

HISTORY *of the*  
FOREIGN POLICY  
*of the* UNITED STATES

BY

ROBERT L. JONES, P.H.D.

*Author of "The Eighteenth Amendment  
and Our Foreign Relations"*



G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS  
NEW YORK : LONDON

COPYRIGHT, 1933, BY ROBERT L. JONES

All rights reserved. This book, or parts thereof, must not be reproduced in any form without permission.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
AT THE VAN REES PRESS

## PREFACE

THE relation of the United States with other nations forms the subject matter for a rapidly growing volume of literature. The great majority of this is primarily concerned with diplomacy—the dealings of the agents of one government with agents of another. Through the intricacies of most negotiations it is exceedingly difficult to trace the threads of any general plan or policy. Policy and diplomacy have too frequently been treated as one and the same. And the former has been overshadowed by emphasis upon the latter in the briefer surveys. I have, therefore, undertaken to show the origin and trace the development of the general principles pursued by the United States in its more important relations with other countries. I have incorporated some diplomacy to serve as background or to make a clearer exposition of policy.

During the greater part of its history the United States has proceeded on its course in a leisurely manner. During these years general plans of conduct were formulated for the promotion of the best interest of the nation. These accepted principles were uniformly insisted upon in the customary intercourse with other governments. But the World War thrust the nation as a principal actor upon an unfamiliar stage. Suddenly new policies had to be formulated and old ones modified to meet the changed conditions. The cessation of hostilities did not restore the old order. The increased importance of the country coupled with the unprecedented conditions in Europe and Asia has kept the State Department constantly face to face with new situations. It has uniformly attempted to apply the principles regarded as sound in earlier years. Numerous monographs have been devoted to particular cases and now a brief survey of the entire subject seems desirable.

For assistance received from a variety of sources a general expression of gratitude will have to suffice. But a more particular acknowledgment is due to the late Professor E. D. Adams who

directed my attention to the subject; and to Professor George Carver for his constructive criticisms. For many valuable suggestions in regard to errors of fact and aberration of judgment I am deeply indebted to Professor B. H. Williams who read a great part of the book in manuscript, and to Professor N. Andrew N. Cleven who read the chapters dealing with Latin America and the Far East. The innumerable helpful suggestions and the sound advice of my wife have been invaluable. She has also prepared the manuscript for the press.

R. L. J.

*February, 1933.*

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE BEGINNING . . . . .	3
II. EMPIRIC DIPLOMACY . . . . .	21
III. POLITICAL RECOGNITION . . . . .	39
IV. COMMERCIAL NEGOTIATIONS . . . . .	56
V. NEUTRALITY . . . . .	75
VI. ISOLATION . . . . .	92
VII. THE WAR OF 1812 . . . . .	109
VIII. THE MONROE DOCTRINE . . . . .	126
IX. SETTLEMENT OF LONGSTANDING DISPUTES . . . . .	145
X. CONTINENTAL ACQUISITIONS . . . . .	163
XI. THE WAR WITH MEXICO . . . . .	182
XII. CUBA . . . . .	199
XIII. ISTHMIAN CANAL DIPLOMACY . . . . .	217
XIV. THE PACIFIC AND FAR EAST . . . . .	235
XV. THE CIVIL WAR . . . . .	253
XVI. AFTERMATH OF THE CIVIL WAR . . . . .	271
XVII. PAN-AMERICANISM . . . . .	290
XVIII. THE WAR WITH SPAIN . . . . .	308
XIX. THE CANAL AND THE CARIBBEAN . . . . .	329
XX. THE FAR EAST, 1860-1914 . . . . .	355
XXI. WORLD LEADERSHIP . . . . .	377
XXII. THE WAR AND THE PEACE . . . . .	395
XXIII. RIVALRY IN THE FAR EAST . . . . .	414
XXIV. UNITED STATES AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS . . . . .	435
XXV. THE WORLD COURT . . . . .	455
XXVI. DEVELOPMENT OF THE MONROE DOCTRINE . . . . .	472
XXVII. INTERNATIONAL PEACE . . . . .	491
XXVIII. THE UNITED STATES AND DISARMAMENT . . . . .	508

