

Topic 3.2

The Seven Years' War (The French and Indian War)

You Will Learn To:

- Explain the causes and effects of the Seven Years' War (The French and Indian War).

The Anglo-Franco Struggle for North American Dominance

The Seven Years' War (1754–1763) was a global clash of European empires. Known as the French and Indian War in North America, the conflict was the last in a series of wars between Britain, France, and French-allied American Indians.

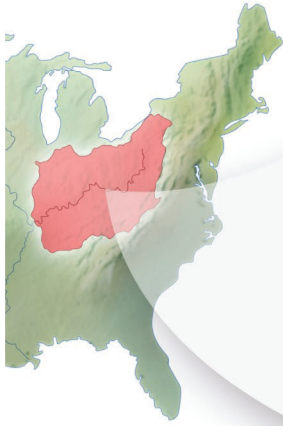
The colonies helped score a decisive British victory against the French, breaking their grip on the continent. However, the victory was costly, and maintaining their new territory was difficult. Therefore, the British crown looked to the colonies for help. To maintain the territory and pay war debt, the British:

- placed limits on colonial westward expansion.
- raised taxes.
- enforced trade restrictions.
- increased political control of the American colonies.

In this topic, we'll look at what led to the French and Indian War. We'll also look at plans for colonial defense, which, although not adopted, provided a model for unification during the Revolutionary period. Finally, we'll look at some short-term and long-term effects of the war.

British Colonials Push West

Increased British settlement in the Ohio Valley during the mid-18th century intensified the imperial rivalry between Britain and France and led to the French and Indian War.



Beginning in the mid-1600s, the French formed mutually beneficial relationships with Native Americans based on trapping and fur trading.



British settlement began in the early 1700s and led to contested land claims between the British, French, and Indians.

Ohio Valley region

During the early 1700s, a wave of Virginia and Pennsylvania settlers migrated into the backcountry, advancing the British colonial frontier westward and claiming the Ohio Valley.

In response, France began constructing forts next to these British settlements. The British understood that if France completed these forts, it would be difficult for colonials to hold onto their land claims in the region.

In 1754, the Virginia colony sent a militia led by George Washington to prevent the completion of Fort Duquesne in western Pennsylvania. On disputed land, Washington instead founded a small, hastily built British fort he named Fort Necessity, provoking a French attack. Washington was unable to defend the fort and surrendered, kicking off the French and Indian War.

War and Defense in the Colonies

Although the conflict in North America was focused on control of the Ohio River Valley, the stakes were much higher. If the French claimed a decisive victory in North America, the British empire could potentially be crippled by the loss of colonies, whose transatlantic trade had built the empire.

A series of French victories in 1754 and 1755 prompted the colonies to search for new strategies for defense. As the war waged on, colonial militias and the British regular army were able to break France's hold on the region.

The Albany Congress

At the start of the French and Indian War, colonial leaders met in Albany, New York, to discuss frontier defense. Benjamin Franklin, an organizer of the New Albany Congress, calling for colonial unity and defense, proposed the Albany Plan of Union.



