LEADERS AND LEADERSHIP AMONG THE IROQUOIS: NATIVE POLITICS AND RELATIONS WITH THE ENGLISH, 1748 - 1764

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ABSTRACT

LEADERS AND LEADERSHIP AMONG THE IROQUOIS: NATIVE POLITICS AND RELATIONS WITH THE ENGLISH, 1748 - 1764

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Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Iroquois Confederacy, or Five Nations, exercised great influence and power on the northern colonial frontier. Because of their geographic location, military prowess, and ability to influence other Indian groups, the Iroquois became an important element in the colonial policies of France and England. Yet, by the end of the eighteenth century, the once-powerful Five Nations were a broken, powerless people. Historians, in dealing with the relations of the Iroquois to the colonial powers, particularly England, have tended to emphasize the chronological extremes of a two-centuries-long relationship. Thus, on one hand, studies have dealt with the causes and consequences of the expansive period of Iroquois history in the early seventeenth century. On the other hand, historians have chronicled the decline and dislocation of the Five Nations during and after the American Revolution. What has been lacking in the historiography of Iroquois-English relations, however, has been an Iroquois-centered study of the period between the height of Five Nations power, in 1701, and the decline of the Confederacy after 1777. More specifically, little has been done to ascertain how relations between the Five Nations and the English colonies changed over time and the reasons for the decline of the Confederacy.

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Within the past decade, political anthropologists and ethnohistorians have developed tools and methods useful in a study of Iroquois-English relations from the perspective of the Five Nations. Two of these: a political approach to Iroquois history, and an emphasis on interest group interaction, seem particularly well suited for such a study. By focusing on the Iroquois political process, much can be learned about the nature and function of local and Confederacy decision-making as it applied to relations with the colonies. By emphasizing interest group behavior, Iroquois politics and leaders can be placed in a cultural context wherein issues, leaders, and definitions of leadership can be assessed and changes due to native perceptions of British policies identified and explained. By the application of these methods to a behavioral study of Iroquois responses to two crises in relations with the English in the eighteenth century, changes in policies and attitudes are revealed that help explain both the nature of Iroquois politics at a critical time and the decline of Five Nations power late in the century.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: A POLITICAL APPROACH TO MID - EIGHTEENTH CENTURY IROQUOIS HISTORY

The five confederated Iroquois tribes of Central New York have long been the subject of varied and intensive study by scholars. Of particular interest has been the relationship of the Five Nations to the several English colonial governments and the imperial government in London. However, a survey of the literature of Iroquois-English relations demonstrates that several significant aspects of the subject have either been ignored or dealt with in a superficial manner.

Historians who have dealt with the nature of Iroquois-English relations have followed essentially two lines of investigation: chronological and motivational. On one hand, much of the material focuses on the extremes of a two century-long relationship. Beginning with George T. Hunt's influential The Wars of the Iroquois, a number of studies have shed much light on, and added much confusion to, the seventeenth century competition for control of the fur trade.[1] On the other hand, recent works by Barbara Graymont and Anthony F. C. Wallace, among others, have shifted historical attention to the late eighteenth century. Specifically, these studies have concentrated

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[1]George T. Hunt, The Wars of the Iroquois (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972). On the subject of the fur trade in the seventeenth century, see also: Peter Wraxall, An Abridgment of Indian Affairs, ed. Charles Howard McIlwain (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1915), and Arthur H. Buffington, "The Policy of Albany and English Westward Expansion", Mississippi Valley Historical Review 8 (1922), 327-366.

on the break-down and dispossession of the Iroquois as a result of the American Revolution and their cultural rebirth through the religious revival of Handsome Lake.[2]

Of a more complex and often confusing nature has been the attempt to identify and explain the motives for the militant expansion of the Iroquois in the seventeenth century and the reasons for their decline in the late eighteenth. Hunt and Charles McIlwain initiated a lively debate over Iroquois motives in the seventeenth century by suggesting, separately, that the wars over the fur trade were the result of the Iroquois desire to assume the middleman's position relative to the French and, later, English fur markets. This view was challenged by, among others, Allen Trelease, who suggested that the underlying cause of the Beaver Wars was Five Nations insistence on controlling the fur rich western lands. While each side differed over points of detail, each reflected a similarity of opinion by assigning an economic, somewhat deterministic, motive to Iroquois policy toward Europeans and other Indians.[3]

In The Iroquois in the American Revolution, Graymont suggested that the League of the Iroquois finally collapsed because it could not accommodate to stresses and pressures placed upon it by the Anglo-American conflict. Striving to maintain its historic neutrality, the Confederacy succumbed to the diplomatic pressures of both sides and split apart, inaugurating a period of

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[2]Barbara Graymont, The Iroquois in the American Revolution (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1972); Anthony F. C. Wallace, The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca (New York: Random House, 1969).

[3]See Allen W. Trelease, Indian Affairs in Colonial New York: the Seventeenth Century(Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1971).

cultural and political decline.[4] The nature of the decline and revitalization that followed has been dealt with by Wallace. Concerned primarily with the processes of revitalization among the Seneca, Wallace concentrates on the historical and cultural events surrounding the message of Handsome Lake.[5]

While recent scholarship has added much to an understanding of the Iroquois and their relationship to English settlements and empire, it has also served to illustrate what is still lacking in the history of Iroquois-English relations. Specifically, three aspects of this subject have been given little attention by historians: two of these are cultural, the third is chronological.

First, there is a marked lack of anything approaching a study of the mechanics of decision-making within and among the Five Nations. That is not to say that historians of the Iroquois have completely ignored the political process. Both Graymont and Wallace address themselves to the political structure and, in their estimation, the major issues that influenced the Five Nations in their actions and policies. What has been lacking is a behavioral approach to Iroquois politics and the forces that shaped the political process. Such an approach has the advantage of focusing on Iroquois political processes, both intra- and inter-tribal, rather than simply Indian reaction to European initiatives. That abundant sources exist for such a study was demonstrated by William H. Fenton in "Collecting Materials for a

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[4]Graymont, The Iroquois in the American Revolution, p. 2.

[5]Wallace, The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca, chpts. 5-7.

Political History of the Six Nations".[6]

Two articles have recently appeared that suggest the value and possibilities of a political approach to the history of Indian-European relations. In "Who Should Rule At Home: Native American Politics and Indian-White Relations", P. Richard Metcalf has offered the political approach as a solution to a fundamental problem in writing Indian history: the need for a unifying theme. Borrowing from political anthropology, Metcalf has defined the political process in broad terms to include any kind of competition concerning policy, goals, and the distribution of power within a group.[7] As applied to the study of American Indian history, there is a certain logic and usefulness to such a definition. In tribal societies, such as the Iroquois, the various elements of community life were tightly integrated, not departmentalized as in western societies. Thus, a broadly-based political approach allows the historian to deal with Indian groups as they functioned; as integrated units, where religious, social, political, and military issues were all interrelated. According to Metcalf, this approach "requires historians to treat Indians as multidimensional figures, with connections to a political context within their own community as well as to the context of white encroachment."[8]

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[6]William H. Fenton, "Collecting Materials for a Political History of the Six Nations", Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 93 (1949), 233-238. For an expanded discussion of the possibilities in writing Iroquois history, see Fenton's American Indian and White Relations to 1830: Needs & Opportunities for Study (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957), passim.

[7]P. Richard Metcalf, "Who Should Rule At Home: Native American Politics and Indian-White Relations", Journal of American History 61 (1974), 651.

[8]Ibid.

Metcalf further suggests that a political approach to Indian-white relations necessitates going beyond the "tribe" as the fundamental political unit of Indian society. Depending on circumstances, the unit within which decisions were reached or problems solved could be larger than, or smaller than, the tribe.[9] Anthony Wallace and Fenton have also demonstrated that, in fact, the concept of the tribe may be largely artificial and not accurately reflective of the realities of Indian social and political organization.[10]

Robert Berkhofer, whose article "The Political Context of a New Indian History" preceded Metcalf's, goes further in suggesting uses of a political approach to Indian-white relations. Such a focus, in Berkhofer's view, can help historians deal with two seemingly contradictory themes in Indian history: the simultaneous existence of forces creating change and the persistence of traditional folkways. By looking at decision-making processes over time, a perspective on the forces causing changes and the nature of persistence can be obtained. In addition, Berkhofer emphasizes the study of the phenomenon of factionalism within Indian society. A closer look at the nature and origins of factionalism can reveal information about political processes, issues, and stresses within Indian communities, both native and European-initiated.[11]

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[9]Ibid., 651-52.

[10]See Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Political Organization and Land Tenure Among the Northeastern Indians, 1600-1830", Southwestern Journal of Anthropology 13 (1957), 303-311; and William H. Fenton, "Locality as a Basic Factor in the Development of Iroquois Social Structure", in William H. Fenton, ed., Symposium On Local Diversity in Iroquois Culture, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 149 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1951), 35-53.

[11]Robert Berkhofer, "The Political Context of a New Indian History", in Norris Hundley, ed., The American Indian (Santa Barbara: American Bibliographical Center-Clio Press, Inc., 1974), pp. 101-126.

Both authors point to weaknesses in this method. Of special significance is the tendency to couch Indian behavior in terms of native responses and reactions to European initiatives. Metcalf points to the traditional emphasis on "pagan-Christian" or "Progressive-Conservative" themes in the study of factionalism and reservation life.[12] Of equal importance is the failure to see Indian political processes during contact as dynamic attempts to respond to change. It must be recognized that, within a given contact situation, Indians as well as Europeans were confronted with alternatives and were not merely victims of forces beyond their control.[13]

The second neglected aspect of Iroquois-English relations is, in part, related to the first. Scholars have tended to accept the existence of a "League of the Iroquois" as a political and diplomatic entity as well as a cultural expression. However, little has been done to investigate the dynamics of the League in a political context to determine whether it served as an arena for working out problems of leadership, relations with Europeans, intra-League unity, or the distribution of power. One fundamental error appears to have been the acceptance of eighteenth century European views of the League as a coercive governmental body able to reach decisions and apply sanctions in a European sense. The danger here is one of distorting Indian institutions by defining and studying them in western, rather than Indian, terms.

Finally, there is the issue of chronology. As has been previously demonstrated, the bulk of studies relating to Iroquois-white relations have dealt either with the era of the trade wars and Iroquois expansion in the

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[12] Metcalf, "Who Should Rule At Home", 652.

[13] Ibid., 652-65.

seventeenth century, or the decline of the Confederacy at the end of the eighteenth. From the time of the inception of the famous "play-off" system in 1701 to the western uprisings of 1763, there is a period of sixty years that has been virtually ignored by historians.[14] It is not the purpose of this study to suggest reasons for that neglect, but rather to suggest some possibilities in dealing with this period. The problem becomes obvious after a survey of the literature. In 1701, the Iroquois emerged as one of three "great powers" on the frontier; the diplomatic and military equals of France and England. In 1783, they were politically and socially shattered, living in enclaves in western Canada and New York at the mercy of the English and American governments. How did such a transition take place? A study of the neglected years from 1701 to 1763 may offer some tentative explanations. Specifically, it is suggested that a study of Iroquois-English relations with regard to the western frontier between 1748 and 1764, stressing Iroquois political processes, may reveal many of the problems and issues that accounted for the fracturing and decline of the Confederacy in the late eighteenth century.

The 1748-1764 period produced a number of changes in the relationship of the Five Nations to the English colonies and home government. During this time, the old Covenant Chain relationship, which had bound the Iroquois and English closely together, was weakened and drastically altered. The play-off system, essential to Iroquois autonomy, was shattered. Iroquois

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[14]The one significant exception is Randolph C. Downes, Council Fires on the Upper Ohio (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1940). While purporting to see the period from 1720 to 1795 from the Indian's perspective, Downes concentrates largely on European policy and decision-making.

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power, in real terms, declined. Westward expansion, after a comparative lull of sixty years, again posed grave threats to Iroquois security and prosperity. In short, the period offers a number of critical situations that acted on Iroquois-English relations simultaneously. These situations offer a context within which to examine the political processes of the Five Nations and in which to ascertain the nature of the Iroquois "League".

A study of Iroquois-English relations in the west from 1748 to 1764 suggests several specific questions: what men and issues, both Indian and English, shaped the decision-making process; what were the motives behind Iroquois actions and stated policies; did the Five Nations successfully adapt to changes in frontier diplomacy; in what ways did the Iroquois decision-making structure and process change, and what elements persisted throughout the period? In the decision-making process, who were the leaders; how did the definition of "leader" change over time? Finally, what was the nature of the Iroquois League? What kinds of functions did it perform? Did it contribute to the Iroquois ability to adapt to the changing context of relations with the British colonies?

The fifty years prior to 1748 had witnessed a continuous, indecisive, sparring between France and England in North America. This conflict was at once economic, geographical, and political. The mainstay of the French colonial economy in North America had long been the fur trade. By the end of the seventeenth century, French Canadians had been forced to go farther west in order to obtain prime pelts in sufficient quantity to support the trade.[15] In English New York and New England the trade was also an important,

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[15]The Canadian trade and the problems it created for France are examined in William J. Eccles, France in America (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1972), and William J. Eccles, The Canadian Frontier, 1534-1760 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974).

but by no means vital, business enterprise. In order to protect its trade from English competition, France found it necessary to prevent the penetration of the Great Lakes region and the Illinois country by English traders and settlers. To do this it was necessary to control the river systems that led to these regions. Through the use of mission stations and fortified trading posts, the French eventually gained control over the Niagara portage, the strait at Detroit, and the lower Ohio Valley. The object was to create an arc of settlements and military posts from Quebec to the Gulf of Mexico which would prevent English penetration beyond the Appalachian Mountains. Such a program seemingly reached fruition when, in 1718, New Orleans was established at the mouth of the Mississippi River.

Politically, the struggle centered on gaining control, or at least influence, over the several dozen Indian groups occupying the disputed lands. These people held the key to the success of either French or English policy relative to the west, for these Indians supplied the furs essential to the trade and effectively occupied the lands both powers sought.

The Iroquois of central New York had always played a significant role in this imperial contest. By virtue of their geographic location, they stood between the French in Canada and the English in New York and to the south. Further, the western member of their confederacy, the Seneca, occupied both sides of the Niagara portage, the strategic link between the St. Lawrence Valley and the upper Great Lakes.

The Iroquois dealt creatively with the changing circumstances of the early phases of the struggle. In fact, their involvement began as an extension of the half century-long trade wars, during which they had attempted, albeit unsuccessfully, to drive the French and French-allied Indians from

the fur hunting grounds of the eastern Great Lakes. English solicitation of Iroquois military aid after 1689 allowed the Five Nations to pursue their own ambitions with the support of English weapons and manpower.

Recognizing their strategic location relative to the two European powers, the Iroquois were able to gain substantial concessions from each side in line of trade, weapons, and guarantees of security and alliance. This attempt to balance French and English power in the west was institutionalized in 1701 through a series of negotiations which culminated in two treaties; one signed at Montreal, the other at Albany. These treaties established the "play-off" system, whereby the Five Nations sought to maintain their own power and security by maintaining a state of armed neutrality in the face of European expansion and conflict.[16] This amounted to a diplomatic revolution, making the Iroquois not only the diplomatic equals of the Europeans, but the indispensible partners of both sides. To the French, the Five Nations promised neutrality and a willingness to allow western Indians passage through Iroquois lands in order to trade at Montreal and other posts. To the English, their traditional trading partners, the Iroquois pledged cooperation in bringing western tribes to Albany for trade and, in a move of some significance for later events, ceded for defensive purposes their western lands. These lands, especially those in the upper Ohio Valley, would, in the course of the next fifty years, become the focal point of a protracted and decisive conflict between England and France.

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[16] For the details of the 1701 treaties and Iroquois policy at that time, see Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Origins of Iroquois Neutrality: The Grand Settlement of 1701", Pennsylvania History 24 (1957), 223-235.

The Iroquois policy of armed neutrality worked well during the succeeding four decades of international competition over the trans-Appalachian west. During Queen Anne's War and again during King George's War, the Five Nations, much to the consternation of their English allies, "remained on their mats" and allowed the European powers to wage war on each other. There was little that the colony of New York or the royal government could do. Any attempt to force Iroquois participation could alienate the very Indians who protected the colony's western frontier.

