parliament, he returned on May 30, 1777. Wrapped in flannels and using crutches, he entered the House of Lords. Chatham still felt strongly that Britain needed to retain her colonies in spite of the fact that they already been at war for almost two years. He opened his speech by stressing the importance of America to Britain and reminded the peers that it was the colonies who helped Britain win the wars of the eighteenth century: "I state to you the importance of America; it is double the market; double the market of consumption, and the market of supply."¹³² He argued against continued warfare between England and her colonies: "...most humbly to advise his Majesty to take the most speedy and effectual measures for putting a stop to such fatal hostilities." He urged "...the commencement of a treaty to restore peace and liberty to America, strength and happiness to England, security and permanent prosperity to both countries."¹³³ Not only did he wish to retain his beloved American colonies, he also believed it would be impossible to conquer the colonies. He also told members of Parliament to "look at a map

¹³² William Pitt, "On a motion for an address to the Crown, To Put a Stop to Hostilities in America." *The Speeches of Lord Chatham, Classic Persuasion*, <http://www.classicpersuasion.org/cbo/chatham/chat14.htm>

¹³³ Ibid.

of America,” believing it was impossible to conquer the American colonies as he hoped for a quick and peaceful resolution.¹³⁴

The man who had once orchestrated the ouster of France from North America now saw all too clearly that the military realities favored the Americans. He also believed that a relationship could be salvaged. He told Parliament that all legislation since 1763 must be repealed. In order to fund the administration and protection of the colonies, he again proposed that colonial assemblies enact taxes to pay for themselves.¹³⁵ Finally he urged reparations for the colonies to compensate them for wartime seizures and damages. The result underlined how far his political stock had fallen as the proposal was defeated by ninety-nine votes to twenty-eight.

Chatham would speak in the House of Lords just twice more before his death. To the end, his pronouncements would reveal the inconsistencies in his perceptions of the Empire, and in particular, of the erstwhile American colonies. In November 1777, he argued for a cessation of hostilities with America. He condemned the war calling it “...this ruinous and ignominious situation.”¹³⁶ He urged Parliament to re-establish a peaceful relationship rooted in trade by recalling the fruitful economic tie that had benefited the Empire, stating, “She was, indeed, the fountain of our wealth, the nerve of our strength, the nursery and basis of our naval power.”¹³⁷

He could not abide the idea of outright American independence, however. When the Duke of Richmond proposed accepting this eventually as a precursor to peace in the spring of 1778, Chatham returned to speak in the House of Lords on 7 April. To those

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ William Pitt, “Address to the House of Lords November 18 1777.” *The Speeches of Lord Chatham, Classic Persuasion*, he <http://www.classicpersuasion.org/cbo/chatham/chat15.htm>

¹³⁷ Ibid.

around him, Chatham looked like the shadow of the man he once was, but he told his fellow members of Parliament that he was forced to come and speak as he believed granting the colonies their independence was wrong and would be the ruin of his great country.¹³⁸ However, before he could continue, he collapsed. Chatham was removed to the anti-chamber where he was revived and transported to a nearby friend's home on Downing Street. Two days later, he was moved to his country estate where he was surrounded by his family.¹³⁹ Chatham would die a month later. He would die not knowing that the American colonies he worked so hard for would eventually defeat the British and become their own independent nation; perhaps it was better that way. In his lifetime he helped to create one of the largest and most powerful empires. He had not, however, enjoyed either the recipe, or the health, to play a similarly decisive role in keeping that empire together.

¹³⁸ William Pitt, "The Last Speech of Lord Chatham." *The Speeches of Lord Chatham, Classic Persuasion*, <http://www.classicpersuasion.org/cbo/chatham/chat17.htm>

¹³⁹ Ruville, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham*, 279.

Conclusion

It has been said that George Washington was the indispensable man of the American Revolution.¹ The same could be said of William Pitt during the Seven Years' War. As this thesis has shown, at the start of that conflict, Great Britain was faltering in all the major theatres. However, this provided an opening for Pitt's emergence as a key minister and wartime leader. When he became Secretary of State in 1757, and gained control over the prosecution of the war, the tide began to turn for Britain's forces.

He strengthened home defenses, minimized Britain's land-based commitments on the European continent, approved key operations in the Mediterranean and India, and most importantly, made the ejection of France from its North American holdings his major wartime objective. In the process, the British army in North America was reinforced. Hesitant or incompetent generals were replaced by younger and bolder commanders, and ambitious combined operations involving both the army and navy delivered decisive results. In the end, his policies and approach to war on a global scale had redefined the British Empire.

In this thesis, major aspects of Pitt's career have been broken down into two periods. The first focused on his wartime service and the resulting expansion of the empire, while the second addressed the growing post-war tensions between Britain and its American colonies. This was a situation that grew, in no small measure, from the financial burdens that had developed during the successful prosecution of the late war.²

It has been asserted here that Pitt proved himself to be a great wartime minister. First and foremost, he recognized the importance of the North American theatre of the

¹ James Thomas Flexner, *George Washington: The Indispensable Man* (Newtown, CT: Amer Political Biography Press, 2003).

² Green, *William Pitt*, 244.

war. He demanded a military emphasis in the New World rather than the traditional battlefields of Europe. He remained steadfast in his support for the efforts of the British military in North America when it was unpopular among many of his colleagues, and even the King himself. It was in North America that the strategies employed by Pitt met with their greatest successes. The pivotal year was 1759, when Britain's efforts were rewarded with immensely important victories, as outlined in Chapter Two. Pitt did not alter his strategy after this victorious year. He maintained the imperative of completely destroying the French in the New World and as a result, British victories continued. The war finally concluded with the Treaty of Paris in 1763.

