

Beginning stages that lead to war of 1812



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During the beginning stages of the War of 1812, Britain was fully engaged in fighting Napoleon in Europe and desperately tried to avoid a confrontation with the United States. However, Britain did little to stop it. While Britain was pre-occupied fighting Napoleon, America saw an opportunity to expand their territory and attempt to conquer British North America.

Due to the poor organization of the U. S. forces and lack of military strategy, America failed to accomplish their main objective to take control of the northern territory of British North America.

The other objective of the United States was to preserve the rights of neutrals and maintain the freedom of the seas and continue its trades with whom they desired. It is debatable who won the war; from a military stand point the British won the key battles however, the war ended in a stalemate with no gain for either side. In order to examine this thesis clearly, the paper approach shall be to look at the American grievances against British, offensive strategy of America, Britain defensive strategy and the failure of America to conquer Canada.

Failure by America to conquer Canada is not really one of the stages in the beginning of the war, but rather to demonstrate the degree of gain and reason for that degree of gain. Beginning stages that lead to the War of 1812 There were various diplomatic policies approach was employed to regain a peaceful and harmonious coexistence between America and British. This was done through the use of various bills and Acts that would ensure peaceful coexistence between America and British. For instance, the Embargo Act of 1807, the Nonintercourse Act of March 1809, and the passed Macon's Bill No.

2 ; all this legislation were a clear indication of America's commitment for use of diplomacy to resolve policy crises with Great Britain. However, due to the ongoing British war with napoleon , Great Britain over step on the American rights and national pride that saw war as the only option to have British change its harmful policies that hampers various US progress and development. Many Americans viewed the war as a continuation of revolution, but from sociopolitical perspective scholars; the move was necessary to protect and strengthen the new found independence from England's aggression .

Sadly, two days after war declaration orders by the congress, the England parliament had already revisited those policies that added grievances to US by repealing the orders in council and sent a message to America. Unfortunately, the message reached when it was too late a midst initial war battles in Detroit by Gen. Hull that accounted to British delay to prevent the war. It is in this line of thought that this paper shall examine the core causes for war to be initiated and the results that leave a large quantity of debate to who won the war.

America's grievances' against England The Americans had many built up anger and pain against Britain during the initial steps that marked the beginning of the war. These grievances were however fueled up with economic and political reasons behind the scenes to play an active drive role into steps to ignite the battle. For instance many scholars of politicalsciencelike Buel, Richard (2006), states that criticism directed to President James Madison greatly played a contributory role to start of the war.

During the time, President James Madison was criticized for his failure to stand up against Britain injustices to U. S. Therefore, faced with daunting task of election in late 1812, James Madison had only two options to either negotiate with Britain or go to war to increase his popularity and prove his capabilities for leading this great nation. As a result, when diplomatic approach failed, Madison asked the congress to vote on war. Fortunately, 19 to 13 votes in senate and 79 to 49 votes in the house of representative; was a go ahead command on war on Great Britain on 18th June, 1812.

Despite political reason on war declaration on Great Britain, the United States of America was fed up with British impressments . Great Britain reverted to a policy of boarding Americans ship to retrieve the former sailors of Britain who had deserted the Royal Navy to look for a better pay and life to United States of America. As a result of this hunt for sailors, British seized 11, 000 sailors by mid 1805. The need for the impressments was on the basis of expanded Royal Navy to 175 of the line together with other 425 ships that required more professional sailors about 140, 000.

These sailors could not be found with land of Great Britain, therefore, they opted to press and retrieve the Royal Navy veterans and other experienced sailors from merchant shipping and privateers . In reacting to that, the United States of America felt that the Royal Navy deserters were justified to be citizens of US; of course owing to their benefits. To worsen the matter, Britons failed to honor this fundamental right of the US, instead provoked law openly. They refused to recognize the naturalized US citizenship, and considered all US citizens born in Britain territory to be liable for impressments.

The situation was made worse when Britain impressed Americans. Worst of all was when the British frigates were stationed on the America harbors; in fact in America's territorial waters conducting their searches, it could not be tolerated even by a dead patriotic American . This resultant act injured the American National pride. The trade inhibition and hampering as a result of Britain blockade of the Napoleonic Europe was a major concern to US trade that could not be swept under carpet.