During the period from 1701 to 1748, treaty relations with the English became more complex. This is best illustrated by tracing the evolution of a treaty institution known as the Covenant Chain. This term was used metaphorically to describe the special relationship that had developed since the mid-seventeenth century between the Five Nations, Dutch, and English governments of New York. Under this system, the Europeans recognized the Iroquois as the dominant Indian group in the region and supported them in their control over the Mahicans, other so-called "River Indians", and later the Delawares and Shawnee. In return, the Iroquois were expected to guard the western frontier, using their dependent tribes as auxiliaries, and to police the west for their Dutch, and later, English partners.[17]

By the middle of the eighteenth century, this Covenant Chain had been enlarged and extended to include other colonies, notably Pennsylvania. In 1731 that colony institutionalized its earlier dealings with the Iroquois by inviting representatives of the Five Nations to Philadelphia. A council fire

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[17]For the historical development of the Covenant Chain idea, see Francis Jennings, "The Constitutional Evolution of the Covenant Chain", Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 115 (1971), 88-96.

was symbolically created and a treaty negotiated whereby the Quaker colony, at the behest of its Indian agent, James Logan, entered the Chain of Friendship. The reasons were similar to those outlined above: recognition of Iroquois claims of conquest over other tribes and lands in return for Five Nations help in managing the frontier. Such management was necessary for the profitable maintenance of the fur trade and land speculation schemes.[18] As a result of this arrangement, the Pennsylvania officials acknowledged Iroquois dominion over the Susquehanna and Ohio Valley lands and control over the Indians occupying those lands. To the Five Nations, this meant simply recognition of the traditional patterns of mutual obligations that had been worked out over several decades between the Confederacy and tribes who, for a variety of reasons, had placed themselves under Iroquois protection and nominal control. To Englishmen, this arrangement meant the simplification of Indian relations by placing all negotiations in the hands of the Iroquois council at Onondaga. What this meant in practical terms can be illustrated by the now famous 1742 Philadelphia conference, held to settle differences that had arisen over the 1737 Walking Purchase. When the Delawares balked at consummating the questionable purchase, the Five Nations were brought in. With no little amount of prompting from Logan's agents, they publically warned the Delawares to vacate the deeded land and remove to a spot designated by the Onondaga council.[19]

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[18]Anthony F. C. Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 1696-1760: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), passim.

[19]For a traditional explanation of this event, see Julian P. Boyd, "Indian Affairs in Pennsylvania, 1736-1762", in Carl Van Doren and Julian P. Boyd, eds., Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin, 1736-1762 (1938; reprint Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1977), pp. xxviii-xxxiii. For a conflicting ethnohistorical perspective, see Francis Jennings, "The Delaware Interregnum", Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 89 (1965), 174-198.

Coupled with the widening scope of the Covenant Chain was a shift in Iroquois population during the first four decades of the eighteenth century. Particularly after 1730, large numbers of Iroquois people had migrated into the upper Ohio Valley, settling at Cuyahoga, Logstown, and along the upper Allegheny. The reasons for this migration are still unclear, but food shortages at home has been suggested as one possible explanation.[20] The result of this transplanting of Iroquois people was the slow, but perceptible, development of a new Iroquois "nation", the Mingo. The term as used on the frontier came to define any and all of the Iroquois then residing on the Ohio. What was to be more significant was the degree of political and cultural autonomy that developed along with the new identity. While still nominally subordinate to the Iroquois in New York, the Mingo habitually stressed their independence and had become, by the time of the Revolution, a separate people.

The circumstances that had governed Iroquois-English relations for half a century suddenly changed in the closing years of the seventeen forties. Beginning with King George's War, events took place that shook the foundation on which rested the complexity of relationships that secured Iroquois power and independence. Two decades later, in 1768, at the treaty grounds near Fort Stanwix, the Five Nations would face an entirely different set of circumstances from those that had prevailed since 1701.

Much of Iroquois culture during the fifty years before 1748 had survived intact, and the Five Nations still reflected much of their traditional customs, beliefs, and lifestyles. At the same time, sustained contact with Europeans had wrought a number of changes, both in material culture and in attitudes

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[20]Downes, Council Fires, p. 44.

and social structure.

While accurate figures for the period prior to 1768 are lacking, indications are that Iroquois population remained relatively stable throughout the early eighteenth century. Estimates made by anthropologists and ethnographers have placed Iroquois population for the period at between 8,500 and 15,000 people.[21] In 1763, Sir William Johnson, Indian Superintendent for the northern colonies, sent an enumeration of all tribes within his department to the Board of Trade. This list shows the Five Nations, exclusive of listed dependents, to have a total of 1,950 warriors, which would place the total population at between 8,000 and 10,000 people.[22] Further, sizable numbers of Iroquois had migrated westward to the Ohio Valley and Lake Erie. Conrad Weiser placed their number at 306 fighting men, or a total population of perhaps 1,200 people.[23]

These 9,000 to 11,000-odd Iroquois were living in a large number of villages, varying in size from small hunting camps to semi-permanent towns such as Canajoharie and Genesee. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the classic longhouse had given way to smaller dwellings in most towns, and stockaded villages were a thing of the past.[24] Written evidence tends to in-

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[21]William H. Fenton, "The Iroquois in History", in Eleanor Burke Leacock and Nancy Oestreich Lurie, eds., North American Indians in Historical Perspective (New York: Random House, 1971), pp. 134-35.

[22]"Enumeration of Indians within the Northern Department", in Edmund B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, VII (Albany: Weed, Parsons & Company, 1857), pp. 582-84.

[23]Lawrence Henry Gipson, The British Empire Before the American Revolution, IV, Zones of International Friction: North America, South of the Great Lakes Region, 1748-1754 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), p. 185.

[24]Wallace, Death and Rebirth of the Seneca, pp. 22-24.

dicate that the Iroquois were living in a widely scattered state, or at least it appeared so to security-minded Englishmen. There are repeated references at treaty conferences of requests that the Five Nations go back to the old ways of living together in large, fortified, villages, and stop living in such a decentralized condition. The continuing necessity of hunting for furs may partly explain this tendency as might also the suggestion that famine, or at least local food shortages, were plaguing the Five Nations at this time.[25] French mission stations and trading posts such as those at Oswegatchie and Niagara also had the effect of drawing some Iroquois away from the more settled areas.

These villages and their occupants stood at the center of a vast expanse of Iroquois-owned, or dominated, territory. Aside from the traditional homelands along the Mohawk and Genesee Rivers, the Iroquois laid claim to the Susquehanna Valley, the Ohio Valley as far as the Great Kanawa River, the southern shore of Lake Erie, and to settlements near the Bay of Quinte on the northern shore of Lake Ontario. To the north, their lands extended to the St. Lawrence River and the mountains of Vermont. Much of this land had come to the Five Nations through the trade wars of the previous century, or through claims supported by interested English governments as part of the Covenant Chain relationship. These lands were occupied by a variety of Indian people, representing parts or all of tribes who had been dispossessed by the combined effects of disease, war, and land-hungry Europeans. While different in terms of culture and history, these people were looked upon as members of the Iroquois Confederacy. They served as its "props" and, in

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[25]Report of Myndert Wemp, in Documents Relative, VII, pp. 101-102.

return for helping to protect the Five Nations, they were given land, security, and an opportunity to share in the Iroquois vision of a universal, peaceful community as taught by the prophet Deganawida. In terms of numbers and the role played in the events of the period, the Delawares and Shawnees occupied a particularly important position as dependent tribes.

Materially, the Iroquois in the 1740s were showing signs of a century of contact with fur traders, merchants, farmers, and other elements of the English community. Muskets, plows, domestic animals, cloth, brightwork, and household utensils were all common sights in Iroquois villages by mid-century. This adoption of European material culture had led to greater changes in some aspects of Iroquois culture. As an example, warfare, once a localized affair of limited impact, was now becoming Europeanized both in terms of methods and objectives. The trade wars had an economic as well as a cultural motive and had resulted in the destruction of whole tribes, notably the Huron. Guns had supplanted bows, and clubs had given way to steel hatchets. There was also a revolutionary change in attitudes toward warfare. In chiding their English allies for a lack of military effort against the French, one group of Iroquois suggested that the English should follow "our manner [which] is to destroy a nation and there's an end of it."[26]

However, as Anthony Wallace has reminded us, adoption of European goods did not indicate that Mohawks, Onondagas, or Senecas were any less Iroquoian in their attitudes and non-material culture.[27] Evidence suggests that many

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[26]"Extract from Indian Papers", August, 1756, in James Sullivan, et. al., eds., The Papers of Sir William Johnson, 14 vols. (Albany: State University of New York, 1921-1965), IX, p. 517.

[27]Wallace, Death and Rebirth of the Seneca, p. 25.

elements of Iroquois culture had survived intact from pre-contact times.

Women continued to play a central role in family life and the political life of the Five Nations. The clan system was still organized matrilineally, with the mothers of each clan segment in a village selecting a representative to the village councils. Politically, there is evidence to suggest that, as late as the 1750s, women were playing an influential role in councils, decision-making, and leader selection. In 1756, at one of several councils held with Sir William Johnson, Scarouady, the Ohio Half-king, requested that Johnson bring the women up to date on events, "for their influence is a matter of no small consequence with our fighters." Johnson, hard pressed to keep the Iroquois faithful and actively employed in the English interest, willingly complied.[28]

The forms of decision-making appear to have survived relatively intact into the middle of the century. The protocol of the council, the use of the condolence ceremony, and decision-making through consensus are all very much in evidence in the written records of the period. What does appear to have been changing was the status of leaders and definitions of leadership. Iroquois leadership often appeared confusing to Europeans who talked to one man while, in reality, negotiating with groups of men and women who remained nameless and faceless throughout the negotiating process. Evidence indicates that by the 1740s negotiations with the English were being conducted by men other than the fifty sachems of the Confederacy council. These men, the "Pine Tree Chiefs", were of less than sachem rank, selected by the Onondaga council as spokesmen or messengers. The criterion for selection

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[28]"Journal of Indian Transactions", 1756, in Documents Relative, VII, p. 103.

appears to have been the nature of the Pine Tree Chief's relationship with the English. Thus, village elders such as Hendrick Peter of Canajoharie, or Red Head of Onondaga, acted as points of contact between their people and English officials.[29] What has not yet been determined is how far these Pine Tree Chiefs went in acting independently of Onondaga or the village councils, or whether they may have been partly responsible for the factional disputes that arose within the Iroquois community during the eighteenth century.

Factionalism, on an intra-confederacy and inter-tribal basis, was very much in evidence by the middle of the century. There was a recognizable pro-French faction within the Seneca that had its roots in the imperial rivalries earlier in the century.[30] A more obvious conflict, in terms of its appearance in the records, was that between the Upper, or Canajoharie, Mohawks, and the Lower, or Fort Hunter, Mohawk village. By the 1740s this conflict seems to have become institutionalized to the point where references to meetings specifically identified the "Canajoharies and Mohawks."[31] The questions that remain to be answered are to what degree such factionalism was long term or short-lived, and whether it can be attributed to issues arising from contact, or from purely Iroquois sources.

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[29] Fenton, "The Iroquois in History", p. 148.

[30] Wallace, Death and Rebirth of the Seneca, p. 39.

[31] "An Indian Conference", February, 1755, in Johnson Papers, I, p. 453.

CHAPTER II

CRISIS IN THE WEST: THE INTER - WAR YEARS, 1748 - 1754

Writing to his colony's official interpreter in October of 1750, Pennsylvania's Provincial Secretary, Richard Peters, noted that "Indian affairs are in a most lamentable condition. It seems to me that our only game to play is with the Ohio Indians and Twightwees."[32] This statement was indicative of a dramatic change then taking place in Iroquois-English relations in the Ohio Country. This change was based largely on the dual perceptions of an increased French threat to English commercial interests in the Valley and a decrease in Iroquois ability to redress the threatened balance of power. Acting on these perceptions, Pennsylvania sought to protect her interests by direct involvement in the affairs of the Ohio Valley Indians. Such a policy struck at the heart of the Covenant Chain relationship by which the Five Nations were upheld as the sole bargaining agent and political force in the region. The ultimate result of this shift in policy was an Anglo-French confrontation in the Ohio Country, the disruption of traditional Indian-Indian relations in the region, and the beginning of a general conflict that threatened the security and integrity of the Iroquois Confederacy and its position relative to England and France.

The story of the conflict on the Ohio has been well documented and retold, largely from the perspective of the European participants. What has

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[32] Van Doren and Boyd, Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin, p. lxiii.

been given far less attention is the position and actions of the Ohio Indians and the Iroquois in the years prior to the beginning of open warfare. In particular, little has been said on the question of whether English perceptions concerning Iroquois power were correct. Further, there is a need to understand Iroquois policy in the Ohio Country in the years after 1748 to determine why the Five Nations acted as they did in specific instances, or why they chose not to act at all. Before pursuing this subject, it is necessary to review conditions in the Ohio Country between 1748 and 1754 and follow the behavior of the various participants as a crisis developed.

In 1748, the Ohio Valley was inhabited by a variety of Indians, many of whom had only recently moved into the region. The Valley was dominated, technically, by the Five Nations, who had laid claim to it as a result of their victory over the Erie and other indigenous peoples in the seventeenth century. While few Iroquois inhabited the region prior to the 1740s, they encouraged its settlement by other bands and tribal groups in an effort to create an effective buffer between the Confederacy proper and the westward moving peoples of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. Much the same situation prevailed in the Susquehanna Valley, where Delaware, Conoy, Tutelo, and Tuscarora bands acted as a screen between the Iroquois and English settlements to the south.

Many of the Indians who eventually settled in the Ohio Country moved there to escape the same kind of English encroachment that the Iroquois were so anxious to avoid. The most significant of these groups was the Delaware, who began moving west in large numbers in the 1730s, as their lands in the Delaware Valley were expropriated by the Penns. Another group was the so-called Eastern Shawnee, who had migrated into Pennsylvania from the southern

Ohio Valley and had moved west after 1720. A cosmopolitan native population was further created by the presence of the Twightwees, or Miami, from the Sandusky and Detroit areas, some few bands of Ottawas, the Wyandot who moved eastward during King George's War, and settlements of Seneca, Mohawk, and Cayuga hunters.[33]

Evidence suggests that Iroquois political dominion over the Ohio Valley and its people was of recent origin and tenuous at best. In 1748, at a conference held at Logstown on the Ohio, Conrad Weiser noted that he had been approached by the Seneca Tanacharison, who requested some trade goods to be used by him as presents. Tanacharison and his Oneida counterpart, Scarouady, had been dispatched by the Onondaga council to uphold Iroquois interests in the Ohio Valley and to act as speakers for the officially mute "hunters" in the region. Their appointment had been so recent, in fact, that they had "nothing in their Council bag, . . . either to recompense a Messenger or to get Wampum to do business, . . ."[34]

During the decade prior to 1748, English traders, most of them from Pennsylvania, had penetrated deep into French dominated territory south of Lake Erie. Some of these men had simply followed their former customers as they moved into the Ohio region. Others, principally George Croghan, sought to penetrate the French trading empire and deal directly with Indians hereto-

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[33]On the subject of the Indian population on the Ohio, see: Downes, Council Fires, chpts. 1, 2; Gipson, Zones of International Friction: North America, South of the Great Lakes Region, 1748-1754, chpts. 6, 7; Francis Jennings, "The Indians' Revolution", in Alfred F. Young, ed., The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), pp. 321-36; Paul A. W. Wallace, Indians in Pennsylvania (Harrisburg: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1968), chpts. 16, 18.

[34]Wallace, Conrad Weiser, p. 269.

fore outside the English sphere of influence.[35] Backed by superior quality goods at cheaper prices than the French were offering, Croghan and his fellow businessmen were making a shambles of the French trading network, driving French traders from the field and, far worse, drawing local tribes into the English trading establishment. Some groups, such as the Miami and Wyandot, physically moved east from Detroit to settle in the Cuyahoga and Miami River valleys, closer to British goods and British protection.

The result of this economic activity was the transformation of a previously peaceful region into a cockpit of Anglo-French conflict for economic and political control of the area. With the sudden arrival of numerous, well-supplied English traders, the delicate balance of power in the west had been upset. Faced with English invasion and the loss of their own western empire, the French reacted quickly. Their reaction, like that of the English as suggested by Richard Peters, was radically different from what had been common in the period prior to 1748. Instead of working diplomatically through the Iroquois to remove the English traders and restore the balance of power, the French determined on unilateral military action. Further, that action was not aimed at restoring a former condition; it was aimed at driving the English from the area and extending French authority over the entire trans-Appalachian region. The logic behind such a plan seems similar to that which prompted a shift in English policy at the same time: the realization that the Five Nations could not or would not act effectively to maintain the balance of power in the west.[36] In 1748, as the French began making plans for their

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[35]An excellent summary of Pennsylvania's trading activity on the Ohio prior to 1748 is found in William A. Hunter's "Traders on the Ohio: 1730", Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine 35 (1952), 85-92.

[36]Wallace, Death and Rebirth of the Seneca, pp. 111-14.

military sweep of the Ohio Valley, Pennsylvania's officials were taking their first, uncertain, steps away from the Covenant Chain and toward a new Indian policy.