**HISTORY OF THE FOREIGN POLICY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**



## CHAPTER I

### THE BEGINNING

THE foreign policy of the United States began in 1776 when the revolting colonies attempted to form an alliance with European nations. Aid was recognized to be essential if Great Britain was to be defeated and independence won. But the search for an ally did not begin until the Revolution was well under way. The colonists had not expected to create a new state. The dependent connection had secured to them a long and rarely disturbed development in the art of self-government. However, when the mercantile statesmen began to organize the administration at London along nationalistic lines, a divergence of opinion appeared between the people on the two sides of the Atlantic over the constitutional rights of Englishmen. The colonies had governed themselves with little interference from abroad and when their right to this privilege was threatened they championed the idea of a federal state. In the Islands leaders grew more and more impressed with the necessity for a closer coöperation between the various sections of the empire. To effect the design a supreme legislative body appeared necessary. A compromise between this and the colonists' view proved impossible. Social, economic, and political forces accomplished unusual changes and before there was a widespread recognition of the fact a new nation had come into being in America. The authorities at Paris watched these developments closely and openly supported the rebels when convinced that the result would be a great humiliation to the hated rival, England.

There was at first no unanimity of opinion in the colonies as to a proper solution of the controversy with the mother country. By 1775 some of the bolder, more harassed, or far-sighted looked longingly toward total separation but the majority still hoped to find peace in the bosom of a reconstructed British Commonwealth



of Nations. The development of the quarrel, the armed clashes at Lexington and Concord, roused the Americans to a determination to protect the rights which they believed guaranteed to them by the fundamental law of England. They resolved to defend themselves against ill-advised ministerial policy. In the midst of the excitement the Second Continental Congress met May 10, 1775, and was forced to assume the conduct of the war. None of the leaders openly advocated independence as an immediate, feasible solution, yet troops were levied, war made, and redress of grievances sought. The colonists, however, continued to regard these proceedings as a domestic quarrel and foreign affairs were studiously neglected. Congress as late as July 6, 1775, in a declaration of causes and necessity for taking up arms asserted that its cause was just, its union complete, its resources great and if necessary, foreign assistance could be obtained.<sup>1</sup> But lest such sentiment disturb friends and fellow subjects in other parts of the kingdom, the same resolution assured them that the colonies did not mean to dissolve the British union which had lasted so long and served so well. On the contrary they wished to see it restored. Arms had neither been taken up with ambitious designs to separate from the parent state nor to establish independence.<sup>2</sup>

The march of events was inexorable, soon opposition was formidable on both sides of the Atlantic. Reports of the affray at Bunker Hill reached England on July 25, 1775. On August 23, the ministry announced its decision to prohibit all trade and intercourse with the colonies. The determination to subdue the refractory subjects was plain. Popular opinion had run high before the answer to the challenge of Bunker Hill was received, and this retort carried it higher. Leaders of the radical party seized the opportunity to show their less zealous countrymen that they could never hope to secure the coveted autonomy within the British empire.<sup>3</sup> They boasted that the colonists had an army strong enough to hold Gage in Boston, therefore, were entirely able to take care of themselves.<sup>4</sup> They also pointed out the fact that the full effect

<sup>1</sup> *Journals of the Continental Congress* (Ford ed.), II, 154.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>3</sup> *Washington's Writings* (Ford ed.), III, 414.

<sup>4</sup> Samuel Adams, *Writings* (Cushman ed.), III, 234.

of the Continental Association adopted by the First Continental Congress would be known by the spring of 1776. If this failed to bring the English to terms alliances could be sought and trade opened to all the world, Great Britain excepted.<sup>5</sup>

The strong Whig sentiment in Congress and its early reception of information from abroad kept it in advance of public opinion. These factors were largely responsible for its conduct which was so baffling to the public at times. They likewise explain the ambient secrecy of a resolution adopted November 20, 1775, to appoint a committee to correspond with sympathizers in the United Kingdom and "other parts of the world."<sup>6</sup> Three days later this Committee of Secret Correspondence, as it came to be called, was directed to search out and engage in the services of Congress skillful military engineers who were to be guaranteed rank and pay equal to what they had received in former service.<sup>7</sup>

The military experience of the last half of 1775, removed all doubt that foreign aid was essential. The resources of the colonies were not sufficient. There was little manufacturing, in normal times products of the loom and the forge came from the mother country, now the need had increased while the supply had entirely ceased. Federal authorities, both civil and military, realized the impossibility of equipping and maintaining an army without munitions from Europe. American man power was considered, under the circumstances, adequate but to secure the necessary materials, it was determined to send a commercial agent to France. Silas Deane was selected for the mission. His instructions, drawn by the Committee of Secret Correspondence, ordered him to inform Vergennes, French Minister for Foreign Affairs, that it was impossible for America to supply its army by the usual commercial intercourse. Therefore, some special arrangement would have to be made and Congress had decided to present the case first at Paris since, if a total separation from Great Britain became necessary, France would be the power whose friendship it would be wisest to obtain and cultivate.<sup>8</sup> If the court appeared friendly, Deane was

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Journals*, III, 392.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 400.