The Britain in attempt to Block commodities to reach into the hands of French, they seized estimated 400 Americans ship that adversely affected the trade of America. The American society felt that by seizing of their merchant ships by the great Britain in their attempt to block US trade with France Empire during their war; they did not only breach the international law, but also they failed to recognize Americans neutral rights in regard to the ongoing war between the Britain and France.

Black, Jeremy (2006), adds that, Great Britain practiced blockade since it perceived a possible threat by the doubling rate of US state merchant marine and fear of losing the 80 percent cotton import and 50 percent overall of the US exports to other European nations. Therefore Britain felt threatened to loose commercially and growing mercantile of the US. And by these actions and policies, America felt that the Great Britain breached Neutral Nation's Right to trade with their own chosen trade partner. The conflict built up and pressure for war increased.

The British's practice of arming the native enemies of Americans; Indians of western fueled the conflict, since they were increasingly hostile strengthened by British support . As a consequence, it was difficult for

Americans to defeat the native enemies due to their support from Britain. Therefore to make the Great Britain change its prices, war was necessary to cause tangible pain to Britain, in order for America to gain. Other scholars usually add that desire for expansion was drive for war and conquer on Canada .

However this argument is not clear and lacks empirical evidence from various supportive perspectives and position. However the outstanding issue is the fact that Great Britain leadership failed to stop the war. In the sense that, despite massive protest and demonstrations by the Americans craving for “ free trade sand sailor’s rights”, the Britons could not read these building up pressure for freedom and respect for Americans rights. Instead, they intensified from high seas crime to American shows, extending it inland to arming of the Indians.

This action and deafness of the Britain officials, justify the American “ war hawks” statement that Great Britain crimes were not only confined to the high seas, but also injurious to national pride of the United States of America . Therefore, war was inevitable in an attempt to reclaim this past glory. The follow up events saw war declaration on British on 18th June 1812 when Great Britain was concentrating on Europe Napoleonic war . This led to the invasion of Canada. American goal to maintain offensive strategies

After the war declaration on British passed by smallest margin recorded on war vote in US congress, it consequently lead to US invasion of Canada. Despite the invasion and desire to conquer Canada, the war strategy employed was offensive . This is in the light that British Royal Navy was powerful in the worlds at that present time, and no way could inexperienced

and untrained fighters would outwit them. Secondly the US focus was to conquer Canada basing on land battles for lower and Upper Canada that most of its inhabitants were post war immigrants or exile from US.

Natives were not for interest of the US, justifying their hostility to the US unions. The third aspect was the focus by US on building ships that would fight the British in great lakes. In all of these thee aspects upon US invasion of Canada, there is no single strategy that focus on the organization of the fight due to lack of professionalism in the US militia. Instead, all these tree focus point were directed on breaking the power of native enemies and conquering the British North America, while failing to take into account the power of the British military component would help them to organize their army to fight well.

Furthermore, the Royal Navy was too powerful for American navy which was in a better shape anyway due to ingredient of experienced and competent sailors. Therefore, the battle in Atlantic did not materialize to see the light of the day. In return, the American marine campaign and efforts were diverted to disrupting merchant trade in sea. Fortunately, this campaign yielded many victories to the US, but it was of no impact to barricade Great Britain trade and provide away through to their controlling the Great Lake . British goal to maintain a defensive strategy

The British military power that was present in Canada was well trained to defend the interests of the Great Britain. But the outstanding challenge was the large numbers of the American army that outnumbered them. Empirically, statistics reveals that British regular troops present in Canada at the beginning of the war were in 6, 034 soldiers, against 13, 000 American

soldiers which were increased to 35, 000 men with authorization by the congress. Lieutenant General Sir. George Prevost was the commander in chief of the Northern America for England was instructed to employ defensive strategy of the war against Americans.

Since, it was clear that war with America was of no preference to Napoleonic war . In addition to number deficiency to justify British engage in defensive strategy, British armies were all committed to the fighting Napoleon and peninsular as it was a priority to British than Northern America. While the Royal Navy was involved in the Europe sea blockade, the options were to protect the marine communication between Canada and Britain to facilitate supplies and weaken the American battle strengths by blockading American ports to disrupt trade and divert the attentions of war.

