

The U.S. War of Independence: A Power Struggle Between the Thirteen Colonies, Britain and France?

By Arnold August, October 2011

Limitations of contemporary democracy in the U.S. can find some of their explanations in their origins. Recent and very revealing academic research traces the reluctant role of France to ally itself on the side of the Thirteen Colonies against England in the family feud between England and the Thirteen Colonies. It is pointed out that the origins of French assistance to the Colonies in their separatist rebellion was found in the century-long competition between England and France for world domination, with the Thirteen Colonies representing a collateral advantage for France, inter-colonial rivalry. When the Thirteen Colonies resumed trade with London shortly after the hostilities and thus double-crossed France, the latter's suspicions were confirmed.

The U.S. War of Independence against the British was featured in a special issue dedicated to this event by the *U.S. News and World Report* on the occasion of the 2008 Fourth of July celebrations. University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) professor emeritus of history Joyce Appleby claims that France was weary that the “family [England and the Thirteen colonies] make up and leave the French out. Yet that is exactly what happened.”¹ By resuming trade with London shortly after the hostilities and thus double-dealing France, adds historian and former President Bill Clinton Adviser Ted Widmer, “It was a curiously non-idealistic way to advance America’s famous idealism.”² It was pointed out that the origins of French assistance to the Colonies in the separatist rebellion was the century-long competition between England and France for world domination, with the Thirteen Colonies representing a pawn in the chess game for France. Whatever the reasons, “French assistance was perhaps the single greatest factor in the colonists’ victory.”³

¹ Appleby, Joyce. 2008. In Alex Kingsbury, “Allied With the Enemy of Our Enemy.” *U.S. News and World Report* (July 7–14), p. 48.

² Widmer, Ted. 2008. In Alex Kingsbury, “Allied With the Enemy of Our Enemy.” *U.S. News and World Report* (July 7–14), p. 48.

³ Kingsbury, Alex. 2008. “Allied With the Enemy of Our Enemy.” *U.S. News and World Report* (July 7–14), p. 48.