It may be argued that this change in English policy toward the Ohio Indians and the west was unplanned and that Pennsylvania, and later Virginia, simply took advantage of circumstances as they developed. The same may be said of the Ohio Indians, who acted to secure the best possible position for themselves in the face of a growing Anglo-French competition for a region that these Indians still saw as their own. Just how far these people were willing to go toward maintaining their own security is illustrated by the 1747 conference held at Philadelphia. This meeting, unplanned and taking the English somewhat by surprise, was held at the request of the chiefs and warriors representing the various Ohio Indians, including a substantial number of Iroquois. The speaker was Scarouady, whose name appeared in the records for the first time. Concerned about the war then going on between England and France, Scarouady, speaking for the "young men", said that his people were unhappy with the decision of the "old men" to remain neutral and were willing to fight with the English, if they could be given something other than "sticks & Hickeries" with which to attack the French.[37] The "old men" referred to by Scarouady were the sachems of Onondaga. Not only were the Ohio Indians willing to engage in the war in the hopes of establishing a permanent English trade in their region but, Scarouady hinted, they would establish their own council fire the following year at Logstown and that the English should council with them there at that time.

The 1747 meeting evidenced a striking amount of independence on the part

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[37] Wallace, Conrad Weiser, p. 260.

of Indians who were, in the eyes of the Five Nations, only "hunters" unfit to act as diplomats or councilors. The willingness of these people to take decisive action while the Iroquois remained aloof from the conflict prompted Pennsylvania to respond by sending a small present to the Ohio, to be followed next year by a full conference at Logstown. The decision was not easily arrived at and prompted a debate between James Logan, who wished to maintain the old relationship with the Iroquois, and those, including Weiser and Richard Peters, who saw the advantages of direct intervention in the Ohio Valley. In the end, considerations of trade and practicality won and Pennsylvania began to shift its long-standing position relative to Onondaga and the western tribes. Iroquois reaction to this threat to the Covenant Chain was predictable, but muted. Prior to departing for Logstown in 1748, Weiser met with Shickellamy, Iroquois representative on the Susquehanna. Shickellamy suggested that any direct negotiations with the Ohio Indians were inappropriate and would undermine the authority of the Onondaga council in its dealings with these and other dependent Indians.[38]

Before Weiser could depart for Logstown, another delegation of Indians arrived. At Lancaster, in July of 1748, Scarouady returned with a large delegation of Twightwees who were seeking admission into the Covenant Chain. They may have been prompted to do so by Croghan and other English traders who had been active among these people for several years. Speaking through Scarouady, the Twightwees held out the prospect of a lucrative trade in return for English protection. This protection was all the more necessary

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[38] Ibid., p. 262.

since the Twightwees had already broken with the French and had moved away from Detroit. Events within the next four years would prove their concern for security correct. The Miami alliance offered dazzling opportunities for Pennsylvania's traders and merchants. Indications were that a successful treaty with the Twightwees would result in similar alliances with virtually all the Ohio and Illinois tribes. The offer was too good to refuse. On the 19th of July a treaty was concluded by which the Miamis were solemnly brought into the Covenant Chain as the "brothers" of the English and Iroquois.[39] Two things should be noted here. First, it was the colony that was inviting in a new member to the Covenant, with the approval of the Ohio Iroquois, but without the immediate support of Onondaga. Second, the importance and independence of the Miami tribe was confirmed by their status as one of the "bretheren" rather than as "nephew" or "child", terms that reflected dependent status.

With Weiser's arrival on the Ohio and participation in the lighting of the council fire at Logstown, Pennsylvania's change in policy was virtually complete. Economic considerations, coupled with the apparent refusal of the Iroquois to act in the colony's interest against the French, made direct alliances with the Ohio Indians both profitable and strategically necessary. No sooner had Pennsylvania made her move than the French began to reclaim the region for Louis XV. Celeron's expedition of 1749 and the appearance in the Valley of the Joncaire brothers and other French agents brought the two sides and the Indians closer to a renewal of the imperial conflict.

Virginia provided another, albeit negative, incentive for the Ohio In-

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[39] Van Doren and Boyd, Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin, pp. xlviii-xlix; 113-122.

dians to construct alliances with the Pennsylvanians. While Weiser was at Logstown, a group of gentlemen from Virginia were busily organizing the Ohio Company for the greater exploitation of the Ohio Valley and the greater profit for themselves. Within two years they had dispatched their advance agent, Christopher Gist, on a scouting mission into the Valley; a mission whose purpose was the location of land suitable for sale and settlement by the Company under provisions of its royal charter. Gist's appearance, coinciding as it did with increased French military activity, increased feelings of apprehension among the local Indians.[40] Among those looking with concern at this stranger with the compass were the Ohio half-kings and the Onondaga council. Word of Gist's mission was certainly transmitted to Onondaga. His mission was certainly no secret since, as he stated, he was questioned closely by suspicious Indians about his presence in the Valley.[41] Acting on behalf of Virginia, Conrad Weiser approached the Onondaga council with an invitation to come to the colony and formally clear Iroquois title to the land Gist had selected; land that, in the opinion of the Virginia government, was already within the defined limits of the colony. This the Iroquois refused to do, citing the fact that such a meeting was without precedent and that pressing business prevented negotiations. Not to be undone by the seeming intransigence of one group of Indians, the Ohio Company had instructed Gist to invite the local tribes to Virginia for the same purpose. The prevailing opinion seemed to be that signatures were needed on a deed, it did

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[40] Jennings, "Indians' Revolution", pp. 324-25.

[41] Lois Mulkearn, ed., George Mercer Papers Relating to the Ohio Company of Virginia (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1954), pp. 1-39.

not really matter whose they were. At any rate, the Ohio Indians, speaking through Tanacharison, indicated their reluctance to attend.[42]

By 1750 then, the Ohio Valley Indians and their nominal overlords in New York were facing a crisis. The region, long a safe haven against white expansion, was now the target of Pennsylvanian, Virginian, and French interests. Thomas and Chabert Joncaire, Christopher Gist and company, and the Pennsylvania traders were all competing for land, trade, and political favors from the local Indians. Something of the dilemma faced by these Indians and the basic ambivalence of Iroquois policy at the time can be gathered by examining the careers of the two Ohio half-kings: Tanacharison and Scarouady.

Little is known about either of these men prior to their arrival in the Ohio Valley; in fact, any exact determination of that arrival is difficult. Tanacharison appears to have been the senior of the two, at least in authority, being referred to most often as "the Half-king". Scarouady inherited the official title upon Tanacharison's death in 1755. That both men were recent arrivals on the Ohio is testified to by their exchange with Weiser in 1748. Evidence suggests that they arrived either in 1747 or shortly before. Scarouady was present at the 1747 Philadelphia conference, which seems to have been his first appearance at such an event.[43]

The title "half-king" applied to these men is one example of the Euro-

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[42] Gipson, Zones of International Friction: North America, South of the Great Lakes, 1748-1754, pp. 42-49.

[43] Little biographic information exists for either Tanacharison or Scarouady. However, useful information can be found in: William A. Hunter, Forts on the Pennsylvania Frontier, 1753-1758 (Harrisburg: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1960), chpts. 1, 2; Lois Mulkearn, "Half-King: Seneca Diplomat of the Ohio Valley", Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine 37 (1954), 65-81; Wallace, Indians in Pennsylvania, pp. 178-79.

pean tendency to equate Indian ranks and functions in western terms. Neither man was a king in any European sense. Their coersive power was severely limited and much of their authority came to rest on English, rather than Indian, aid and acceptance. Rather, these men reflected the traditional Indian view of reciprocal obligations and consensual authority. Each man had been dispatched to the Valley to reside with, and serve as Iroquois representative to, one of the two major Indian groups in the area. Tanacharison was sent to the Delaware, Scarouady to the Shawnee, who knew him as Monacatootha.[44] Their task appears to have been twofold: to act as the Iroquois spokesmen on the ground and to uphold decisions arrived at by the Onondaga council; and to act as spokesmen for the local Indians who, by Iroquois definition, were officially mute. Thus, in a real sense, each man served two masters, one in New York and another in the Ohio Valley. What complicated their position was the introduction of other men from Pennsylvania and Virginia who would also be masters. It should also be noted that the selection of these men was not haphazard by any means. Tanacharison, a Seneca who may have lived on the Ohio for some years, was selected as spokesman for the Delaware since that tribe traditionally looked to the Seneca as their special protectors of "fathers". The Oneida had a similar relationship with the Shawnee who had migrated from the Susquehanna Valley. Thus the appointment of Scarouady, an Oneida, to act as spokesman for that tribe.

The primary responsibility of these men was to maintain the Ohio Valley as a demilitarized region and one controlled by the Iroquois. This was necessary in order to ensure the security of the dependent peoples and to prevent the Five Nations from being drawn into any European struggle. Increas-

[44]Wallace, Indians in Pennsylvania, pp. 178-79.

ingly, this policy became untenable, with the Half-kings seeking English aid against what they saw as French military aggression. The result was precisely what the Iroquois and local tribes had tried to avoid: a European conflict that threatened the security of the region and the stability of local political relations. To blame such circumstances entirely on the Ohio Half-kings is to ignore the nature of the situation in which they and their followers found themselves. The position that they were expected to maintain became more and more difficult in view of Celeron's expedition and the activities of the Ohio Company and English traders. Further, they could not, practically speaking, ignore the political realities in the Ohio Country, particularly the growing political and military significance of the local tribes. Finally, in the absence of direct Iroquois intervention in the affairs of the region, Tanacharison and Scarouady were ultimately forced to act alone in the best interests of their charges and themselves. They were censored and at times repudiated by Onondaga, yet they did act positively and creatively to protect the Ohio Country and its people from invasion.

Between 1748 and 1754, the Ohio Indians, through the Half-kings, engaged in a number of conferences and treaties with the governments of Pennsylvania and Virginia. From the Indian point of view, these conferences served to widen the political gap between the Iroquois and their nominal wards on the Ohio. They also served to enhance the newly declared independent status of the Ohio Indians, particularly the Mingo Iroquois. In addition, these meetings are indicative of the continuing effort by the Ohio Indians to work out an accommodation with the Europeans while maintaining their independence. Economic considerations influenced these people to seek English aid against the French, but the Indians continued, on a local level, the larger play-off

system that had become characteristic of Indian diplomacy throughout the period. Not until 1752 did the Ohio Indians give tacit agreement to the military occupation of the Valley and, even then, evidence suggests that the agreement was more by way of a political expedient than a fundamental change of policy.

The first, and in some ways most significant, of these conferences was held at Logstown in the Fall of 1748. The meeting was held to confirm an alliance created in July of that year between the Twightwees and the Pennsylvanians and Iroquois. At the same time, Conrad Weiser, representing the colony, was to give formal recognition to the new council fire at Logstown, as announced at the 1747 Philadelphia meeting. The lighting of this fire was a symbolic act of independence on the part of the Ohio Indians. It announced to all, including the Five Nations, their self-proclaimed status as councilors and diplomats able to conduct business in their own name.[45] Having seized the balance of power in the region by acting independently of the Five Nations, the Ohio Indians, led by the Mingo Iroquois, were free to negotiate with Pennsylvania, Virginia, or the French as their own interests dictated. They gratefully accepted Weiser's gift of 1,000 pounds sterling on behalf of Pennsylvania and Virginia, but made no commitment other than promises to maintain the trade and give shelter to English traders.

It should be noted that the choice of Logstown as the new capital of the Ohio Indians was no accident. Logstown was the home of Tanacharison and was the major Iroquois community on the upper Ohio. It appears that the lighting of the council fire there served to enhance the power and prestige of

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[45]Nicholas B. Wainwright, George Croghan, Wilderness Diplomat (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), pp. 17-20.

that sachem as well as the people he represented. In fact, Tanacharison may have been particularly sensitive about his position as leader of the Ohio Indians. Upon Weiser's arrival in 1748, delegates from the Delaware villages at Kuskuskis on the Mahoning River to the north asked that the council be moved to that site. At Tanacharison's urging, Weiser refused, saying that Logstown had been selected as the proper site for the meeting.[46] Thus it appears that the Half-king may have been struck by a sense of his own stature as the local power broker. For whatever reason, Tanacharison was henceforth the acknowledged leader of the Ohio Indians, Iroquois and others, until his death. His title, but not his power, then passed to Scarouady.

The French expedition into the Valley in 1749, led by Celeron de Blainville, and subsequent rumors of increased French military activity aimed at the area, caused the local tribes to act in an increasingly independent manner. This was particularly true of the Ohio Iroquois. Unable to rely on assistance from the Five Nations, who continued to maintain a strict neutrality in the affairs of the region, the Ohio Indians were forced to deal with changing circumstances as best they could. This in turn encouraged more independent action and a heightened sense of importance on the part of these people. This feeling was given voice at a meeting held at George Croghan's Aughwick settlement in 1750. The Mingos took the opportunity at this gathering to voice their dissatisfaction with the treatment accorded them by their elders in New York. In particular, they wished to receive part of the price received by the Five Nations for recent land cessions. Such, they felt,

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[46] Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, from the Organization to the Termination of the Proprietary Government (Harrisburg; 1838-1853), IV, pp. 349-50. (Hereafter cited as Pennsylvania Colonial Records)

was their due, since they were of the Five Nations.[47] Further, they served notice that "We are now become a stronger body than when we received the present from our Brothers the Governors of Virginia and Pennsylvania, and have got many to join us, and are become a Great Body, and desire to be taken notice of as such; and for this purpose our nations by us present this belt."[48]

The arrival of French forces in the Ohio Country also alarmed interested English parties and spurred both Pennsylvania and Virginia to action. While the Mingos were counselling with Croghan in 1750, Christopher Gist was making his way into the Valley to fulfill his instructions from the Ohio Company. Gist's arrival complicated the politics of the Ohio Indians and for other Europeans. For the Indians, Gist was a menace, representing as he did men who wanted land, not trade.[49] To Pennsylvania, the presence of Virginia agents represented a threat to the colony's expanding trade with the western Indians. To the French, the projected settlement of the Ohio Country by Virginia posed a serious strategic threat that had to be met immediately, by force if necessary. Each side took steps to secure or enlarge its position at the expense of the others. Tanacharison and the Ohio Indians kept their freedom of action by refusing an invitation in 1750 to negotiate with Virginia for the sale of Ohio lands. Their refusal may in part be explained by their ambivalent relationship to the Five Nations, who would not have sanctioned any land cession by local Indians. Certainly it was in the best

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[47]Ibid., pp. 438-39.

[48]Ibid., p. 439.

[49]Jennings, "Indians' Revolution", p. 325.

interests of the Ohio Indians to remain free of any commitments that might jeopardize their position relative to the French, whose military strength they respected, and Pennsylvania, whose trade they needed.

Governor Hamilton of Pennsylvania, reacting to Virginia's moves, dispatched Croghan to the Ohio region in 1751 to determine the attitude of the Indians toward the construction of a trading post and fort on the Ohio. Croghan's subsequent report, suggesting Indian willingness to accept such an establishment, was rejected out of hand by the pacifist Quaker Assembly, thus effectively nullifying any active role for their colony in western affairs. Political and military initiatives among the English now passed to Virginia.[50]

The French, unwilling as yet to risk an open conflict with England over the Ohio Country, sought to persuade or force the Indians of the area to defect from the English and seek protection and trade from the Great Lakes posts. In particular, the French were interested in disrupting the increasing English trade among the Miamis at Pickawillany, which trade threatened the French interest throughout the Illinois region.

Virginia, for her part, sought to establish her position in the Valley by more than mere land titles. Having accepted Gist's report outlining the location of suitable land, and anxious about the French presence in the region, Governor Dinwiddie took steps to cement a trading and military alliance with the Ohio Indians as a bulwark against French aggression and to fill the vacuum created by Pennsylvania's departure from the field. The result of these plans was the 1752 Treaty of Logstown, which marked a climax in Indian-white relations in the Ohio Valley.

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[50]Wainwright, Croghan, pp. 43-44.

The Logstown conference in June of 1752 was held at Virginia's request to settle the long-standing issue of a boundary between that colony and the Iroquois-controlled areas in the Ohio Valley. Such a settlement was all the more pressing in 1752 in view of the recent royal land grant to the Ohio Company and the continuing growth of French influence on the Ohio. There is also some indication in the treaty minutes that Virginia was also trying to improve its trading position relative to Pennsylvania.[51] After nearly two weeks of bargaining and talking, the Virginia commissioners left with a treaty that, from their point of view, opened the Valley to Virginia traders, settlement, and which, for the moment, satisfactorily settled the boundary question.

The agreement was negotiated not with official delegates from Onondaga, but with Tanacharison and other Ohio sachems. Only one delegate from the Five Nations was present, and his status cannot accurately be determined from surviving treaty records.[52] That Tanacharison was the recognized spokesman at the council cannot be denied; official talks did not begin until his arrival at Logstown on the 4th of June.[53] In one respect the treaty served to underline the independent position being taken by the Ohio Indians in negotiations with the English. On the other hand, however, much ambiguity remained as to just how much independence should or could be exercised and how far the Half-king's authority really went.