<sup>8</sup> *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress* (Burnett ed.), I, 376.

to endeavor to learn its probable disposition in case the colonies declared themselves independent. Would their ambassador be received? Would treaties or alliances be entered into with them and if so upon what general terms?

The instructions given Deane were wise and politic, for the colonial public was not then ready to abandon all hope of reconciliation with the mother country. It desired a mediator not an ally. Agents were directed to sound European governments upon their willingness to interpose; only upon the failure of reconciliation were alliances desired. Deane's mission was commercial, but the Committee of Secret Correspondence with commendable foresight inserted in his instructions provisions for laying the foundation of a political connection. In Congress a majority favored the promotion of foreign friendships but progress was slow as unanimity was essential. However, the repeated military reverses did much to spread a conviction of the necessity for succor from abroad. Washington came to regard a formal renunciation of British allegiance and a foreign alliance as two parts of the same problem. He believed the colonists would come reluctantly into the idea of independence, but that time and persecution would produce the change.<sup>9</sup> The Virginia delegation in Congress wrote the Governor that the colonies should proceed with all haste to the formation of alliances with European powers. They feared England, apprehensive of her inability to conquer the rebels, would enter into negotiations with France and Spain and secure their promise to withhold aid in return for commercial concessions.<sup>10</sup> To the delegates the absolute necessity of overseas trade was apparent, for taxes could not long be paid without the sale of produce which could only be assured by the aid of foreign war vessels numerous enough to keep the commercial channels open. Military reverses and economic depression rapidly impressed the public with the determination of the ministry to crush all opposition and augmented the number of those who felt an accord with Parliament was impossible.

Application to European governments for aid was recognized

<sup>9</sup> *Washington's Writings*, IV, 4.

<sup>10</sup> *Letters of R. H. Lee* (Ballaugh ed.), I, 178.

to be futile as long as restoration to a position in the British Empire was the object of the rebellion.<sup>11</sup> Most men in public life knew that no nation would treat or trade with them as long as they considered themselves subjects of King George; honor, dignity, and international practice forbade. They must first take rank as an independent people.<sup>12</sup> And if the funds with which the war was waged, the great and growing expense of the contest, and the prospect of its continuing for some time longer were considered it would be evident beyond a doubt that foreign aid was indispensable. A resolution of May 7, by the Virginia House of Burgesses instructed the Old Dominion's representatives in Congress to propose a declaration of independence and the negotiation of alliances with foreign nations. The two questions were discussed simultaneously in Philadelphia, and the argument on the former was based almost entirely upon the wisdom of the latter.<sup>13</sup> The true state of affairs was revealed by the informed to those less in touch with the situation until Congress felt sure of sufficient support to justify a formal renunciation of dependence upon Great Britain.

This courageous step was probably taken because of the desperate situation in which Congress found itself. The Declaration of Independence concludes: "That as free and independent states they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do." Congress had levied war, attempted to make peace with England, sought to negotiate treaties for the establishment of commercial relations with European nations and had sounded various courts on their attitude toward alliances. In view of the activity of Congressional commissioners nations in the Old World, especially France, would have found it difficult to interpret this declaration as other than a justification of the policy pursued by the colonies. It also appeared as an intimation of a readiness to hearken to any proposal a foreign court might see fit to make in reply to the importunities of American agents.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 177-9.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (Definitive ed.), I, 20.

