Fitzgerald

**Articles of Confederation – Powers denied Powers Given**

What does “create new” actually looked like?

The “***abolish***” was the American colonies publishing the Declaration of Independence and then holding on for six years through the American Revolution (noting specific ways the Americans were able to do this) till the British gave up.

The “***create new***” would have had to occur as soon as the colonies declared independence, 4 July 1776, as the America colonies would have immediately needed a government to replace that of the British.

The colonies ***knew what they did not want*** in their new government, for instance no king, but did not know what they did want. We discussed being ***reactive***, taking action that is simply the opposite of what one does not like, versus being ***proactive***, action that is guided by a set of beliefs, a goal, a vision of a desired future.

America would eventually develop a ***proactive*** form of government when it wrote the ***Constitution*** in 1789, but in 1776 what they came up with was a ***reactive*** government, the ***Articles of Confederation***.

***LEARNING TARGETs*** –

* to be able ***describe the weaknesses*** of the Articles of Confederation
* and ***explain why they would have been adopted***,
* and then to be able to ***describe the economic and political problems*** these weaknesses could cause.

***If*** the British created a government for the colonies in which all the power was held by the national government and almost no power was held by the colonies, ***then*** the government the colonies would create in reaction would give as little power as possible to the new national government and keep as much power as possible in the states. Note the diagram below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| British Government of the Colonies –  Most power in national government,  almost no real power in smaller units  Called a unitary (one source of power) government | Government created by the Articles of Confederation -  Almost no power on the national government,  Smaller units retain most powers  Called a confederation |

Reactive Change - Just doing the opposite of what you did not like

On the following pages, find a chart, recording our ideas on what powers were granted and why, what powers were denied and why and what problems not having those powers would cause.

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Chart Analyzing the Article of Confederation

The short chart below lists the very few powers the Articles gave to the national government.

Why did the Second Continental Congress decide the new national government had to have each power?

**POWERS GIVEN**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Power given** | **Explanation of why that power needed to be given to the national government** |
| The power to deal with foreign nations | * In a war - Need alliances   + Particularly seek the help of France - "The enemy of my enemy is my friend." * The European nations are more likely to respect an ambassador that comes from all thirteen nations. * Do not want individual colonies forming alliance that leave other out. |
| The power to declare war and negotiate peace | * Had already started a war - had all signed the Declaration of Independence as one, as the Second Continental Congress * Do not want individual colonies surrendering/making peace with Britain, making the remaining colonies left to fight the war more vulnerable. - Divided We Fall. * Britain gives in because it cannot control all of the colonies at once. - United We Stand. |
| The power to borrow money | * Wars are extremely expensive. * As war began, the colonies were a brand new "nation," with no money of their own. * Would have to borrow to fight. * Wanted the money borrowed by the nation, not individual states, as they were fighting the war together |
| The power to coin money for the nation | * a single currency would more likely be able to rival the British pound * one currency would make trade easier |
| The power to create a postal service | * needed to be able to communicate between colonies * moving letters between thirteen speararte system would be difficult * Benjamin Franklin was the champion of the postal service and all respected him |
| The power to create laws necessary for executing the above powers, but . . .  NOT THE POWER TO ENFORCE THEM | * governmental decision are always expressed as laws and acts * but do not want to be forced to do anything by a central government * which lead to . . . POWERS DENIED!!! |

(over)

**POWERS DENIED**

The much longer chart below lists the many powers the Articles denied to the national government.

The powers denied were denied because of experiences the colonies had had with the British government.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Power denied** | **What negative experience with the British would have caused the colonies to deny the new national government this power?** | **What problem(s) might be caused if the new national government did not have this power?** |
| Could not create or collect taxes – only the new state legislatures could tax and would send money to the national government | * Believed that , as the Magna Carta had said, taxes should only be passed with the consent of the people * So . . .Believed that taxes should only come from the people's representatives * Had not agreed to the idea that Parliament should be able to pass taxes for the colonies, and looked at the new national government as being like Parliament * Just as the colonies had told parliament that they would taxes their own citizens through their colonial legislatures and send Parliament the desired funds, so the states said they would taxes their citizens through their new state legislatures and send the allotted money to the national government | * Each colony, though they were allotted a fair share, would always think they were paying too much and others not enough * Colonies might use taxes to pay for things within their colony first and then only send what was left, which might not be enough * If a colony did not send what it had promised or what the Articles Congress had decided, the Congress could not do anything about it * Only 9 out of 13 were needed to pass an act assigning what each colony would pay - the colonies that voted against could just not collect * Communicating bout what was owed and what could or would be paid would be difficult as mail was so slow |
| Could not regulate trade | * Had hated mercantilism * The colonies were only allowed to serve the Mother-Country's economic needs * The colonies were not allowed to manufacture * The colonies had to send all desired resources only to the Mother-country * The Mother Country would manufacture goods and send them to the colonies - the colonies could only buy the goods the Mother Country produced from the mother-Country * Believed their colony could become richer if they could sell to the highest bidder and buy the least expensive, best products | * trade would be difficult to organize with European nations - * merchants trading across the Atlantic might not be encouraged to trade fearing that the disorganization would hurt their profits * so harder to find European buyers and Europeans good than thought * it was difficult to begin manufacturing because starting manufacturing businesses is expensive * states might pass import taxes to protect their new manufacturing business * the taxes would drive up the prices of both imported goods and the ne manufactured goods, which would be priced right below the imported taxed good * new businesses protected by the import taxes might not work hard enough to make quality goods as did not have to compete * import taxes on goods from other states would shut down trade between the states, hurting business |
| The new legislature would not be large, it would only have one house and in that house each state would only have one vote | * Colonies had felt like Britain had tried to control and over power them * Wanted to feel equal - have no higher power | * States with higher populations were not fairly represented - a small state with a small population like Rhode Island would have as much of a say as a large state like New York, giving Rhode Island more power * There was no way to represent diverse opinions in a state with just one vote |
| **Power denied** | **What negative experience with the British would have caused the colonies to deny the new national government this power?** | **What problem(s) might be caused if the new national government did not have this power?** |
| Could not pass laws based just on a majority of the 13 states (7 of 13) –  instead 9 of the 13 states would be required to pass any law or act | * The colonies had often seen that a large number of representatives in parliament had been on their side, not agreeing with many of the acts of parliament that had violated their right or with the decision to go to war, so . . . * Felt like a higher majority should be required to pass acts at the national level | * This would make it too hard to pass any act * Nothing would get done |
| Would not have a chief executive (no king, no president, no prime minister)   * The states would execute all the laws | * Had felt like the King had unfairly enforced laws against them | * There would be no leader * There would be no one to organize the enforcement of the laws * The states would all enforce the laws differently * The nations of Europe would not have any leader to meet with |
| Would not have a national court system –  State courts would hear all cases | * The colonies had hated that the Intolerable Acts sending any accused of killing a British officer to London for trial - felt like would not get a jury of peers * Thought that the same would happen if a defendant was sent away to a national court * Did not imagine a national court system that weld have a court in each state | * State courts might not prosecute a defendant who had broken a law that the state had not voted for * State courts would prosecute a defendant accused of breaking a law differently than another state would law |