To the Five Nations, there was never any question that the talks at Logs-

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[51]"The Treaty of Logg's Town, 1752", Virginia Historical Magazine 13 (1913), 148-49. (Hereafter cited as Logstown Treaty Minutes)

[52]Ibid., 160.

[53]Ibid.

town were invalid. Through some mishap, the belts prepared by Virginia to serve as the official invitation to the Onondaga council to attend the meeting were never delivered. James Patton, entrusted with these belts, had turned them over to the Ohio Iroquois for delivery to Onondaga. The Iroquois claimed later that they never arrived. At any rate, the damage was done; without formal invitation, the Five Nations refused to acknowledge any council held on the Ohio.[54] Whether the Iroquois would have attended had the invitation been received is open to speculation. A similar attempt at negotiation made by Virginia in 1750 was rejected by the Iroquois. That the Virginia commissioners and Governor Dinwiddie believed they were going to be negotiating with bonifide delegates of the Five Nations is demonstrated by the instructions issued to the negotiators.[55] As the treaty progressed, Tanacharison did nothing to directly disabuse them of this notion, although he did acknowledge his limited bargaining power and that "We must acquaint our Council at Onondaga of the affair, and whatsoever they bid us do, we will do."[56] It may also have been that the Half-King was attempting to give the problem to the Onondaga council by refusing to take any independent action on matters of such importance as land cessions and settlements.

From Tanacharison's perspective, a limited alliance with Virginia could serve several purposes. A power vacuum had been created when the Pennsylvania Assembly had decided not to support a fortified trading establishment on the Ohio. It was necessary to fill this vacuum in order to off-set French activ-

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[54]For the details of this matter, see Mulkearn, Mercer Papers, pp. 412-14.

[55]Logstown Treaty Minutes, 147-52.

[56]Ibid., 171.

ities. The presence of armed Virginians would be a guarantee of protection to the Ohio Indians, who were growing increasingly apprehensive about the growth of French military power on the Lakes and in the Illinois region. In addition, Virginia traders on the Ohio, competing with their Pennsylvania counterparts, would help keep trade prices down and increase the volume of goods needed by the Indians. On a more personal level, Virginia could also aid in maintaining the status of the Half-king by recognizing him as the sole representative of the surrounding Indians.

It did not take the Virginia commissioners long to cut to the heart of the matter. In their opening remarks, they brought up the proposal of an English settlement on the "South East Side of Ohio", suggesting that such a settlement could serve to:

> supply you with Goods much Cheaper than can at this Time be afforded; they will be ready to Help in Case you show'd be attacked, and some good Men among them will be appointed with Authority to punish & restrain the many Injuries & Abuses too frequently committed there, by disorderly white People.[57]

Such a proposal seemed to offer just what Tanacharison had been looking for. He responded favorably by saying that "We therefore desire our Bretheren of Virginia may build a strong House, at the Fork on the Monongalio[sic], to keep such Goods, Powder, Leade & necessaries as shall be wanting, as soon as you please: . . ."[58] Tanacharison made a point of suggesting the military usefulness of such an establishment by his specific reference to "Powder, Leade . . .". A careful reading of the exchange reveals a fundamental problem of semantics: Tanacharison's "strong House" was not Virginia's "settlement". To the Half-king, strong houses or forts were fine, settlements were

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[57] Ibid., 161.

[58] Ibid., 168.

not. They would endanger the security of the Valley's people as well as their independent bargaining position between the English and French. In addition, it must be borne in mind that Tanacharison was in constant contact with Delaware and Shawnee people who knew all too well what "settlement" meant for Indians. The commissioners immediately caught the difference and asked, in a private meeting, whether Tanacharison meant "settlement" when he said "strong House". "He answered in the Negative."[59] When, two days later, the commissioners again raised the subject of a settlement and a definitive boundary, Tanacharison professed that "we have not the full Power in our Hands on Ohio to make such concessions."[60]

Circumstances might have remained as they were, with pledges of support, exchanges of gifts and little else. The commissioners were, however, determined to return with a treaty. To this end, "having drawn up an Instrument of writing for confirming the Deed made at Lancaster, & containing a Promise that the Indians wou'd not molest our Settlements on the South East Side of Ohio", they instructed the adopted Seneca and acting interpreter, Andrew Montour, to "confer with his Bretheren, the other Sachems, in private, on the Subject, to urge the Necessity of such a Settlement & the great Advantage it wou'd be to them, as to their Trade or their Security."[61] Montour, recognized as a sachem by the Iroquois, did his job remarkably well. Within an hour he returned and announced that the sachems "were willing to sign & seal in writing, which was done & witnessed by the Gentlemen then present."[62]

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[59]Ibid., 169.

[60]Ibid., 171.

[61]Ibid., 171-72.

[62]Ibid., 172.

This having been accomplished, the commissioners hastened to conclude the conference, departing on the same day.[63]

What arguments Montour used in persuading the Ohio sachems to sign the treaty or what rationale these men used in agreeing cannot be determined through any surviving records of the conference. It may have been that Montour warned the sachems of the consequences to the Valley should Virginia be forced to leave the region to the French. Whether Tanacharison was prevailed upon to persuade his fellow sachems to sign the treaty in return for some favor is open to speculation. It should be noted, however, that for the next three years, he did act vigorously on Virginia's behalf both in attempting to block the French military occupation in 1753 and in leading Ohio warriors with Washington's Virginia force in 1754. By that time he was, at least to Virginia, the unquestioned leader of the Ohio Indians. Indian cooperation may also have been simply a matter of practical necessity. A Virginian establishment on the Ohio would have obvious advantages that might far outweigh the threats and complications of English settlement. The Ohio sachems may also have counted on the Onondaga council to make such adjustments in the treaty as to prevent the immediate settlement of the Valley. The attitude seems to have prevailed among the Ohio Indians that once the political balance of power had been restored, the English would give up plans for settlement and continue to support the trade.[64] For whatever reasons, the Ohio sachems committed themselves and their people to the support of English settlement on the Ohio. They did so out of consideration for their own security and power, apparently giving little consideration to what the reaction of the

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[63] See Ibid., 174, for a list of the Indian signatories.

[64] Jennings, "Indians' Revolution", pp. 329-30.

Five Nations might be.

Iroquois reactions to the Logstown treaty were universally negative. Writing to Governor Clinton of New York in March of 1753, William Johnson noted that the Iroquois were particularly upset that "they had not received any part of the Present [given by Virginia to consumate the agreement], but they heard it was given to some Indians living about Ohio, Shawnees &c:".[65] He further explained that the Five Nations did not attend because the invitation had never been received. Their protest went beyond hurt pride. Andrew Montour, reporting to the governor of Pennsylvania after a trip to Onondaga in the same year, noted that the Iroquois were demanding that both the English and French remove their forces and settlements from the Ohio Country, leaving only traders as had previously been the case. They went on to excoriate those who signed the Logstown treaty, calling them "giddy men & children." In effect, the Five Nations council at Onondaga was giving notice that it had repudiated any such agreement and wished to maintain the status quo.[66] At a conference at Winchester, Virginia, later in 1753, Scarouady, speaking now for the Five Nations, warned that they would not tolerate either French or English posts on the Ohio and would maintain the neutrality of the region.[67]

By the time these words and warnings were spoken, the Ohio had been transformed into a potential battleground. Within two weeks of the conclusion

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[65]Edmund B. O'Callaghan, ed., The Documentary History of the State of New York, 4 vols. (Albany: Weed, Parsons, & Company, 1849-1851), II, p. 364.

[66]Andrew Montour's report of his mission to Onondaga is found in Pennsylvania Colonial Records, IV, p. 635.

[67]Mulkearn, Mercer Papers, p. 433.

of the Logstown council, word arrived that the Twightwee settlement at Pickawillany had been attacked by a French and Indian raiding party and that La Demoiselle, the Miami sachem, and several Pennsylvania traders had been killed. The following Spring, the Sieur de Marin entered the Ohio Valley at the head of nearly 3,000 troops and Indian auxiliaries in order to establish French dominion over the region through the construction of forts from the upper Allegheny to the Ohio. When Pennsylvania, then Virginia, failed to act promptly to counter this invasion, Tanacharison and Scarouady frantically attempted to stop the French. While Scarouady held councils at Carlisle and Winchester to drum up support among the English, Tanacharison confronted Marin and ordered him, on behalf of the Five Nations, to leave the Valley. Marin ignored his threats: by refusing to accept the Half-king's message belts, he symbolically signified that Tanacharison did not even exist. That the Half-king's position was deteriorating is evidenced by the conciliatory manner in which Marin was greeted by the Delaware and Shawnee who repudiated Tanacharison's message. The French invasion had driven a wedge between the Ohio Iroquois and the people they were responsible for. Sensing that the French were gaining the upper hand, the Ohio Indians began to put as much distance between themselves and the Iroquois as possible. Moreover, the Five Nations continued to remain apart from the crisis, later disavowing the strong measures taken by Tanacharison.[68] Thus isolated from his own people, and losing the support of the local Indians, Tanacharison's only hope for assistance could come from his allies in Virginia. That assistance, in the form of a diplomatic protest, then a ridiculous expedition to construct and

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[68] Donald H. Kent, The French Invasion of Western Pennsylvania, 1753 (Harrisburg: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1954), pp. 49-51.

maintain a "fort" on the Ohio was woefully inadequate. By the summer of 1754, Virginia had been driven from the Valley, the Delawares and Shawnee were making a separate peace with the French, and Tanacharison and Scarouady had become Half-kings without subjects.

Faced with the loss of the Ohio Valley and worried about the possibility of French action elsewhere in America, the English colonial governments acted to induce the Iroquois to give aid in protecting the western and northern frontiers of British North America. What made this task difficult, however, was the deteriorating state of Iroquois-English relations. This condition can be traced back to the period after the treaty of 1701. Since that time, during Queen Anne's and King George's Wars, the Iroquois had been prompted to aid in the defense of New York's border against French attack. The outcome was always the same: the Iroquois did the protecting while the colony limited its actions to blandishments, promises and, occasionally, arms shipments. More recently, fraudulent land cessions and uncontrolled liquor trading throughout Iroquois territory had put the Five Nations in a less than conciliatory mood.[69] From the Iroquois point of view, the Yorkers and their New England partners had been less than ideal trading and military associates. The French occupation of Niagara in 1720 had been countered only by threats and the miserable stockade at Oswego. The colony of New York seemed to be unable or unwilling to control land speculation that threatened to overrun the Mohawks and Oneidas, the easternmost of the Five Nations. The only measure of control that the Iroquois had over these circumstances was their relation-

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[69]For the problem of land and settlement in the Mohawk Valley, see: Georgiana C. Nammack, Fraud, Politics, and the Dispossession of the Indians: The Iroquois Land Frontier in the Colonial Period (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969).

ship with William Johnson, immigrant trader and would-be land baron. Commissioned "Colonel" of the Iroquois during the last Anglo-French war, Johnson had quickly assumed the position of intermediary between the Five Nations and the New York government. However in 1750, Johnson, disgusted with the handling of Indian affairs, resigned as Indian commissioner, to be replaced by a five member board whose arrogance and ineptitude further alienated the Iroquois.[70]

In response to what appeared to be a lack of English interest in, and regard for, the Iroquois, a delegation of Mohawks, led by the Canajoharie sachem Hendrick Peter, arrived in New York in June of 1753. After voicing a vigorous protest against repeated frauds and failures on the part of the colonial government, Hendrick proceeded to announce that "the Covenant Chain is broken between you and us. So brother you are not to expect to here of me any more, and Brother we desire to hear no more of you."[71] That Hendrick spoke these words in the name of all the Five Nations gave the English cause for alarm. Hendrick's speech and threat were not exactly what they appeared to be, however. In the first place, he could not have spoken for the Five Nations, being neither a Confederacy sachem nor embodied with any special powers on this occasion. Further, the Onondaga council, where cooler heads prevailed, later repudiated his rash comments. This is not to detract from Hendrick's political judgement. On the contrary, he may well have made this speech in order to test the depth of English commitment to the Iroquois. If so, he was not disappointed. Word of his breaking the Covenant Chain was sped to England, where

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[70]Milton W. Hamilton, Sir William Johnson, Colonial American, 1715-1763 (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1976), chpts. 6, 7.

[71]Council Minutes, June 16, in Documents Relative, VI, p. 788.

the Board of Trade took immediate steps to redress the situation. In a letter to the newly appointed royal governor of New York, Sir Danvers Osborne, the Board ordered the convening of a general council to look into and redress all grievences presented by the Iroquois. At a time of increasing French aggression on the frontier, Iroquois cooperation was essential.[72] In particular, Osborne was cautioned to limit further land sales and end the fraud in Indian land cessions.[73] Osborne never had the opportunity to carry out his orders, having committed suicide within a month of reaching New York. His successor, James de Lancey, president of the colony's council, did take the necessary steps in arranging for a conference to meet at Albany in June of 1754. To this meeting he invited the governors or representatives of the colonies north of Virginia whose interests in this matter were similar to New York's.

Several groups and interests converged at Albany in the summer of 1754. De Lancey, representing his own government as well as the crown, was primarily concerned with colonial security and a renewed Iroquois alliance. Others, however, had less abstract goals in mind. One of the visible results of the conference was the competition between Connecticut and Pennsylvania over lands on the upper Susquehanna River; lands that had been held for nearly a century by the Five Nations as a buffer against English expansion. In fact, the land issue seems to have been the one compelling reason for Connecticut's attendance at the conference. Finally, other men, particularly William Shirley, governor of Massachusetts Bay, saw the conference as a step toward

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[72] Board of Trade to Sir Danvers Osborne, September, 1753, in <u>Documentary History</u>, II, pp. 323-24.

[73] Ibid., pp. 324-25.

a comprehensive plan of colonial union as a defense against the French. While Shirley did not attend, the colony's Chief Justice, Thomas Hutchinson, did and in conjunction with Benjamin Franklin and others produced the famous Albany Plan of Union.

Putting the Plan of Union and the Pennsylvania-Connecticut land conflict aside, the central theme throughout the conference continued to be the Iroquois alliance and the strengthening of the Covenant Chain. To these ends the Albany Indian Commissioners suggested three points to be taken up with the Iroquois early in the proceedings: get the Five Nations to reunite in fortified villages and give up their present "dispersed state"; work toward the return of large numbers of Iroquois who had lately resettled at the French mission at Oswegatchie under the spiritual and political guidance of abbe Piquet and; reduce tensions between traders moving to Oswego and the Iroquois, particularly the Oneida.[74] As the Iroquois delegations slowly arrived late in June, it became apparent that the negotiations would be long and difficult.[75] Jealousies and factionalism were evident among the Indians, with the Mohawk feeling abused by their brethren for their pro-English sentiments.[76] As the council opened, the Iroquois immediately began voicing their complaints and concerns and, in the process, took the moral high ground at the meeting. In order to ensure that their words were heard and taken account of, the Mohawks invoked the Covenant Chain, one of whose provisions was that "if there be any uneasiness on either side or any request to be made, that

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[74]New York Indian Commissioners to de Lancey, June 15, 1754, in Ibid., pp. 325-37.

[75]Jennings, "Indians' Revolution", p. 327.

[76]"Meeting with the Upper Mohawks", June 28, 1754, in Documentary History, II, pp. 335-37.

they shall be considered with brotherly regard."[77] Of immediate concern was the continued expansion of English settlers westward along the Mohawk River. One speaker voiced the Iroquois concern when he noted that "we shall have none left but the very spot we live upon, and hardly that."[78]

Land was not the only issue on which the Five Nations voiced complaint. Noting that "tis now three Years since we have been called to any publick Treaty", Abraham, brother of Hendrick Peter, complained about the neglect shown them by the Albany Commissioners.[79] To add insult to injury, he suggested that the reason for this neglect was the inordinate amount of time the Commissioners spent talking to and trading with the "Indians of Canada", who were known to be carrying on a lucrative contraband trade between Montreal and Albany. This situation could be rectified, and the Covenant Chain restored, if William Johnson was restored as the sole agent for Iroquois affairs.[80]

The final issue to be debated at Albany, and the one to which both Iroquois and Englishmen showed a great deal of sensitivity, was the growing problem of French expansion into the Ohio Valley. In response to the English question of whether the French had entered the region with Iroquois permission, Hendrick Peter answered in the negative and stated that it was the intention of the Iroquois to keep both French and English forces out of the Valley.[81] Hendrick further noted that "The Governor of Virginia and the

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[77]"Private Council with the Lower Mohawks", June 27, 1754, in Ibid., pp. 334-35.

[78]Ibid.

[79]Indian reply to de Lancey's opening speech, July 2, 1754, in Ibid., p. 339.

[80]Ibid.

[81]Ibid., p. 338.