A majority of the delegates in Congress believed that ministers should be sent at once to European governments. They believed that the declaration of July 4 had removed all of the difficulties to the proposal of alliances to foreign nations. But such action would have to proceed in a systematic manner; therefore, on July 18, 1776, the draft of a treaty to be proposed to foreign nations was taken up for discussion by Congress.<sup>14</sup> And finally on September 17, terms were approved. The draft contained all the provisions usually found in treaties of friendship and commerce between European states. And other items were incorporated that would create a virtual alliance between the contracting parties. This was considered proper as the signature of any convention with Congress was equivalent to a declaration of war against England.<sup>15</sup>

The British had never believed the colonies either able to effect a union or to offer serious military opposition. But a formidable rebellion with the probable European complications was certainly not desired by the ministry. And colonial reluctance to give up hopes for, coupled with efforts to secure a reconciliation, afforded the cabinet a last chance to bring the insurgents again to their former allegiance. It was supposed this opportunity would be ever present and London followed its usual dilatory policy. Finally, it was decided to send Admiral Lord Howe with the fleet and an offer of pardon to the rebels if they would lay down their arms. He arrived off Sandy Hook July 12, 1776. It was too late, but the well-meaning Admiral did not realize it and communicated his authority to Franklin to whom he wrote of the paternal solicitude of the king for the establishment of lasting peace and union with the colonies. Franklin replied that if a peace to be entered into between the two countries as separate nations was meant and the Admiral was authorized to negotiate upon that basis, he ventured "though without authority" to think a treaty "not quite impracticable, before we enter into foreign alliances."<sup>16</sup> Howe failed to grasp the situation and continued eager to treat with members of the governing body to be considered by him in their personal

<sup>14</sup> *Journals*, V, 575.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 768.

<sup>16</sup> Parton, *Life of Franklin*, II, 136.

capacity. Congress obliged his lordship by sending as a committee Franklin, John Adams, and E. Rutledge. In the interview they insisted upon the independent status already assumed and intimated an intention to seek foreign aid. The ministry was at last convinced that the colonies had effected a coalition but considered its duration contingent upon continuous military success.

The two nations faced each other supremely confident. England relied upon her armament, the colonists upon the justness of their cause and succor from abroad. In America it was believed that the interest of France would force her to support the rebels, and if their agents were received by Louis XVI other courts would follow his example.<sup>17</sup> Howe's mission demonstrated the improbability of reconciliation, and Congress increased its efforts to secure aid from abroad. To its best talent was assigned the task of conducting relations with the hereditary enemy of Great Britain in an effort to bring to a successful conclusion a negotiation that might transfer the seat of war from the colonies and assure their ultimate independence. At the moment Congress felt it should confine its efforts to France, as it might offend the sensibilities of Versailles if similar applications were made at other courts.<sup>18</sup>

Information from Europe appeared to sanction this policy, and also to indicate that it was being adhered to by the agents abroad. Deane wrote, August 8, that the minister of foreign affairs had received him pleasantly although unofficially and had informed him no mediation would be undertaken or alliance entered into with the colonies. But since all concerned would profit by the extension of equal freedom to American and English commerce, in French ports, the king had resolved to place the trade of both upon the same footing. Deane also explained that Beaumarchais had orders from the ministry to supply munitions of war to the United States.<sup>19</sup> The same day he wrote C. W. F. Dumas, an ardent advocate of the colonial cause, that his country wanted no alliance with Holland but asked only what nature entitled all men to, a free and uninterrupted commerce.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Letters of R. H. Lee*, I, 211.

<sup>18</sup> *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin* (Smith ed.), VII, 35.

<sup>19</sup> Force, *Archives* (5th Series), I, 1014.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 1021.

Congress was not satisfied with the material aid procured by its agents in France. There was some justification for the lack of progress. Besides the caution of the court, intelligence traveled very slowly. It took weeks for a communication to pass from Paris to Philadelphia. The sentiment favorable to foreign alliances developed most rapidly in the spring and early summer, but action taken thereon as a result of the change did not reach Europe until the fall or winter. Likewise the favorable indications toward the rebels manifested by the Bourbon courts were equally long in reaching the colonies. European assistance thus utterly failed to keep pace with the galloping events on the more vigorous side of the Atlantic. In its eagerness, Congress overlooked the true reasons and concluded that the cause was not supported actively enough. And as aid grew daily more essential, three commissioners, Franklin, Jefferson, and Deane were selected on September 26, 1776, to transact the business of the United States at the court of France.<sup>21</sup> Jefferson declined the appointment and Arthur Lee was selected in his place. They were instructed to secure military stores, negotiate an alliance with Versailles and the powers with which it usually acted. Commercial connections were also to be sought when it appeared that they might strengthen the cause. For the latter purpose the draft of the proposed treaty was placed in their possession. The entire business was to be kept a profound secret. Members of Congress were forbidden to say more on the subject than that such steps had been taken as judged necessary for the purpose of obtaining foreign alliances.<sup>22</sup>