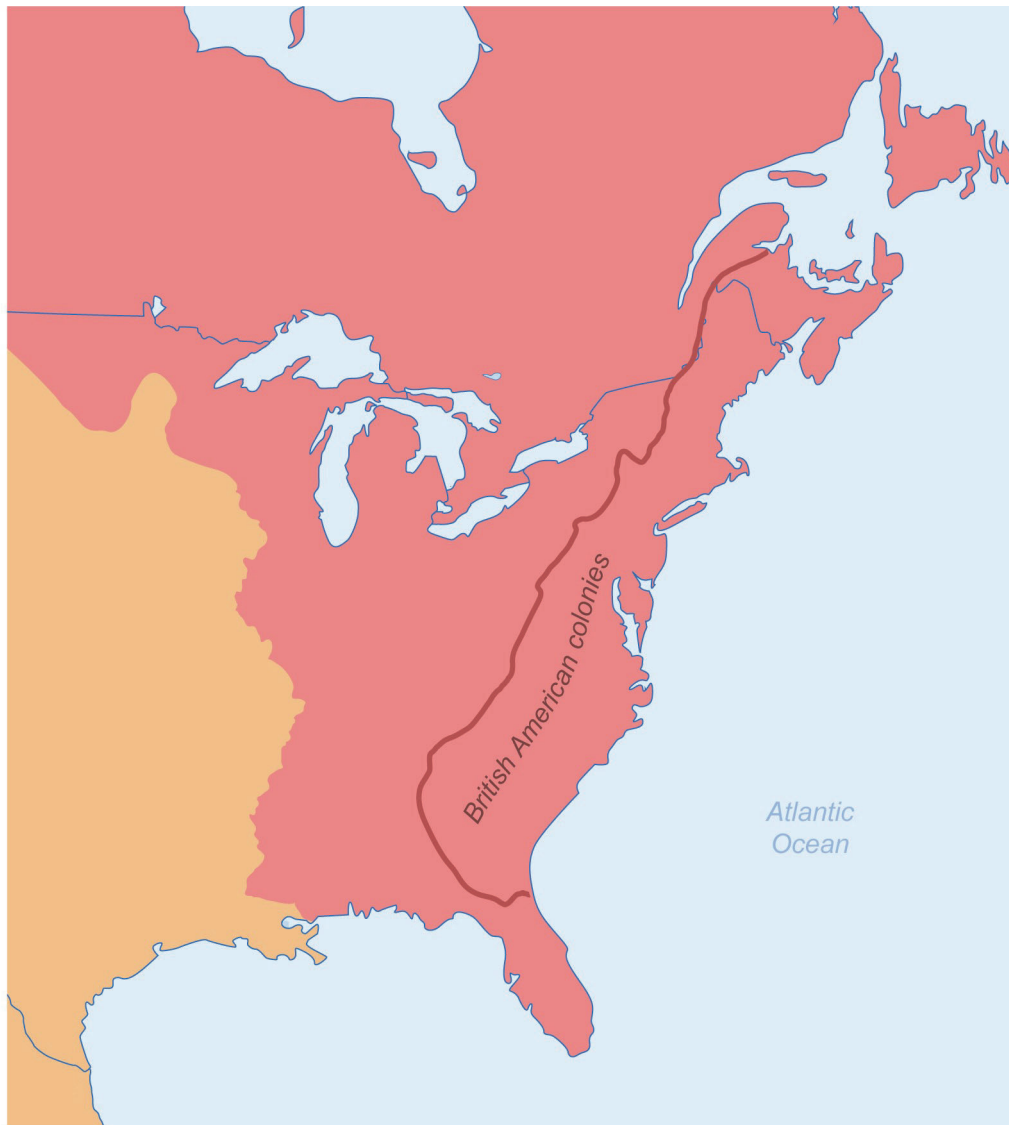
The plan called for the creation of a central government made up of representatives from each colony. To ensure territorial safety, the central government would have the power to:

- raise an army and pay soldiers.
- construct forts for the defense of any of the colonies.

Despite the congress' support for the plan, colonial assemblies rejected it because the colonies were concerned that they would be giving up political autonomy.

The Treaty of Paris (1763)

The victory gave Britain dominance in North America. Additionally, the peace treaty changed the map of North America.



Spanish territory British territory

Postwar boundaries, 1763

The Treaty of Paris:

- gave Britain Spanish Florida and France's holdings east of the Mississippi River, except for New Orleans.
- gave Spain New Orleans and France's claims west of the Mississippi River.
- gave Canada to Britain.
- gave Britain the eastern half of North America.

A Costly Victory for the British

To defend their costly victory, the British needed new revenue sources. Therefore, the British Crown exerted more economic and political control over its American colonies. New taxes and economic restrictions marked the end of salutary neglect.



For example, Britain renewed its commitment to enforce the Navigation Acts and increased the number of enumerated goods (taxable goods). In 1765, Parliament passed the Stamp Act, the first direct tax on the colonies, aimed at recouping the cost of the war. These measures were met with colonial resistance and protests. Nonetheless, Britain continued to enact policies intended to bring the colonies back in line with the empire's control.