Governor of Canada are both Quarreling about Lands which belong to us. And such a Quarrel as this may end in our destruction."[82]

The last sentence suggests a strong desire on the part of the Iroquois to stay out of any future Anglo-French conflict, especially in view of the past performance of their loyal allies from New York and New England. In making this assault on English and French actions, Hendrick conveniently overlooked the fact that the Ohio situation had been in part created by the willingness of the Iroquois to allow English traders into the region.[83] The English were quick to point out this contradiction in policy, with Conrad Weiser giving a lengthy harangue on the history of Indian-white relations in the Ohio Country.[84] De Lancey also attempted to counter Iroquois opposition to an English presence in the Valley by citing French aggression and England's desire to protect the region for Indians and traders. This was undoubtedly Hendrick's point: what did the English mean by "protection"? That the Five Nations were clearly attempting to remain above the Ohio conflict is further indicated by their opinion of Tanacharison's actions of the previous year, in ordering the French to leave the Ohio. Hendrick noted that the Half-king had acted on behalf of the "United Nations at Ohio" with no hint of approval from Onondaga.[85] He further noted that the other conferences at the time, at Carlisle and Winchester, were also held by local tribes without the sanction of the Five Nations.[86] Something of the general

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[82] Ibid.

[83] Wallace, Death and Rebirth of the Seneca, pp. 111-13.

[84] Commissioners' reply to the Iroquois, July 3, 1754, in Documentary History, II, pp. 341-42.

[85] Ibid., p. 342.

[86] Ibid.

attitude of the Iroquois toward their Ohio clients can be gathered from this exchange. The Iroquois accused the English of a grave diplomatic faux pas in not conveying part of the 1752 Logstown gift to Onondaga, as recognition of the Confederacy's dominion over the Ohio. That the English did not do this is evidence of how far their own policies had changed relative to the Iroquois and the local tribes on the Ohio.[87]

This acrimonious debate continued until the end of the conference on the 6th of July. Neither side entirely convinced the other of its sincerity and neither was ultimately willing to accept total responsibility for the Ohio conflict or more minor problems such as the liquor traffic and trade re-lations at Oswego. In fact, the only creative program to come out of the Albany conference was the proposed Plan of Union, which had little to do with any of the items on the conference agenda. The only people to profit to any extent from the proceedings were the Pennsylvania and Connecticut land-jobbers who, in a confusing series of clandestine meetings and intrigues, had managed to purchase the same lands from two different groups of Iroquois sachems, thus opening the way to three decades of suits and occasional kill-ings on the upper Susquehanna.

While the English did not get the commitments they had hoped for from the Iroquois, especially in terms of military cooperation, and though the Five Nations returned home loaded with gifts and doubts about their English brothers, the conference was not as inconclusive from the Indian standpoint as historians have made it seem. The Five Nations retained their freedom of action, having made nothing more than vague pledges of future cooperation if and when needed. They had avoided being directly involved in the growing

[87]Iroquois reply to the Commissioners, July 4, 1754, in Ibid., p. 344.

Anglo-French conflict on the Ohio by professing neutrality and charging the English to take some steps toward acting on the matter. In getting a pledge from de Lancey that William Johnson would be restored as superintendent for the Iroquois, the sachems had scored a victory of some significance. Of all the New York public officials, Johnson was the one whom the Five Nations could most directly influence and trust. His restoration to office meant that the Iroquois had one of their own in the British councils, both a mouthpiece and a pipeline of information; something that had been noticeably lacking during the previous four years. Perhaps the most significant gain for the Five Nations, however, was not material but psychological. The proceedings demonstrated, as nothing else could, the importance the English colonies and royal government still placed in the Iroquois and their diplomatic and military power. Admittedly, as events on the Ohio had demonstrated, the special position that the Iroquois had long held in English frontier diplomacy was declining in the face of changes in power in the west. Nonetheless, the Iroquois still commanded major avenues into the west, avenues needed by British armies. Further, the Five Nations could still exercise some influence on the Indians who lived along the English frontier. Hendrick's gamble in 1753 seems to have paid off. The Iroquois, for the moment, were secure in the knowledge that their English brothers needed them at least as much as the Five Nations needed them.

CHAPTER III

THE IROQUOIS AND THE GREAT WAR FOR THE EMPIRE,

1755 - 1760

The English need for an Iroquois alliance became increasingly apparent as the French and English colonies rapidly approached a show-down over the fur trade and westward expansion. Even as the Iroquois and English delegates exchanged views at Albany, Colonel George Washington, by a successful ambush in the Ohio Country, initiated a general conflict as both sides rushed to gain advantages in the west, along the Champlain-Hudson invasion route, and in Nova Scotia. In 1755 the still largely colonial dispute was enlarged by the almost simultaneous arrivals in America of British troops in Virginia and French forces at Quebec.

The Five Nations were a vital part of the British military plan for 1755. One English offensive was aimed at Niagara and the upper St. Lawrence basin. Iroquois cooperation was necessary to ensure the safe, rapid movement of troops, under the command of Governor Shirley, to their objective. At the other end of the Longhouse, William Johnson was trying to build an army in order to take French forts on Lake Champlain, preparatory to a move on Montreal. Finally, General Edward Braddock, in attempting to force the French from the Ohio, needed auxiliaries and diplomats from the Five Nations to lead his army and negotiate with the Ohio Indians.

These basic military plans, which were to occupy English and provincial armies for the next five years, led to a furious, expensive effort to buy,

threaten, or coerce the Iroquois out of their official neutrality and into a comprehensive alliance with the crown. At no time were the English ever totally successful in this venture, and not until 1760 did the Iroquois, sensing British victory and the advisability of positive action, participate in the war in the manner envisioned by Braddock in 1755. The Five Nations' participation was, rather, a history of careful negotiation, deliberate consideration of options, and a marked lack of enthusiasm for engaging in a war that only the Iroquois could lose.

From the outset, negotiations with the Iroquois were in the hands of William Johnson and his subordinates. Johnson's mission among the Five Nations was fourfold: obtain as much active military support as possible from the Iroquois; promise and give protection to the Iroquois; regulate land sales in order to eliminate any friction that would alienate the Indians and; give satisfaction to complaints voiced at Albany.[88] At least part of Johnson's task was made easier by the simple fact that the war, which directly threatened the Mohawk Valley, precluded land speculation and settlement. However, with the singular exception of the Mohawk, Johnson was seldom able to ensure the participation of many Iroquois warriors until very late in the conflict. Rather, at the several general councils and numerous smaller meetings with the Five Nations, Johnson was met with hesitation, suspicion, and an insistence on neutrality by the sachems and women of the Confederacy.

The first of these general conferences was held at Johnson's home, from the 21st of June until the 4th of July, 1755. This meeting had been called in order to obtain Iroquois support for Braddock's campaign on the Ohio, and

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[88]See the instructions from the Board of Trade to Governor Hardy of New York, in Johnson Papers, I, pp. 528-30.

Shirley's attempt on Niagara. The highlight of the conference would be the delivering of a speech from Braddock summoning the Iroquois to take up the hatchet for the King. The council also marked Johnson's first official act as newly appointed crown superintendent for Indian affairs in the north.[89]

In many respects, this conference embodied many of the elements and behavior patterns, on both sides, that would appear again in future meetings. Johnson spared no efforts to solicit Iroquois military aid, and did not scruple to stop short of coercion, bribery, and deceit. After assuring the assembled delegates that their interests had been of primary consideration at the recently held council of war at Alexandria, Virginia, Johnson proceeded to outline the present conference. In order to impress the Five Nations with the overwhelming importance of what was to follow, Johnson suggested that everyone, even women and children, should attend the proceedings.[90] Such a comment was well calculated to impress the gathering. Throughout the council, Johnson was careful not to couch English requests and statements in terms that might imply that the Iroquois were a vital element in English plans. Instead, he insisted that the English were only asking the Five Nations to act the part of good brothers as had their forefathers, and that the war belt was being offered as a sign of friendship and brotherhood, not because the English armies really needed Iroquois aid.[91] Whether the assembled sachems and warriors really believed or accepted this explanation is doubtful. Certain-

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[89]Braddock's speech to the Iroquois, May, 1755, in Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 171-79.

[90]"An Indian Conference", Mount Johnson, June 21-July 4, in Documents Relative, VI, p. 966.

[91]Ibid., p. 972.

ly the expense and effort that the English were expending on them, and the soon-to-be-proven ineptitude of British field commanders demonstrated that Johnson's words carried little meaning.

As a further inducement to the Iroquois, Johnson delivered a speech from Scarouady exhorting his brothers to follow his example and join the English.[92] Finally, Johnson suggested that any reluctance on the part of the Five Nations would be seen by the British as a serious breach of faith and would signify the breaking of the Covenant Chain.[93]

At this point, Johnson was attempting to appeal to the martial spirit of the "young men", in the hope that they would cease listening to the peaceful words of the sachems, whose traditional role was to lessen the need for fighting. In this respect, Johnson was seeking to drive a wedge between two competing factions within the Confederacy, hoping that the sachems would yield to popular pressure and allow the warriors to decide the issue for themselves. As an added bit of diplomatic theatrics, Johnson, when offering the war belt, deliberately gave it to the Mohawks of Canajoharie who, as the most pro-English, would be prone to accept the belt publically. On accepting the belt, the Canajoharies would be offering a challenge to the other nations to do likewise.[94] Not content with these public exhortations and arm-twistings, Johnson resorted to private meetings with select sachems, among them Hendrick Peter, hoping to solicit their support in influencing the village and clan councils to accept the belt.[95]

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[92]Ibid., p. 973.

[93]Ibid.

[94]Ibid., p. 974. See also Red Head's comment to Johnson, p. 988.

[95]Ibid.

These proceedings took place on the 24th and 25th of June. The formal reply by the assembled sachems was not delivered until the 28th. Previous to this not all the nations had taken up the war belt.[96] When the council did resume, the sachems made a point of offering an apology for the unusual delay. Their reason was the absence of several sachems who were drunk on trader's whiskey at the time.[97] This may or may not have been true. It should be noted that Johnson took special precautions on this matter prior to the conference by issuing a proclamation banning liquor from the meeting place.[98] In light of subsequent proceedings, it may well have been that the sachems were having a difficult time reaching a consensus on the matter of war. Further, in their apology, the sachems indicated that the "elder brothers": the Mohawk, Seneca, and Onondaga, were ready to speak, but the delay was caused by the Oneida and Cayuga, the "younger brothers".[99]

For their part, the Iroquois seem to have been somewhat less than overwhelmed by Johnson's words. They had serious reservations about campaigning against the French, lest they be forced to kill their own people; in this case the Caughnawaga Iroquois of Montreal. Johnson gave assurances that he would seek their neutrality in the upcoming campaigns, but this issue continued to cause the Five Nations some concern for the next several years.[100] Finally, however, Johnson received the council's reply. On the 29th of June Red Head, an Onondaga sachem recently won over from the French, stated in full

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[96]Ibid., p. 975.

[97]Ibid., p. 976.

[98]This proclamation was issued on the 11th of June. See Johnson Papers, I, pp. 580-81.

[99]op. cit., p. 976.

[100]Ibid., p. 981.

council that "We the Confederated Nations here present agree to your request and will join and assist You in your undertakings."[101]

These words tend to imply a major shift in Iroquois policy from neutrality to partisan participation in the war. It should be noted, however, that no specific commitments of aid or military action were made here. Further, Red Head was speaking for the "Confederated Nations" as a whole. Decisions reached in Confederacy councils were not necessarily binding on the many Iroquois villages. Such a decision may well have been reached in an effort to appease the warriors, who were demanding action. Further, there is at least the hint that this agreement to some unspecified form of aid was more the result of backstairs persuasion than a free decision made by all the sachems. At a private meeting on July 1st, the Cayuga "confess[ed] that your [Johnson] <u>pressing</u> us to take up the hatchet is somewhat sudden and for which we were not prepared . . ."[102] [emphasis added] Did others among the Iroquois delegates also feel "pressed"? In addition, immediately after delivering their reply to Johnson's war message, the warriors announced, much to Johnson's chagrin, that their first act would be to go home and secure their families before going to war. Besides, they said, there was no pressing need to fight now, since it would take Braddock, Shirley, and Johnson some time to get their troops into the field.[103]

The Iroquois decision to commit themselves, however tenuously, to support the English may have been triggered in part by a desire to put the British on

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[101]Ibid., p. 978.

[102]Ibid., p. 980.

[103]Ibid., p. 983. In his report of the council to Braddock, Johnson mentioned that the Iroquois had so far "evaded sending any assistance to your Excellency at present." See Johnston to Braddock, Mount Johnson, July 15, in <u>Johnson Papers</u>, IX, p. 204.

the defensive. On July 3rd, the sachems offered a belt and demanded that all rum traffic in their territory be stopped. Further, in response to repeated requests that the Five Nations reunite into large, fortified villages, the sachems said that this would be a good idea if the land was available, but that recent cessions and frauds had left the Confederacy very little room for large villages. If Brother Johnson wanted their support in his war with the French, he would have to meet Iroquois demands.[104] A final ominous note was sounded just as the conference was ending on the 4th of July. Red Head, in his closing remarks, reminded the assembly that in the past, when the Five Nations had fought with the English, things had not turned out well. He expressed the hope that Johnson's leadership and power in English councils would make a difference this time.[105]

With only slight variations due to time and circumstances, this conference established something of a pattern for future meetings between Johnson and the Iroquois. On one hand, Johnson, using every possible means of persuasion short of outright threats, attempted to construct a military alliance with the Five Nations. For their part, the Iroquois, while at times seeming to abandon their policy of neutrality in the war, hesitated to give unequivocal support, and always stopped short of making any specific commitments of men or actions. Further, as subsequent events would demonstrate, not all Iroquois were interested or willing to take even these limited actions. The result of this internal division was a Confederacy that gave every appearance of dissention. By late 1756, Johnson was faced with a seemingly contra-

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[104]"An Indian Conference", in Documents Relative, VI, p. 984.

[105]Ibid., p. 987.

dictory pattern of Iroquois behavior that led him to believe that the best he or anyone else could hope for from the Confederacy was armed neutrality.

At least part of the reason for the shifting Iroquois policy and lack of commitment to their brethren is to be found in the ways in which the English prosecuted the war. The ink was hardly dry on the council minutes at Mount Johnson when word began filtering in that something had gone wrong on the Ohio. As information became available about the fate of Braddock's army, many Iroquois must have had serious second thoughts about aiding the English. They knew, as did British soldiers and diplomats, that the Ohio Country was now totally under French control. This situation boded ill for the Iroquois as well as for English settlers on the frontier. As if this was not enough, the Five Nations had to cope with the press-gang mentality of Sir William Shirley and his agents, who were busily enlisting warriors for the Niagara campaign.

Chief among the objects of Iroquois complaint in this regard was John Henry Lydius of Connecticut. He had played a leading role in engineering the Connecticut deed to the Susquehanna Valley lands at Albany the previous year. Now, acting on orders from Shirley, he was roaming around the Mohawk Valley, bribing, threatening and, on occasion, kidnapping Iroquois men to serve with the western army. Complaints began to pour into Johnson's headquarters on Lake George from Tuscaroras, Oneidas, and Mohawks about their rough treatment at the hands of Shirley's men.[106] To make matters worse, in the resultant confusion, the Iroquois were staying away from Johnson's camp as well. Evidence indicates that the activities of Lydius were part of a

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[106] "Journal of Indian Affairs", July 27-29, in Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 212-13; pp. 217-20 cover a continuation of the Journal for August 8th.

larger feud between the two generals concerning jurisdiction and control of Indian affairs. Johnson's commission as sole superintendent of Iroquois affairs had come from Braddock, while Shirley's position as commander-in-chief was recognized by a royal commission. Lydius' actions were part of Shirley's scheme to undermine Johnson's authority among the Indians.[107] Had Shirley exercised more judgement or intelligence than he did, he would have realized that such high command squabbling would have done little to enhance the English reputation among allies who were still apprehensive at best. Johnson, writing to Lieutenant Governor de Lancey of New York, summarized the Iroquois feeling in the matter when he said that "Their Sachems have sent me down Word that they are all in amazement, that they cannot comprehend what is the meaning of these opposite Proceedings. They desire I will clear up & explain matters to them, that their Castles are tore to pieces with discord faction & riot &c. &c."[108]

For all his activity among the Five Nations, Shirley's army barely got to Oswego before the campaigning season ended. Johnson's motley collection of New England militia, bolstered by a good number of Mohawks under Hendrick Peter, had its drive on Fort St. Frederic cut short when the Baron de Dieskau's French army suddenly appeared near Johnson's camp. In the resultant two day encounter, Dieskau's troops were roundly beaten and put to flight. On the English side, Johnson's raw troops had taken a beating of their own and among the dead was perhaps the best friend Johnson or the English had among

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[107] See in particular, "Journal of Indian Affairs", August 8th, in Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 218-19, for the Indian version of a story circulated by Shirley claiming that Johnson was withholding recruitment money from the Five Nations.