The French government had already determined to promote the anti-British movement. And Thomas Story, on October 1, 1776, direct from London brought word from Arthur Lee that the French minister for foreign affairs had sent an agent to inform him that Louis XVI would assist America. Two hundred pounds sterling worth of arms and munitions would be sent in time for the next campaign to the West Indies, there to be delivered to agents of the United States.<sup>23</sup> Lee received this information before Deane arrived in Paris. Now the latter was ordered to apply

<sup>21</sup> *Journals*, V, 827.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress*, II, 110.

immediately to the court and not to fritter away his efforts on individuals. He was also instructed to ask for a convoy of war-ships for the munitions that he might procure.<sup>24</sup> The next day he was informed that Congress had determined to attempt the negotiation of treaties of commerce and alliance with France. He was therefore to devote his energies to social amenities around the court until the arrival of his colleagues.<sup>25</sup>

The commissioners were instructed to cultivate all ministers and if occasion presented itself, to attempt to secure from their sovereigns the recognition of American independence. Treaties, however, might be entered into only on condition that nothing contrary to the proposed convention with France be inserted and provided the United States were not bound to become a party to any war which might result from the agreement. All provisions were to be reciprocal. In every case where possible, the French king was to be asked to interpose his good office and every effort was to be made to prevent Great Britain from securing allies.<sup>26</sup> Before the commissioners assembled in Paris supplementary instructions had been forwarded to them to procure eight line-of-battle ships, either by purchase or loan, well manned and fitted for service.<sup>27</sup> Congress hoped that efforts to acquire a navy would meet with immediate success, and that the Bourbon courts might be influenced to send a large fleet at their own expense to act in concert with these ships.<sup>28</sup> The first year of the war demonstrated the necessity of the British maintaining a fleet on the American coast. This gave France and Spain the opportunity to attack a divided English navy with great probability of success. Congress did not suppose the occasion would be permitted to go unimproved and concentrated its importunities upon Versailles as the leader in the Family Compact.

These expectations and high hopes were reared on domestic foundations created from local wishes, but encouragement from abroad was not wholly wanting. Deane reported on November 27, that the king would probably need all of his naval crafts. Besides, if the national vessels were employed in the service of the rebels,

<sup>24</sup> Force, *Archives*, II, 319.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 895.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 839.

<sup>28</sup> Force, *Archives*, II, 1198.

<sup>26</sup> *Journals*, VI, 884.



it would be equivalent to a declaration of war, which he thought in form at least would for some time be avoided.<sup>29</sup> If Congress, however, desired he thought it might procure any number of vessels that could be easily fitted out as fighting ships from individuals on credit at five per cent.

Meanwhile the fortunes of war continued to favor the British. However, the success of Washington at Trenton on December 26 restored a feeling of security for the winter. But there was little hope of the army being able to win victories in the spring if it were restricted to the use of domestic resources. The leaders realized the necessity of preventing a recurrence of the military catastrophe which had so nearly ended the rebellion during the past summer and autumn. The policy of seeking aid at the Bourbon courts only was abandoned, and on December 30, Congress approved directions for its commissioners to use every means in their power to secure succor from any or all of the European states. They were directed to apply to the Emperor of Germany, the Empress of Russia, as well as the Most Catholic and Most Christian Kings to prevent foreign troops from being sent to America, and if possible to obtain the recall of those already dispatched. They were to seek to induce France to assist in the war by attacking the Electorate of Hanover, or any other part of the dominion of Great Britain. If the proposals heretofore authorized were insufficient and they thought concessions would secure the coveted treaty, they were to assure Vergennes that such of the British islands of the West Indies, as in the course of the war should be taken by the combined forces, would be ceded to France. Congress would also undertake to furnish and deliver to designated ports provisions for an expedition against the West Indies to the amount of two millions of dollars, and six frigates mounting not less than twenty-four guns each, manned and fitted for the sea; and to render any other assistance which might be in its power.<sup>30</sup> A commercial treaty, similar to the one proposed to France, was to be urged upon Spain. To this was to be added the provision that if his Catholic Majesty would join in the war, the States would assist him in taking the town and harbor of Pensacola; provided

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 867.

<sup>30</sup> *Journals*, VI, 1056.