Britain now boasted the largest, and potentially the most lucrative, empire in the world. Neither Queen Elizabeth, nor Oliver Cromwell, to cite just two historical figures that had led overseas expansions, would have comprehended such influence.³ Not even the Roman Empire had been as large or as powerful as the empire Pitt helped to create. As Marie Peters has suggested: "Pitt's war leadership reaped decisive colonial success."⁴ His legacy as a wartime leader who gained military victories is therefore beyond question. This thesis has argued, however, that this is only part of Pitt's legacy. Decisions made in the context of the war ultimately proved to have more challenging connotations, once peace arrived.

While leading Britain to a series of global victories in the Seven Years' War, Pitt's strategy simultaneously drove the Empire into an unprecedented level of debt. He lacked the foresight for managing the financial costs that underwrote his aggressive strategy in North America. We have seen that Pitt believed any consideration of cost

³ Green, *William Pitt*, 108.

⁴ Peters, *Pitt and Popularity*, 143.

should be deferred until victory was achieved. But, with the war's end, new sources of revenue were needed to address a massive national debt, to say nothing of the rising costs of administering and defending a global empire. This in turn required that policies must change to meet the new realities. As we have also seen, neither imperial officials, nor the colonists in America were fully prepared to comprehend drastic changes.

Pitt, or the Earl of Chatham as he became after 1761, was similarly baffled by post-war realities. Although he demonstrated his great capabilities as a wartime minister, he failed to find success as a peacetime leader. Now, changing political circumstances, a misreading of American aspirations, philosophical stubbornness, and above all, declining health, meant that the great war leader would be a bit player in peacetime government.

Perhaps if Chatham had been in good physical and mental health, he might have been able to successfully contribute to an imperial policy designed to meet the changed circumstances. However, this seems unlikely. Chatham did not formulate a plan that brought a new vision to Britain's relations with the American colonies. He had the vision to win a large and powerful empire through war, but this did not extend to any new sense of how post-war relations between the mother country and the colonies should work. This was especially true where imperial finances were concerned. Chatham could not reconcile the fact that he believed in the supremacy of Parliament but at the same time denied Parliament the authority to tax the colonists as British citizens. The Empire was in desperate need of funds, but he vehemently denied the right of Parliament to directly tax the colonies. His support of colonial rejection of the Stamp Act, for example, fueled the fire of rebellion in the colonies against British authority.

Chatham's vision of the colonies was outdated. His views were deeply rooted in the old colonial system that prioritized trade and associated excises within a mercantilist model driven from London. Above all, he gloried in imperial unity. The colonies, by contrast, exhibited great confidence, self-sufficiency, and a desire for self-determination after the Treaty of Paris.⁵ A return to *status quo ante bellum* was impossible, but he still believed a return to the mercantile system of the Navigation Acts and Acts of Trade, could deliver the revenues the post-war empire required. Instead, Britain would be forced to reevaluate its colonial policy. Chatham was unprepared for this.

Over time, the crisis between the colonies and the mother country intensified as illustrated in Chapters Three and Four. Chatham could not understand the magnitude of the rift between Britain and her colonies, and he constantly advocated for conciliation. His only goal was to keep the colonies an integral part of the British Empire, thereby ignoring the financial costs that had arisen from the late war. Conciliation was not a long-term solution, however. Financial and constitutional issues would not be solved by the policy of conciliation. The colonists were not willing to pay taxes levied by a government that they believed did not represent them. The relationship was on its way to being irreparably damaged.

In the end, it is the contention of this thesis that there were two William Pitts that must be decoupled from each other, where the backdrop to American Independence is concerned. Pitt the war leader saved the American colonies from the French threat in North America, but he had done so at great financial cost. Pitt/Chatham, the peacetime politician, could hardly gainsay the financial expedients that had made victory possible, yet he could not reconcile this with the need to gain greater colonial contributions to

⁵ Schweizer, *William Pitt, Earl of Chatham 1708-1778*, xix.

imperial expenses. Furthermore, he was so muddled in his views toward the imperial parliament that he could argue for its supremacy on the one hand, while metaphorically trying to tie its hands vis-à-vis the colonies on the other. Many years later, Thomas Babington Macaulay would capture some sense of this tension surrounding him, when he wrote:

Chatham at the time of his decease, had not, in both Houses of Parliament, ten personal adherents. Half the public men of the age had been estranged from him by his errors, and the other half by the exertions he had made to repair his errors. His last speech had been an attack at once on the policy pursued by the Government, and on the policy recommended by the Opposition. But death restored him to his old place in the affection of his country. Who could hear unmoved of the fall of that which had been so great, and which had stood so long? The circumstances, too, seemed rather to belong to the tragic stage than to real life.⁶

As this thesis has argued, his wartime legacy, that burst forth again in national mourning at his death, has obscured focus on his postwar career, particularly where America is concerned. Chatham could not fathom the Empire losing the American colonies that he had fought to secure, and he literally fought for imperial unity until his last breath. The tragedy for him was that he failed to perceive that the breach was complete, and that he could offer nothing to repair it.

⁶ Thomas Babington Macaulay, 'The Earl of Chatham' in, A.J. Grieve, ed., *Macaulay's Critical and Historical Essays* (2 vols.), London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1907, II, 477. I am grateful to Dr. Andrew Nicholls for this quotation.

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