[108] Johnson to de Lancey, Mount Johnson, August 8th, in Johnson Papers, I, p. 841.

the Iroquois. Hendrick, old, infirm, and riding a horse loaned to him by Johnson, was part of an English scouting party that blundered into an ambush early in the fight. The loss of this man, a sachem of Canajoharie and a man of much influence with both the Onondaga and colonial councils, was a severe blow. In addition, several other sachems and warriors of the Mohawk, Oneida, and Susquehanna Iroquois had died in the fight. Whatever enthusiasm the Iroquois may have shown for the war in June and July had waned by mid-September as the dead were brought home and the condolences performed.[109]

The combined effects of the Braddock disaster, Shirley's dictatorial policies, and the killings at Lake George had a profound impact on the Iroquois and their attitudes toward the English and the war. Johnson's agents were sent out to the several Iroquois villages to perform condolences for the dead and to recruit men for scouting parties on Lake George. Without exception, they all reported a singular lack of response from the Five Nations. Even the Mohawk, usually so reliable, were wavering. The Reverend Mr. John Ogilvie and Sybrant Van Schaick, sent to the Lower Castle to recruit, reported that the men there were "averse to joining the Army again."[110] Their reason was the fear that the English wanted "to swallow all our Fighters at once . . ."[111] The Lower Castle refused to accept Johnson's war belt. Part of the reluctance of the Mohawk to take the English part may be explained by an extraordinary message they received from the upper four nations soon after

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[109]"Return of Killed, Wounded and Missing in Battle of Lake George", September 8, in Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 234-38.

[110]Ogilvie and Van Schaick to Johnson, October 1, in Johnson Papers, II, pp. 125-26.

[111]Ibid.

the Lake George battle. The message stated that the upper nations would not "intermeddle, the the English and French had a design to kill them all"; that if the Mohawk wished to act they could do so, if they chose to act, the other tribes would "kick them from them and have no more to say to them."[112] This threat of sanction against a member of the Confederacy speaks volumes about the real concern felt by the Iroquois about the war and their own security.

1755 had been a bad year for the Iroquois and the English. The two following years were even worse. The English saw their gateway to the Great Lakes, Oswego, fall in August of 1756. This defeat ended for the moment any plans for the capture of Niagara. It also ended, permanently, the American career of William Shirley. In 1757 British losses were compounded by the French capture of Fort William Henry, which had guarded the northern approaches to the Mohawk Valley and Albany. Finally, Pennsylvania and Virginia were embroiled in a frontier conflict with the Delaware, Shawnee, and other Ohio Indians. These people had taken advantage of Braddock's defeat to settle many old scores with the English.[113]

For the Five Nations, the situation was equally disturbing. The loss of Oswego had opened the Mohawk Valley to French invasion, and had the potential of turning all of western New York into a battleground. British military ineptitude was underscored by the loss of Fort William Henry, which surrendered while several thousand troops stood motionless only a short march away. In addition to the usual pressures for military aid put on them by Johnson, the Iroquois councils were also besieged with pleas and demands from Pennsyl-

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[112] Ibid., pp. 85-86.

[113] Jennings, "Indians' Revolution", p. 330.

vania to take an active part in bringing its frontier war to an end. Clearly, the situation did not bode well for the Iroquois and, during these years, the Confederacy took steps to put some distance between itself and the English until such time as the military situation became more clearly defined, and European goals more apparent.

In February, 1756, Johnson held the second of his major wartime councils with the Five Nations.[114] By the time the council convened, the Iroquois had already been given a taste of what the year would hold. Shirley had, since early January, solicited their aid in stopping the raids in Pennsylvania, something the Iroquois persistently refused to do. Further, the Senecas circulated a black belt that had been sent by French officers warning the Five Nations that they would be attacked if they interfered in the war.[115] On the strength of this message, the Iroquois requested that reinforcements be sent to Oswego as soon as possible.[116]

Iroquois concerns are amply evidenced by the exchanges at the Fort Johnson council, held from the 17th to the 29th of February. In replying to Johnson's opening remarks, Red Head, once again acting as the principal speaker, reminded the superintendent of the mutual obligations inherent in the Covenant Chain, and expressed the hope that the English would honor their commitments to aid and protect the Iroquois.[117] In response to Johnson's request that

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[114]Shirley to Johnson, New York, January 6, in Johnson Papers, II, pp. 409-12.

[115]"Extract from Indian Proceedings", in Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 343-44.

[116]Ibid.

[117]"An Indian Conference", Fort Johnson, February 18-19, in Johnson Papers, IX, p. 359.

they take the initiative in disciplining the Ohio Indians, the Five Nations remained non-committal. They defended this position by denying that they had any special powers over these people. They further suggested that if Pennsylvania had acted with greater circumspection, it would not now be suffering from an Indian war.[118] This exchange also suggests that much of the Iroquois' power over client tribes was more a European fiction than a reality of Indian-Indian relations. Johnson continued to press this issue, but without getting any positive response from the assembled delegation.

Johnson also pressed the Iroquois for more active military involvement in the upcoming campaign. He cautioned them against "continuing any longer in your past, lethargic, and supine state" and asked them to honor all their commitments heretofore made.[119] To the Five Nations, however, no commitments had been made beyond a vague promise made the previous year to keep faith with the English and consider requests for aid. In response to this speech, Red Head again promised to consider Johnson's words.[120]

The Iroquois, too, made requests at this meeting. The most recurring and, to them the most important, was the need for forts in their country to protect the villages if and when the young men went out to war. The Five Nations were taking no chances: active participation on their part meant adequate protection for families and farms by those whose work they were doing. This theme of forts and demands for protection runs throughout this and subsequent councils and indicates that the Five Nations were in no way convinced of the

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[118] Ibid., p. 360. See also p. 368.

[119] Ibid., p. 372. Johnson's speech was delivered on February 23.

[120] Ibid., pp. 375-76. Red Head spoke on February 24. The full text of this speech is found on pp. 373-77.

inevitability of English victory.[121]

While Johnson was trying to elicit some favorable response from the Iroquois sachems, English military operations went ahead as planned. Shirley again made an ascent of the Mohawk River to Oswego, but without much aid from the local Indians. Of particular concern to the Iroquois was Pennsylvania's decision to declare war on all those Indians within the colony currently making raids against the settlements. Apparently unsatisfied with the Iroquois reply to requests for mediation, the colony acted alone, without consulting other officials. The result was confusion and alarm among the Indians, who saw the action as only the latest example of English double-dealing. Johnson was particularly upset and worried that the Five Nations would take Pennsylvania's action as further evidence of divided English councils, and would be even less willing to be drawn into the war.[122]

Even as Johnson wrote in complaint to Shirley and others, the Iroquois were attempting a diplomatic initiative of their own. At an upcoming Confederacy council at Onondaga, they planned to treat with the Ohio and Susquehanna Indians in an attempt to end all Indian involvement in what was, to them, a white man's war. What is curious, in view of their previous behavior on such occasions, was their attitude toward Johnson's attendance at this affair. Johnson remarked that the Indians, "the Onondagas excepted, are very warmly against my going to the meeting at Onondaga."[123] While the Iroquois

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[121]Private meeting with the Oneida, February 25, in Ibid., pp. 378-79.

[122]Johnson to Shirley, Fort Johnson, April 24, in Johnson Papers, II, pp. 447-48.

[123]Johnson to Shirley, Fort Johnson, May 10, in Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 449-50.

never gave a definite reason for their insistence on Johnson's absence, their behavior provoked much discussion, especially between Johnson and his informants among the Mohawk. The Canajoharie sachems suggested Onondaga treachery as the reason for their approval of the invitation, and added that the upper nations were not to be trusted.[124] In view of the recent French raid into the Mohawk Valley which had resulted in the destruction of Fort Bull at the Oneida Carry, Johnson was prepared to believe the worst about the loyalties of the four upper nations.

It may have been that the Iroquois' warm opposition to Johnson's attendance stemmed from both a fear of French power, made all the more real by the Fort Bull raid, and their desire to avoid any further pressure from the English to take up the hatchet. Such pressure was causing much internal dissension as warriors and sachems divided over the advisability of going to war. Since the French clearly dominated the frontier, an attitude of distance from the English might have seemed the best means of self preservation. Johnson, however, refused all warnings and offers of compromise and embarked for Onondaga on schedule.

The Onondaga council, to which Johnson's presence must have been a great embarrassment, did initiate steps toward settling Pennsylvania's Indian war. The Ohio Indians were given an opportunity to voice grievances, and those living on the Susquehanna agreed to cease fighting and follow the advice of their uncles at Onondaga. A final resolution of this conflict did not occur until the Easton Treaty of 1758, but the Iroquois initiative did get the process started.

Militarily, 1756 was marked by little participation by the Iroquois in

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[124] Ibid., p. 462.

English operations. Johnson managed to keep several Mohawk scouting parties in the field, but for the most part the Five Nations withheld aid. Aside from British military reverses which certainly influenced Iroquois policy, the summer had been marked by a number of incidents between English troops and Iroquois warriors and farmers that resulted in arrests, exchanges of gunfire, and at least one unprovoked murder of an Iroquois near Schenectady.[125] Such incidents could not have reinforced Iroquois feelings of security at the hands of the English government. In addition to this, lack of participation may have been the result of an economic crisis among at least some of the Iroquois. Myndert Wemp, sent by Johnson to the Seneca as an armorer and informant, returned from his post late in April complaining that "the scarcity of Provisions was such amongst them that he couldn't subsist."[126] Johnson added yet another reason for Iroquois non-participation when, in a report to the Board of Trade, he suggested that "the Six Nations are sensible that the deprivation of what they deem their property will be the consequence of either we or the French prescribing terms to each other--and hence the chief cause of their indifference in our Quarrel."[127] Elaborating further, he noted that "our indiscriminate avidity [for land] alarms them with jealousy and raises prejudices against us, which are improved by the French."[128]

In order to counter the ill effects of the Oswego debacle, and to rid the

[125] "Some Articles for Lord Loudouns consideration", Albany, August 2, in Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 490-91.

[126] "Journal of Indian Proceedings", April 29, in Documents Relative, VII, pp. 100-101.

[127] Johnson to the Board of Trade, Fort Johnson, September 10, in Documentary History, II, p. 428.

[128] Johnson to the Board of Trade, Fort Johnson, September 10, in Documents Relative, VII, pp. 129-30.

Five Nations of their indifference, Johnson called a council at Fort Johnson in mid-November. While not a major gathering, the council did reveal the degree to which the Iroquois were becoming alienated from the English. The treaty minutes are marked by exchanges that can only be described as measured and cold. For their part, the Five Nations charged the English with cupidity, for engaging in talks with the French without informing the Confederacy; of "stingyness" in giving out treaty gifts and trade goods; and, in a stinging attack on Johnson's judgement and character, they suggested that message belts sent by him to the upper nations had in fact been hidden and then sent to Canada by Johnson's Indian messengers.[129]

Johnson, in replying to these charges, could do little to soothehurt feelings and drive away feelings of distrust. He did, however, insist in strong terms that the Iroquois give him a clear, final statement of their position on the war, warning that anything less would be seen in English councils as a sign of unfriendliness. The assembled sachems declared that such a statement could only come from a full council of the Confederacy and promised to consider his request and deliver an answer as soon as possible.

The Iroquois reply, when it came, underscored both the divisions that were beginning to appear within the Longhouse and a general desire to remain apart from the European conflict. At a series of councils held in March and April of 1757, the upper three nations made their feelings and policy known. In reply to Johnson's question of the previous November, the sachems said "We are resolved to keep Friends on both Sides as long as possible & not meddle with the Hatchet, but endeavour always to pacify the White People.

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[129] Iroquois reply to Johnson's opening remarks, in "Indian Proceedings", Fort Johnson, November 12-21, in Documents Relative, VII, pp. 230-36.

Our Arms shall be between you endeavouring to keep You asunder."[130] After nearly three years of English requests and admonitions, the sachems of some of the Five Nations were making their first formal declaration of policy. It is worth noting that these tribes did not view their position as merely one of neutrality. Rather, they were establishing themselves as peace-makers, in order to keep the English and French "asunder". Such a position would accord well with traditional Iroquois policies and goals as established by the prophet Deganawida at the time of the founding of the Confederacy. The upper tribes also felt that they had the military and diplomatic power to act in such a capacity.

The declaration of the Oneida and Mohawk sachems are not recorded in the council minutes, but their subsequent actions suggest that they did not accept the policy of their western brothers. Indeed, these two nations, with some Tuscaroras, provided nearly the entire Iroquois military contingent in the British camp until 1759. The reasons for such a divergence in policies is hard to determine, especially since the Mohawk in particular were taking most of the Indian losses as well as many insults from the English. Johnson's report hints at a growing rift between the two lower nations and the upper tribes. The Mohawk warned Jelles Fonda and Thomas Butler not to set out for the upper country in January because it was not safe and that they "wou'd stand a chance to loose His scalp among them [the upper nations]."[131]

The war was taking its toll of the Iroquois in other ways. Thomas Butler

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[130]Iroquois speech of March 28, in "Journal of Indian Affairs", Fort Johnson, March 19- April 5, in Johnson Papers, IX, p. 669.

[131]Report of Jelles Fonda and Thomas Butler, January, 1757, in Johnson Papers, II, pp. 667, 670.

reported in January of 1757 on the "Great quantityes of Rum brought to" the Oneidas, and of their constant state of drunkeness.[132] Johnson also expressed his concern at the large number of Iroquois who came to his home looking for rum.[133] Such comments became more frequent during 1757 as did complaints by Indians of illicit rum dealers. Compounding the social disruption caused by liquor was the shortage of food and clothing among the Five Nations.[134] Finally, there was smallpox. Johnson reported in July that "I have six of my People in the Small pox and several Ind[s] in ye out houses. It rages verry much in this part of the country, and the Five Nations have carried it with them. The two young fellows who took it at my House dyed at the German Flatts. viz[t] ye Bunt's son & Nimble Rists."[135] The fate of Nimble Rists and others must have been on the minds of Iroquois men who would have otherwise been willing to serve in the English armies.

The war and the Iroquois attitude toward it were having a decided influence on other Indians who looked to the Five Nations for guidance. In May, Johnson held a brief conference with a delegation of Nanticokes, Conoys, and Aghquagas. These people expressed much concern over the behavior of the Iroquois, observing that "We see that the 5 Nations are much divided amongst themselves" and pressed Johnson to spare no efforts to keep the Five Nations loyal and friendly.[136]

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[132]Ibid., p. 673.

[133]"Indian Proceedings", Fort Johnson, April 26-27, in Johnson Papers, IX, p. 694.

[134]Johnson to Peter and Elizabeth Wraxall, Fort Johnson, July 17, in Johnson Papers, IX, p. 799.

[135]Ibid., p. 800.

[136]"An Indian Congress", Fort Johnson, April 29-May 1, in Johnson Papers, IX, p. 706.

Whether large-scale Iroquois involvement in the 1757 campaign would have made the critical difference to English forces is uncertain. What is certain is that the British military continued to give ground before aggressive French troops. The result was another resounding defeat at Fort William Henry, one that convinced many Iroquois that neutrality was the wisest policy to follow. The loss of this garrison stripped the English of their last outpost north of Albany and made the northern New York region and the Mohawk Valley vulnerable to French raids.

The military operations and Iroquois diplomacy in 1758 were, in many ways, repetitions of the previous year. The year began on a sour note as the Mohawk of Fort Hunter complained about the violent treatment they had received from the local garrison. For Johnson, this incident was more than the usual complaints of beatings or bad words, since it directly involved Abraham, a sachem of the village.[137]

As in past years, the Five Nations had called a general council at Onondaga to discuss matters relating to the war and other issues. Johnson, having received an invitation from the Oneida, planned to attend and use whatever influence he still had to gain Iroquois support for the summer campaign. As had happened in 1757, the Iroquois expressed their disapproval of his going, but this time the reasons and the manner of expressing them were more forceful and direct. Significantly, it was the village of Canajoharie, the most pro-English of the Iroquois villages, that offered the most strenuous objections. The women of that village claimed that any invitation to a European to attend a full council at Onondaga was, in a sense, unconstitutional, since

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137"Journal of Indian Affairs", Fort Johnson, January 13, in Johnson Papers, XIII, pp. 104-108.

it violated ancient custom. They suggested that Johnson should be content to receive word of council decisions by messenger. In line with this, they stated that any Oneida invitation was illegal and hinted that the invitation was, in fact, part of a plot to either kill Johnson or disrupt the council.[138] Johnson, impressed no doubt with both the argument and the fact that the women, the trustees of the political system, were speaking, declined the invitation.

