Effects of the Seven Years War

The British victory in the Seven Years War or as it was known in North America the French and Indian War had a great impact on the British Empire. Firstly, it meant a great expansion of British territorial claims in the New World. France lost nearly all of its North American colonies with the main blow being their loss of the large territory of Canada. France also lost all of its territory to Great Britain in the raw material rich Asian country of India. Britain’s ally in the war, Prussia, ruled by Fredrick the Great came out of the war as a European power. But the cost of the war had greatly enlarged Britain's debt. Moreover, the war generated substantial resentment towards the colonists among English leaders, who were not satisfied with the financial and military help they had received from the colonists during the war. All these factors combined to persuade many English leaders that the colonies needed a major reorganization and that the central authority should be in London. The English leaders set in motion plans to give London more control over the government of the colonies and these plans were eventually a big part of the colonial resentment towards British imperial policies that led to the American Revolution.

The war had an equally profound but very different effect on the American colonists. First of all, the colonists had learned to unite against a common foe. Before the war, the thirteen colonies had found almost no common ground and they coexisted in mutual distrust. But now they had seen that together they could be a power to be reckoned with. And the next common foe would be Britain.

With France removed from North America, the vast interior of the continent lay open for the Americans to colonize. But The English government decided otherwise. To induce a controlled population movement, they issued a Royal Proclamation, the Proclamation of 1763, which prohibited settlement west of the line drawn along the crest of the Allegheny mountains and to enforce that measure they authorized a permanent army of 10,000 regulars (paid for by taxes gathered from the colonies; most importantly the "Sugar Act" and the "Stamp Act"). This infuriated the Americans who, after having been held back by the French, now saw themselves stopped by the British in their surge west.

The Proclamation of 1763 would solve the two problems the British government felt the North American colonies were causing. One, it would stop the conflict with the Native American tribes and the colonists over the colonists encroaching on Native American land. That way without the conflict the colonists would not call for more English troops to eradicate the Native American problem and save the British Government time and money. Secondly, it would help the British Government maintain better control over the colonies if they did not stray too far from the Atlantic Coast.

For the Native American tribes of the Ohio Valley, the third major party in the French and Indian War, the British victory was disastrous. Those tribes that had allied themselves with the French had earned the enmity of the victorious English. The Iroquois Confederacy, which had allied themselves with Britain, fared only slightly better. The alliance quickly unraveled and the Confederacy began to crumble from within. The Iroquois continued to contest the English for control of the Ohio Valley for another fifty years; but they were never again in a position to deal with their white rivals on terms of military or political equality.