As a result, American East Coast was under blockade leaving only a section of New England since they were against the war and declined to offer help to reinforce America in the war. These temporary measures were necessary to guarantee reinforcement to the small British army in the Canada. The measure of blockading the America ports produced negative tangible impact to the US , since the exports dropped sharply, coastal trade became dangerous, ships were stack on the ports without business, port towns affected and agriculturalists of West and the South felt the pitch.

It is a point of worthy to mention that Canada's defensive strategies were directed towards strategic and core areas to sustainability of British control in Canada, unlike the US forces that were scattered. Most important and key areas were; Montreal vital for facilitating supply to Upper Canada with

resources; Quebec City enabled and linked provisions from England up the St. Lawrence River to the areas of the west; and upper Canada.

Despite successful defensive strategy in conjunction with the port blockade, geographical limitation to the British soldiers . America failed to conquer Canada Despite presence of indicators of necessity of using war against Great Britain, America was never prepared for war . President Madison undervalued the military task force needed to seize Canada, whereby at the start he sent regular army of about 13, 000 men who were severely defeated. As a consequence, the American congress authorized an additional army to expand the military power to 35, 000 men.

The dark side of these increased numbers was that, they were unprofessional volunteers, who were poorly paid with low motivation to fight outside their home state. This resulted to inefficiency in the military needed to conquer Canada. Defective military strategies were evident as Americans scattered their forces in multi-pronged attacks that bore no fruits. In sum total, the Americans inadequate preparation in naval, military and financial domains generated incompetent troops without proper financial for the war.

The United States of America experienced difficulties in financing its war; since New England withdrew its support for funds and military units, worse of that was the fact America had disbanded its national bank. The only help for funds could have been from private bankers from the Northeast, but northeast private bankers were greatly opposed to the war and could not offer a helping hand for the war . The organization of the military base received a blow due to uncooperative and quarrelsome commanders who were struggling for power and control over military forces.

While militia called to reinforce the army it defined itself as a defensive force for war of obstruction rather than conquest. Evidently, all early attempts to invade Canada did not bore any fruits due to those shortcomings on US military and state failure. For instance, General Hull's attempted attack geared to conquer Canada from Detroit four days after war declaration, backed off due to fear of the native militias. As a result, the Canadian commanding officer Gen. Brock capitalized on this fear to fully advantage. And lead to significant losses in the military battles.

By April 1814 after napoleon surrender, Britain transferred its military might to reinforce Canada in a major landing operation. The initial operations were made in Chesapeake Bay and Maine which were a success. This totally paralyzed American efforts to conquer Canada. This ignited further military actions for against America in Maryland, Washington, D. C. , Bladensburg and the burning of white house in the year 25th of august in 1814. But, British move to attack and capture Baltimore was put off by now better shaped American armies. Conclusion

` The paper has discussed exclusively the early stages and causes the Americans to engage in a military way to regain its control over their land and sovereignty. In attempt bring out the argument the paper has looked at the America's grievances' against great Britain, American goal to maintain offensive strategies, British goal to maintain a defensive strategy and main attributes why America failed to conquer Canada and never gained what it went to war for, apart from victory by General Andrew Jackson in the battle of New Orleans over British army.

It was necessarily important that Americans were never defeated by the Britons. While on the other hand, the Britons were not defeated by Americans in their quest to conquer Canada. In other words, neither of the side lost or gained apart from slight takeover by the America of Carleton Island to be part of New York. The resultant situation of Ghent peace treaty signed on 24th December, 1814, brought back the respect and honor to the American society to maintain its status quo.

While at the same time, facilitating policy changes by the British in favor of America. Additionally, the US learned not to rely too heavily on a militia, but rather have an effective, competent and a more organized army. Although Americans tried to battle with their enemy, they had more than enough reasons to fear the British, whereas Canadians had sufficient evidence to fear the Americans. Bibliography Black, Jeremy. America as a Military Power 1775-1865: Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002

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