Having decided to remain at home, Johnson turned his energies to collecting Indians for General Abercrombie's planned drive toward the French forts on Lake Champlain. In addition, he was concerned about the continuing Indian war on the Pennsylvania frontier. Pacifying the Delaware became even more important now that a second British army would be moving through the colony on its way to the Ohio. That Iroquois feelings toward these campaigns had not changed much is evidenced by Johnson's observations in a letter to Abercrombie. He blamed Iroquois coolness on the defeats at Oswego and Fort William Henry, and suggested that unless the English showed more military success, the Five Nations would continue to be neutral or worse, join the French.[139]

Johnson's negotiations resulted in some Iroquois participation in Abercrombie's campaign. He was also able to get the Five Nations to support a general peace council at Easton, Pennsylvania, that eventually led to a resolution of the frontier war.[140] This Iroquois participation had not been easily obtained. Johnson, facing a military time-table, insisted on having the war-

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[138] Ibid., pp. 111-12.

[139] Johnson to General James Abercrombie, Albany, May 10, in Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 901-902.

[140] For a list of the number of men contributed by each nation to the Lake George army, see Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 944-45. The Mohawk and Oneida provided 240 of the 355 Iroquois warriors.

riors assembled as quickly as possible. The Iroquois objected, claiming that his "hurrying & peremptory messages" violated custom and were patently rude. The Iroquois would consider and give aid on their own terms, they would not be "drove to war."[141] Johnson need not have worried about arriving at the battle on time, since his Iroquois allies never got to within musket range of Fort Carillon at Ticonderoga. Rather, they sat on the sidelines and watched column after column of English get shot to pieces in a vain attempt to storm the French lines. For the third time, the Iroquois' faithful allies had been badly beaten.

On the Ohio, however, the situation was somewhat different. After a gruelling six month campaign, John Forbes's collection of Scots, English, and colonial troops retook the forks of the Ohio. While the Ohio Country could not yet be called "English", Forbes and his army had made enough of an impression to cause the Delaware to come in for talks. His victory on the Ohio may also have been responsible for a change in attitude among the Iroquois, especially the upper nations. For when Johnson again went among the Five Nations to muster support for the 1759 campaigns, he was met by a markedly different reception. At a council at Canajoharie in April, the Genesee Seneca, heretofore so against an English alliance, proposed that the English strike at the French post at Niagara. The idea was obviously a good one, so good in fact that Johnson and the new American commander, Sir Jeffrey Amherst, vied with each other for the honor of its authorship. The other Iroquois soon joined the Seneca in proposing such an operation. Johnson, apparently eager for

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[141]"Indian Proceedings", Fort Johnson, June 27, in Johnson Papers, IX, p. 937.

another opportunity for military glory, wrote a lengthy proposal for such a campaign. His ardour was somewhat lessened when he learned that Amherst had chosen an English professional to lead the attack.[142]

The reasons for the Seneca change in attitude had much to do with the changing nature of the war. English forces on the Ohio gave evidence that the Frenchman's days in the west were numbered. The upcoming campaign might well be decisive and it would be well to be on the winning side. Economics also seems to have played a part in changing the minds of the western Iroquois. Johnson, in his report to Amherst, mentioned that the Seneca and "9 Nations of the said Foreign Indians" had sent a belt to the English for the purpose of opening trade negotiations.[143] Such an interest in trade would make sense in view of the French inability to keep a supply of trade goods coming into Canada due to the British naval blockade. This shortage of goods could account for the sudden coolness on the part of the western Iroquois toward the French and their cooperative attitude toward the English, whose goods were both plentiful and cheap. For whatever reasons, the Iroquois eagerness to take an active part in the war was unmistakable. Johnson reported that he could easily provide eight hundred warriors for the Niagara campaign. Even allowing for a discount in numbers, Iroquois participation was nonetheless impressive.[144]

As finally executed, the Niagara campaign formed part of a four-pronged English attack on Canada. With nearly nine hundred Indians in the ranks,

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[142]Hamilton, Sir William Johnson, p. 243.

[143]Johnson to Amherst, Canajoharie, April 21, in Johnson Papers, III, pp. 28-29.

[144]Johnson to Amherst, Canajoharie, April 22, in Ibid., p. 31.

General John Prideaux's army moved up the Mohawk Valley to Oswego, and from there to Niagara. After little more than two weeks of bombardment, Niagara surrendered. Two months later, as Amherst was consolidating his conquests on Lake Champlain, James Wolfe stormed Quebec. By December of 1759, the war was, for all practical purposes, at an end.

The conquest of French Canada presented the English with a tremendous opportunity. For the first time in over a century, the Great Lakes region was open to English traders and settlers. No sooner had the last French troops laid down their arms at Montreal in 1760, than English officials on both sides of the Atlantic began planning for an enlarged western trading empire based, not at Albany or Oswego, but farther west at Detroit and Fort Pitt on the Ohio. Western tribes such as the Ottawa, Illini, Wyandot, and Chippewa suddenly loomed large in British imperial plans. George Croghan, William Johnson, and scores of other opportunists looked to the west as a source of wealth and power.

For the Five Nations, the English victory had a far different meaning. With English access to the west assured, the Iroquois position as favored intermediaries with western tribes was placed in jeopardy. Further, the entire play-off system that had allowed the Iroquois to preserve their autonomy and power for nearly a century was suddenly undone. Without the French, such a policy made no sense. In short, the English victory in Canada had presented the Iroquois with a far greater crisis than the war just ended. With more limited options, and faced with a victorious, expansion-minded English neighbor, the Five Nations would have to work out a new accommodation as the play-off system was abandoned in favor of hard bargaining.[145]

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[145]Wallace, Death and Rebirth of the Seneca, p. 114.

CHAPTER IV

CRISIS IN THE WEST: THE POST - WAR YEARS, 1760 - 1764

The conquest of Canada, completed in the Fall of 1760, marked the beginning of a period of adjustment and transition in the relations of the Five Nations and their English neighbors. The sudden departure of the French from mainland North America created a crisis for both Englishmen and Iroquois. In each case the crisis involved the necessity of adjusting to new military and political realities on the frontier. This adjustment brought with it conflict and a feeling of uneasiness and distrust on both sides. The western uprising of 1763, usually associated with the Ottawa chief, Pontiac, was only one of the more violent and prolonged episodes in a larger pattern of conflicts and confrontations.

For the English, the fall of Canada opened up for exploitation a territory several times larger than the old mainland colonies. But if the surrender of Montreal brought prospects of wealth and empire, it also placed England in the uncomfortable position of the conquerer in a foreign, still hostile land. To say that Britain controlled Canada and its western territories from 1760 to 1764 would be to overstate the case. Not until the Summer of 1761 did permanent garrisons arrive at Detroit and Michilimackinac and the lesser posts along the Great Lakes. Even then the number of troops, approximately two companies of infantry, was a token force unable to maintain control over such a vast region. The settled parts of Canada, while occupied by several British

regiments, held a population that had yet to be reconciled to the new regime.

On the frontier, English control had not been recognized by the several nations of Indians that maintained control over the lands south of the Great Lakes. While the Ottawa and other Indians near Detroit welcomed the English troops in 1761, they in no way surrendered their sovereignty. Rather, they hoped that the English would simply replace their former French trading partners in maintaining a favorable business relationship.

To the Iroquois, the English victory in America was a mixed blessing. On one hand, the war, which had created hard feelings and tension within the Confederacy, was virtually at an end; and with it ended the constant dread that had hung over the Five Nations concerning their security. In the long run, however, the English conquest of Canada was to create more problems for the Five Nations than it solved. The removal of French power from the continent destroyed the diplomatic principle upon which the Iroquois had based their independence and power. Without a second European power to balance against the English, the Five Nations faced a long period of pressures for land and a decline in prestige in the eyes of their sometime allies.

That Iroquois-English relations were taking a different turn is evidenced by the numerous exchanges, both private and public, of the immediate post-war period. After 1760 relations between the two peoples were marked by sharp disputes, bitterness, and distrust on both sides. Even the Old Agreement, or Covenant Chain, was significantly altered. Prior to 1760, treaties and councils had been held in a spirit of cooperation, however forced or contrived. The English willingly accepted traditional Iroquois practices and protocol as agreed to in the original Covenant. After the conquest, the tone and purpose of the councils changed. Sir William Johnson more frequently spoke in the

manner of a stern father than of a brother. His speeches were marked by threats, demands for cooperation, and continual reminders of the obligations owed by the Five Nations to the Great King in England. His manner was reinforced by those of other royal officials, most notably the American commanders, Sir Jeffrey Amherst and Thomas Gage. While the Iroquois continued to maintain, in council, a spirit of unity and power, in reality their position had changed much since the days of the Lake George campaign and Niagara. The very spirit of the councils after 1760 evidences a decline in Iroquois power and prestige relative to the English and the western Indians who had recently been invited into the Covenant.

This change in attitude toward the Iroquois on the part of British officials in general, and Sir William Johnson in particular, stemmed from the nature of England's frontier problem in 1760. The unsettled regions of Canada were inhabited by Indians who, for over a century, had maintained close trade contacts with the French and who, in many cases, had lately lifted the hatchet against the English back settlements. These people saw English victory as a threat, not only to their established economic patterns, but also to their lands. The treatment of the Delaware, Shawnee, and other border tribes had given Indians farther west cause for alarm. During the years immediately following the English conquest, the Indians: Chippewa, Ottawa, Wyandot, Sauteurs, and Illinois bands, became convinced that England's ultimate goal was to dispossess them and occupy the land.

England's problem, therefore, was to establish and maintain sufficiently good trade relations with these people to guarantee a profitable trade in furs and allow for the eventual settlement of the trans-Appalachian region. This problem was particularly acute when the English military and financial situation

is examined. Those troops still in America had been reduced to minimal numbers through hard campaigning, leaving few men for garrison duty. Realistically, if the western tribes wished to wage war on the back settlements, there was, for the moment, little the English military could do about it. Financially, the ministry in London was eager to reduce the normal and extraordinary expenses associated with the American forces. Chief among these were the thousands of pounds distributed by Johnson and his deputies for gifts and condolences to the Iroquois and other Indian allies. The American commander, Amherst, was convinced that such practices must eventually stop, the sooner the better.

The solution to these problems came to be embodied in a number of official acts, unofficial policies, and stop-gap measures, which eventually became known as the "Plan of 1764." Its originator was Sir William Johnson.[146] To lessen the problems outlined above, Johnson proposed a new imperial Indian policy. Such a policy, if successfully carried out, would lessen the causes of conflict, thus reducing the need for troops and, hopefully, for costly gifts to Indian leaders and peoples. Basically, Johnson's scheme consisted of: creating an enlarged and more powerful Indian Department which would have complete powers to negotiate and control Indian affairs on the frontier, independent of the military; a guarantee to the western nations that the King would protect them in their rightful claims to lands lying outside the settled regions of the colonies, and; the establishment of a well regulated, fair

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[146] For an excellent summary of British Indian policy before the Revolution, see: Peter Marshall, "Colonial Protest and Imperial Retrenchment: Indian Policy 1764-1768", Journal of American Studies 1 (1971), 1-17. Also of value is Jennings, "Indians" Revolution", pp. 336-39.

trade with the western tribes in the hope of thus maintaining their friendship and cooperation. It was in his efforts to bring these measures into being that Johnson began to ignore the Iroquois and work for a new, quite different Covenant Chain relationship.

In Johnson's scheme of things, the Iroquois would play an important, though subordinate, role in the new Indian establishment. As England's oldest and most powerful Indian ally, the Confederacy would be useful in supporting crown policies and in influencing other tribes. Johnson would continue to support Iroquois claims of control over the Ohio Valley in order to facilitate negotiations and land transfers. The Five Nations could also serve as a useful counterpoise to the numerous and latently hostile western tribes. All of this was to be conducted, however, from a position of superior-subordinate, not in the context of "brothers", although that term continued to be employed as a diplomatic nicety throughout the period. Iroquois prestige and independence were also challenged, indirectly, from another point. Johnson clearly saw the new political and military realities on the frontier, one of which was the potential power of the western nations. The Great Lakes and lower Ohio Valley were now the centers of British interest, not the invasion routes into the New York-New England region. As a result, Johnson spent much time and energy courting the Ottawa Confederacy and relatively less time on the Iroquois. In his view, the Five Nations, whose strategic and economic value were now limited, could conveniently be subordinated as part of a larger, imperial pattern of Indian relations. Thus, the new Iroquois-English relationship would be by nature contractural. The English would support the Iroquois and their claims only as long as the Five Nations could effectively act as a support for British imperial policies.

Whether the Five Nations could adequately fulfill their new role was an open question in 1760. That the Mohawk and Oneida had suffered heavily during the war can be attested to by repeated requests for food and clothing as well as by the observations of visiting Englishmen.[147] There was also the renewed problem of land speculation in the Mohawk Valley. With the end of the war, dozens of would-be land barons, including Johnson and the Lieutenant Governor of New York, strove to buy up large tracts of Iroquois land. The methods were often nothing short of robbery and caused the lower Iroquois much concern for their future economic security and social integrity. Similar schemes along the Niagara River posed a threat to the western Seneca.[148]

Finally, there was the problem of the client tribes, especially those on the upper Ohio River. The war had given the Delaware and Shawnee the opportunity needed to declare their independence from the Iroquois and conduct their own diplomacy with the English and French. The English had given support to this movement by negotiating directly with the Ohio Indians in an effort to end the costly and embarrassing frontier war in Pennsylvania. The Mingo were also taking a more independent attitude. Any loss of cooperation with these people could further undermine Iroquois standing with the English, since the colonial and royal governments expected the Five Nations to control and negotiate for these people, particularly in the matter of land cessions.[149]

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[147]"Journal of Warren Johnson, June 29, 1760-July 3, 1761", in Johnson Papers, XIII, pp. 187, 189, 194.

[148]Amherst to Johnson, New York, May 7, 1760, in Johnson Papers, X, pp. 268-70.

[149]Jennings, "Indians' Revolution", p. 332. See also: Wallace, Death and Rebirth of the Seneca, pp. 122-23.

The magnitude of the diplomatic changes then taking place on the frontier and the level of discontent and concern felt by at least some Iroquois can be seen in the events surrounding the Detroit conference of 1761. This meeting, from September 9th to 17th, represented Johnson's first attempt to make a permanent peace with the Great Lakes nations and bring them into an enlarged Covenant Chain, wherein they would be linked with the Five Nations to the English in an alliance that would guarantee future cooperation and a profitable trade. That Johnson undertook a long and potentially dangerous trip from the Mohawk Valley to the recently occupied Detroit area suggests the importance that he, and the English military command, placed in the western tribes.

As Johnson moved up the Mohawk toward Oswego early in July, he held several meetings with Iroquois delegations. While the subject matter of these encounters varied, they all included a brief explanation by Johnson of his trip as an effort to strengthen the Confederacy by bringing it more allies. In reply he received a steady stream of complaints about bad treatment from soldiers and expressions of concern over the sudden change in English policies. At a meeting with a group of Missisaugas living in Iroquoia, Johnson was questioned closely about the continued movement of troops into the west now that the fighting had stopped.[150] The Onondaga expressed concern over Johnson's journey to Detroit, since it appeared to violate custom and threatened the central position of the Iroquois council fire in English frontier diplomacy.[151]

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[150] Meeting of July 20, in "Niagara and Detroit Proceedings, July-September, 1761", in Johnson Papers, III, p. 441.

[151] Meeting of July 21, in Ibid., p. 444.

At this same meeting, the Onondagas complained about the plundering of one of their hunters, Kanadacta, by troops moving to Oswego.[152] One of the most persistent complaints, however, was over the sudden shortage of ammunition. Nearly every group encountered asked why the supply of lead and powder had been suddenly curtailed, and asked for enough to sustain hunting parties.[153] The gunpowder issue was of no small importance. During the war, when the Iroquois were essential to English operations, the ammunition had been freely and plentifully distributed. Now, as fighting ended, the English seemed bent on totally disarming their allies. It must also be borne in mind that, for many Iroquois hunters, gunpowder had become a basic necessity, without which families and whole villages might starve. The English commander might rationalize his new policy of limited allotments as an economy measure and one designed to keep the Indians under control. To the Iroquois, such action could only mean an attempt by their brothers to subdue them and take their lands. Johnson could provide no ready answers to these complaints and attempted to pacify hurt feelings by making monetary restitution for plundered goods and by issuing, against orders, small amounts of powder and lead to keep the young men content.

Having reached Detroit late in August, Johnson prepared for the coming council. At the opening of the conference on September 9th, he took a step of some significance when, symbolically taking a brand from the Iroquois council fire, he lit a council fire at Detroit for the western nations. In so doing, Johnson was taking the first step toward the establishment of what later was

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[152] Ibid., p. 445.