American Indians and a New Diplomatic Landscape

In 1763, Britain took over French forts in the Ohio Valley. Compared to the French, the British were far more oppressive toward American Indians. Natives, dependent on French trade, were angered by Britain's resistance to engage in trade diplomacy, a practice the French had regularly conducted.



As new waves of colonial migrants encroached on Native land, American Indians became concerned that the British planned to force Natives from their homelands. These concerns led to a pan-Indian rebellion against British authority in the Ohio Valley.

Pontiac's Rebellion

In response to the new order of British relations, American Indian leader Pontiac united the region's tribes in rebellion.



Known as Pontiac's Rebellion, the Native attacks burned colonial forts and settlements. British troops violently put down the rebellion, retaking forts and massacring entire villages. The rebellion highlighted the high costs of maintaining Britain's newly expanded American empire.

Proclamation of 1763

Pontiac's rebellion prompted Britain's King George III to try to stabilize the region by prohibiting colonial settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains.



The British set limits on westward expansion largely because they could not afford to provide frontier defense to western settlements. The Proclamation of 1763 intended to prevent costly conflicts with American Indians. However, this angered colonials who held land grants west of the Proclamation line.

Divergent Perspectives

A shift in British policy toward her colonies was the most significant long-term effect of the British victory. In the aftermath of the war, colonial grievances increased as the English government tightened colonial control.

The British Parliament felt justified in having the colonies pay for wars fought in its defense. However, colonists saw this policy as a threat to self-rule and liberty. Colonials saw themselves as central to the empire, not subjects to be exploited.

As a result, a sense of an American identity distinct from Britain grew stronger after 1763. As discussed in Topic 3.3, colonists questioned the Crown's right to tax the colonies, given their lack of political representation in Parliament. Additionally, measures intended to punish the colonies, such as the Coercive Acts, strengthened a sense of an American identity as many colonials began to see the Crown as tyrannical.

Things to Remember

- Increased British settlement in the Ohio River Valley during the mid-18th century intensified the imperial rivalry between Britain and France. These tensions directly led to the French and Indian War.
- The Treaty of Paris:
 - gave Britain Spanish Florida and France's holdings east of the Mississippi River—except for New Orleans.
 - gave Spain New Orleans and France's claims west of the Mississippi River.
 - gave Britain Canada.
- The victory was costly, and the British found maintaining their new territory was expensive.
- To raise revenue, the British Crown began to exert more economic and political control over the American colonies.
- In 1763, Britain took over French forts in the Ohio River Valley and refused to engage in gift giving and trade diplomacy with American Indians—a practice that the French had regularly conducted.
- In response to the new order of British relations post-victory, American Indian leader Pontiac directed a pan-Indian rebellion against British authority in the Ohio River Valley.
- The Proclamation line was an attempt to stabilize the region diplomatically in the aftermath of Pontiac's Rebellion by prohibiting colonial settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains.
- A significant long-term effect of the British victory was a shift in the relations between Britain and its American colonies.
- A sense of an American identity distinct from Britain grew stronger in the post-1763 period.

Key Terms and Developments

Seven Years War (1754–1763)

French and Indian War (1754–1763)

Fort Duquesne

For Necessity

Pontiac's Rebellion

Proclamation line

Treaty of Paris 1763

Salutary Neglect

3.2 Check for Understanding

- 1. In North America, the French and Indian War primarily concerned with**
 - A. American Indian resistance to French authority
 - B. British colonial settlement of the Ohio Valley
 - C. American Indian attacks on Jamestown
 - D. All of these

- 2. The British victory in the French and Indian War resulted in**
 - A. British control of most of the eastern half of North America
 - B. a significant war debt
 - C. significant changes in British colonial policy
 - D. All of these

- 3. The Proclamation of 1763 was intended to prevent costly conflicts between _____ and _____ on the frontier.**
 - A. Colonial settlers, American Indians
 - B. French soldiers, British settlers
 - C. American Indians, French fur traders
 - D. British settlers, Spanish missionaries