America’s Path to Rebellion

Britain is consistently idolized in America, whether it be because of Americans’ vast interest in British boy bands, or their love for British accents. However, America will never be as close, in emotional connection or admiration, to Britain as it was before the French and Indian War. For years, British colonists in the Americas proudly considered themselves fully fledged British citizens, and they would’ve fought or died for their nation. Then, when Britain’s battles were being fought in the colonists’ backyard, many of them did just that, feeling a sense of nationalistic pride in enlisting. However, very few would return home with that same feeling, and still fewer would maintain any love for Britain for more than a few years thereafter. The French and Indian War greatly altered Britain’s relations with its American colonists due to various political, economic, and social factors.

One Political factor in altered relations was that as a result of the Seven Years’ War, the British/American empire became vastly greater. This was because the French ceded most of its territory to the British after the war (Document 1). This additional territory made the Colonist’s feel as though they should be able to move into the land, and conflicts with Native Americans ensued. In order to stop these conflicts, the already economically depleted British passed the Proclamation of 1763, which prevented colonists from migrating past the Appalachian Mountains. This sincerely angered colonists and caused their feelings towards the British to take on much more malice. Before the French and Indian War, George Washington, like many others, loved his Mother Country with all his heart and desired nothing more than to serve his King and Country (Document 2). He aimed to rise through the ranks of the British Military. However, because of the altered relations after the war, he changed his plans and instead became an
irreplaceable part of the revolution and America’s first President, further evidence of how relations between the British and Colonists changed.

Money is almost always a big factor in relationships, and the relationship between Britain and its colonies was no exception. After the war, Britain was in deep debt, and it looked to the colonies to help pay it. When King George was made aware that the colonies were paying almost no taxes to the monarchy, he ended Salutary Neglect, the process by which the British left the colonies to govern and police themselves, and began taxing them (Document 5). This angered the colonists, who felt that they already paid enough taxes to their respective colonial governments, and that they should not be taxed federally without representation in Parliament. Acts such as the Stamp act taxed anything written on paper, thus angering newspaper writers who then spread the idea that this taxation was preposterous (Document 7). This opinion was spread throughout the colonies as Americans began to demand representation in Parliament, which the British were not willing to provide, further altering relations between America and Britain.

Social interactions between British and the Colonists during and after the Seven Years’ War were the biggest reasons for significantly changed relations. During the war many colonial Militiamen felt as though the British didn’t respect them as equals. They had more limited rights, and were looked down upon as second class citizens (Document 3). Even though those who didn’t experience this treatment first hand in the war didn’t share the same animosity towards the British, and many still loved the Mother Country (Document 4), other factors would change their mind soon thereafter. In addition to the specific events that caused changed relations, the Enlightenment also played a large part. It made people begin to question authority and older
methods, in exchange for new systems to fit their needs, and this mindset certainly allowed a large quantity of colonists to begin thinking differently about the British.

The French and Indian War was a huge turning point in the relationship between Britain and its colonies. Political, economic, and social factors all played a part in these changed relations, which in turn led to various other events, such as the American Revolution. Similar to how Shays and many other farmers rebelled after the American Revolution, The colonists created a poor relationship with Britain, after being treated poorly, economically oppressed, and given no say in government. Many of the same people who fought Britain also fought for Shays against Massachusetts, for many of the same reasons. There are countless other similar instances, and no matter where one looks in history, events, causes, and effects are always interrelated in complex and intricate ways. Now if only our populace could find out why Zayn Malik had to leave One Direction!