[153] Ibid., pp. 445, 455. Also: Johnson to Amherst, German Flatts, July 7, in Johnson Papers, X, pp. 312-13.

to become a basic element of British frontier policy: dividing the Indians into separate, rival confederacies to lessen the liklihood of military co-operation.[154]

The bulk of the conference was taken up with the exchange of good will and promises on both sides to hold firm to the Covenant Chain and to cooperate in maintaining peace. For his part, Johnson assured the assembled sachems and warriors that the English would provide ample trade and preserve Indian lands. His speeches were strongly seconded by a delegation of Mohawks, led by Nickus of Canajoharie, whose presence was intended to demonstrate Iroquois support for Johnson's actions.[155]

The conference ended with two symbolic acts. The Ottawa, who dominated the immediate region, gave a calumet to the Mohawk as a symbol of union, in the names of all the western nations. This act completed at least one of Johnson's missions: the reunification of all the tribes within the Covenant. It is significant that throughout the conference, the western tribes were referred to as "bretheren" by both Johnson and the Mohawks, and not in the inferior term of "children". While such an alliance of tribes would ensure greater efficiency in handling Indian affairs, Johnson was also aware of its potential hazards. Therefore, as his last official act in council, he appointed three Wyandot sachems to lead the so-called "Ottawa Confederacy", to embrace all of the western nations living near the Great Lakes. Just how much of a confederacy it was, or how cooperative its members were toward each other is unclear. To Johnson, however, its purpose was clear: it was to serve as a

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[154] Meeting of September 9, in "Niagara and Detroit Proceedings, July-September, 1761", in Johnson Papers, III, p. 476.

[155] Ibid., pp. 480-82.

counterpoise to Iroquois power in the east. Such a confederacy could help ensure Iroquois cooperation by its coercive use. This confederacy could also serve to keep eastern and western nations apart.[156]

While Johnson was speaking to the Ottawa Confederacy, he was also trying to gather details concerning a reported plot, involving a number of tribes, to overthrow British military forces in the west. News of this plot was first made known through a dispatch from the Detroit commander, Captain Campbell, to his superiors in New York, who then forwarded it to Johnson. According to Campbell, the Indians around Detroit were being stirred up against the English by two Seneca who claimed to speak for all the Iroquois. These two men, Guyasutha and Tahaiadoris, displayed belts which, they claimed, had been sent by the Onondaga council. The operation, as Campbell understood it, was to consist of systematic attacks on the western posts, including Niagara and Fort Pitt.[157] Once discovered, the plot, if such there was, quickly evaporated. Johnson and Amherst, however, were much concerned over the very idea of an Indian assault, particularly one led or even planned by the Five Nations.

While the nature of the plot, and the identity of the conspirators, is uncertain, the circumstances surrounding it reveal much about Iroquois attitudes toward the English and their perceptions of what the future held for

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[156] Meeting of September 10, in Ibid., pp. 491, 494. See also: Wainwright, Croghan, p. 182; Hamilton, Sir William Johnson, p. 294.

[157] Captain Donald Campbell to Amherst, Detroit, June 17, in Johnson Papers, III, pp. 437-39; Campbell to Major William Walters, Detroit, June 17, in Johnson Papers, III, pp. 405-406.

them and other Indians.[158] That there was indeed some plan to drive the English out of the west seems certain, given the prevailing mood of the Seneca and other Indians as well as information provided by other observers.[159]

The messengers appear to have been either from the village of Genesee or from the upper Ohio. Whichever the case, they represented people who were the least accommodated of all the Iroquois to English intrusion into the west.[160] That the Seneca had ample reason for their hostile feelings toward the English is quite clear. On the Ohio, British troops were busily establishing a chain of posts from Fort Pitt to Lake Erie. Along the Niagara River, in the very heart of Seneca territory, recently retired British officers had been given permission to establish farms and settlements.[161] All of this seemed to the Seneca to be clear violations of repeated promises made to them by Johnson during the war. The Seneca themselves offered as their reasons for their anti-English feelings the disrespect shown to them by the garrisons and traders, the sudden reduction of ammunition supplies, and their strong notion that these were evidence of an English attempt to "cut them off" and take the land. The solution appeared obvious: strike before the English could complete their plans.[162] This explanation was supported by English observers. Johnson wrote

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[158] Johnson assumed that the plotters were from Genesee, however, Guyasutha, at least, was living on the Ohio. See: Campbell to Amherst, June 17, in Johnson Papers, III, pp. 439-40; Wallace, Indians in Pennsylvania, p. 173.

[159] Nicholas B. Wainwright, ed., "George Croghan's Journal 1759-1763", Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 71 (1947), 407-408.

[160] Wallace, Death and Rebirth of the Seneca, pp. 39, 114.

[161] Johnson to Daniel Claus, Castle Cumberland, May 20, in Johnson Papers, X, pp. 268-70.

[162] "Copy of the Conference sent by Capt. Gamble At a Council held at the Wiandot Town near Fort Detroit 3d July 1761 by the Deputy's of the six Nations with the Ottawas, Wiandots, Chipeweighs, & Powtewatamis", in Johnson Papers, III, p. 451.

to Amherst that "I find of late that all the Nations in Alliance with us & those who might be brought in to His Majestys Interest, are verry jealous & uneasy at the coolness & indifference w^h they think is shewn toward them, and above all at the want of ammunition, which they look upon to be done with a design of falling upon them."[163]

Any plans laid at Detroit, once discovered by Captain Campbell, never materialized into a coherent attempt to resist British power. Indeed, circumstances surrounding the whole incident are incomplete and at times contradictory as to the parties involved and the ultimate goals of any attack. The Seneca never responded to Johnson's repeated demands for an explanation in a way that would reveal all of the details of a plot. This, however, is relatively unimportant. The importance of any Seneca plot was its demonstration that, in at least a limited way, many Indians were by no means willing to accept the British definition of frontier relations and were willing to contemplate steps to actively remove this new threat from their territory.

Plots, and the possibility of a frontier war after 1760, had not really been a major consideration of the British government as it developed its new western policy. Imperial officials complacently believed that the Indians, of whatever group, would be more than happy to become second-class citizens in their own land in exchange for the somewhat dubious advantages that trade and alliance with England could give them. The revelation that a plot was indeed a reality, and that it included large numbers of England's supposedly loyal ally the Iroquois, led to worry and fear on the part of military and civil authorities in the colonies. Through the Winter of 1761, military and Indian

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[163]Johnson to Amherst, Fort Johnson, June 21, in Johnson Papers, X, p. 291.

officials were engaged in a continuous correspondence, the topic of which was the location and leadership of one plot after another, ranging from Montreal to the Ohio. Chief among the hunters after conspirators was Major Henry Gladwin, stationed at Fort William Augustus, near Montreal. He repeatedly warned of a massive attempt by the Northern Indians to rise up and wipe out the English in Canada.[164] In his zeal to root out such attempts, he even became something of an intelligence agent, employing Canadian Indians as spies to seek information from their villages.[165] Johnson, in order to satisfy his own questions and doubts about Gladwin's information, finally ordered his deputy in Canada, Daniel Claus, to investigate the rumors and warn the tribes of the consequences of any bad behavior.[166]

While there is little evidence to give credence to Gladwin's reports, there is no doubt that, as 1762 opened, conditions on the frontier in general, and among the Iroquois in particular, were going from bad to worse. Johnson planned to hold a conference at Fort Johnson later in the year to appraise the Five Nations of the Detroit council and to ferret out the Seneca conspirators. Prior to that meeting, however, his time was taken up in listening to, and trying to answer, a constant stream of complaints and allegations from various parts of the Longhouse. As early as January, the Oneida, speaking on behalf of the Confederacy, announced that the English must immediately stop all further settlement of the Mohawk Valley. The speaker offered as the major reason the fact that "we begin already to be greatly confined, not having suf-

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[164] See for example: Major Henry Gladwin to Amherst, Fort William Augustus, February 4, 1762; and Gladwin to Amherst, Fort William Augustus, March 5, in Johnson Papers, X, pp. 380-81.

[165] Gladwin to Amherst, Fort William Augustus, February 24, in Johnson Papers, X, p. 384.

[166] Johnson to Claus, Castle Cumberland, February 9, in Johnson Papers, III, p. 630.

ficient left us for our hunting." He went on to explain that "We have had our Lands from the beginning of the World, and we love them as we do our lives, therefore we hope you'll put a stop to any attempt of that nature of the future."[167] At the same time, the Mohawks launched an attack on the Klock family of Canajoharie for a variety of deceits and misrepresentations concerning land sales and rents involving the Canajoharie village.

The old complaint about a shortage of ammunition was also heard again.[168] In this context, however, another reason emerged for Iroquois concern about the powder supply and their feelings of apprehension about British intentions. During this period at least some of the Five Nations, principally Senecas and Cayugas, had renewed their traditional conflict with the southern tribes, particularly the Cherokee and Catawbas. Raiding was an essential way for young men to prove both their valor and their abilities as leaders within their communities. Inter-tribal wars also enabled the Iroquois to project enmities outward, thus lessening the opportunities for friction at home. Finally, considering the blood sport nature of Indian warfare as well as the importance of the revenge mechanism, it was vital that raids be conducted to make up losses and revenge the deaths of sachems and warriors lost in earlier attacks. By the middle of the eighteenth century, these goals could not adequately be accomplished without the use of muskets. Without a ready supply of ammunition, the Iroquois were placed at a decided disadvantage relative to their enemies. This, in turn, must have led to feelings of doubt about British intentions and the fear that the Five Nations might fall victim to an English-Cherokee conspiracy.

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[167] "Journal of Indian Affairs", Fort Johnson, January 23-29, 1762, in Johnson Papers, X, p. 360.

[168] Ibid., p. 370.

It should be further noted that the Iroquois were just as susceptible to rumors of English "plots" as the English were to similar behavior by Senecas and Wyandots.

The general conference that Johnson had called convened on the 21st of April at Johnson Hall. No sooner had the traditional preliminaries been dispensed with than Johnson launched into a renewed attack on the Genesee Senecas for stirring up discontent among the western nations. If the Iroquois still retained any illusions that the good old days still lingered, Johnson's remarks must have shattered them. His comments and tone were hardly brotherly and the tirade ended with a stern warning of massive retaliation should the Iroquois dare attack their English neighbors.[169] His comments were immediately supported by his loyal chorus from Canajoharie whose sachem, Abraham, demanded that the western Iroquois continue to uphold and honor the Covenant Chain and that the sachems maintain a strong control over their young men.[170]

The Genesee speaker replied by offering an explanation of circumstances surrounding the plot. In brief, he explained that the idea came from the Wyandot, with the Seneca delegation going west merely to find out if the Wyandot were in fact willing to carry out the plan. Any actual Seneca complicity he blamed on the unilateral actions of Tahaiadoris who, it was said, promised aid in the name of the Seneca; something he was not empowered to do. Guyasutha supported this claim, saying that he was a "stranger" to any such pledge of support.[171] This exchange only succeeded in clouding the matter and increas-

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[169] "Indian Proceedings", Johnson Hall, April 21-28, in Johnson Papers, III, pp. 692-93.

[170] Ibid., pp. 694-95.

[171] Ibid., pp. 695-96.

ing, rather than decreasing suspicions.

The more interesting thing about the exchange, however, was the fact that the Genesee speaker was not a sachem or Pine Tree Chief, but a warrior. That a warrior should speak in council in time of peace was highly unusual, since it violated the traditional separation of war and peace functions. The speaker explained the situation by saying that the sachems had been delayed by bad roads. But beyond this, he explained that "We are in fact the People of Consequence for managing Affairs, our Sachems being a parcell of Old People who say much, but who mean & act very little, so that We have both the power & ability to settle matters . . . ."[172] In this passage may lie part of the explanation for the uncertain, aggressive behavior of many Iroquois at this time. Apparently, at least among the Seneca, the end of the war, bringing with it an end to opportunities for winning valor and status, was causing the young men much concern. In addition, the continued arrogance of the English, coupled with the threats to the tribal land base, must have been causing considerable friction within Seneca society. The young men, as protectors of the land and its people, were unhappy at being restrained by the sachems, whose job it was to preserve social order and peace. The statement suggests that some warriors believed the elders were either unable to take charge of the situation, or worse, were deliberately cooperating with the English, perhaps in order to maintain their own prestige and power. In short, the statement of the Seneca warriors from Genesee may have been a reflection of a growing crisis within Iroquois society created by the changes in frontier conditions and English policy. That crisis may in turn be reduced to a question of alternatives: whether it was better to accommodate or resist. Certainly the traditional power struc-

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[172] Ibid., pp. 697-98.

ture within the Genesee community was being altered, as warriors now claimed their right to sit in, and conduct, councils; something that does not fit the traditional pattern of Iroquois politics.

In addition to this evidence of intra-tribal conflict, there was an exchange between the Onondaga and Mohawk that suggests a rift between these peoples. The Onondagas expressed their concern that the Mohawk had "never attended our Conferences, altho' you knew we had two places of meeting, Onondaga & Fort Johnson, we hope for the future you will, agreeable to Antient Custom, attend them more closely and that you will not fail being present at that which we are shortly to have at Chenussio." The Mohawk reply was short and to the point: they did not attend because they had never been invited.[173] It may be that the Mohawks' eagerness to remain faithful to the Covenant Chain had caused them to be ignored by the upper nations, or rather, suspected of being too much in Johnson's interest. The exchange certainly reflected a concern for unity and loyalty on the part of all the Iroquois, perhaps in recognition of the fact that only as a united people could they hope to withstand English aggressiveness. It also conjured up feelings of jealousy between the Mohawks and the other Iroquois, feelings that carried over from the time of the 1754 Albany conference. Whether such jealousies were purely Iroquois in origin cannot readily be determined, but that they were aggravated by the present state of Iroquois-English relations seems certain.

Coupled with these exchanges, the conference included many complaints from the several participants concerning land, trade, and conflicts with Englishmen on the frontier. The Onondagas brought up the sore subject of the Connecticut settlement on the Susquehanna, and asked that it immediately stop.

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[173] Ibid., pp. 701, 705.

This issue, it was explained, was vital to Iroquois survival.[174] The Seneca warriors, speaking through the Onondaga, complained about the flow of liquor through their country, and announced their "resolution not to admit of, or use any more, as we discover it to be destructive to all our people . . . ."[175] The Oneida sachem Conoghquieson made complaint about the continued occupation of forts within Iroquoia and the attendent friction between local garrisons and the surrounding villages. As a military man, he could see no advantage to continuing the occupation of the forts, since the French threat was gone. Further, he reminded Johnson of promises made to remove the forts upon the end of the war.[176]

Finally, the sachems presented Johnson with the war belt given to them prior to the Niagara campaign. By that belt, Johnson had promised them a fair trade, security, and fair dealings over land. So far the belt appeared to be just so many beads, devoid of any real meaning. It was time for Brother Johnson to uphold his end of the Covenant Chain.[177]

The council ended on the 28th of April. The Seneca buried the war axe and promised to uphold the Covenant. Johnson promised to deal with the immediate problems of liquor, trade, and the misbehavior of the troops. Beyond that, little was said. That Johnson was suffering no illusions as to what he had accomplished is revealed in a letter to Cadwallader Colden. While mentioning that the Seneca had given satisfactory explanations of their past

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[174]Ibid., p. 705.

[175]Ibid., p. 700.

[176]Ibid., p. 707.

[177]Ibid., pp. 707-708.

conduct, Johnson spoke of the "uneasy" feeling among the Iroquois, especially over the English inability to stop settlement of the Susquehanna Valley and the sudden shortage of powder.[178] Some time later, Johnson issued an official report of the meeting to the Board of Trade. In that letter he spoke of the Iroquois jealousy of the growing power of the English and that the Indians were becoming more jealous of their freedom. He further explained that the Five Nations saw the garrisons as forces to "serve as checks upon, and at last surround them."[179] He concluded by warning of an Indian war if steps were not soon taken to correct abuses and bring the various tribes under more firm control.[180]

The conference revealed the pressures that the Confederacy was being subjected to as English policy changed. Continued land fraud, the sudden and unexplained reversal of the old policy governing gifts and ammunition, the courting of the western tribes by Johnson all served to cause internal friction and to increase fears that their one-time allies were now plotting to overthrow the Five Nations. At the same time, the sachems and Pine Tree Chiefs continued to follow the time honored methods of council and continued to trust the English desire and ability to rectify problems and continue as brothers. This pattern suggests that while some groups within the Confederacy, most notably the Seneca warriors, recognized what the changes in English policy might mean, a large part of the Five Nations was slow in reacting

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[178] Johnson to Colden, Fort Johnson, May 15, in Johnson Papers, III, pp. 738-40.

[179] Johnson to the Board of Trade, Fort Johnson, August 20, in Johnson Papers, III, pp. 865-69.

[180] Ibid., p. 868.

to changing circumstances, relying on the old diplomacy, and continuing to employ their assumed diplomatic and military power and usefulness as a lever with the British.

The rest of 1762 was marked by exchanges and incidents that served to reinforce the feelings of betrayal and uneasiness that the Iroquois had expressed to Johnson in April. Further, the behavior of the Five Nations, as well as the Ohio and western Indians, indicated that tempers were running short and that Johnson's explanations and threats were beginning to fall on deaf ears.

The Mohawk Valley was in a state of alarm in August when the commander of Fort Stanwix reported what at first appeared to be an attempt on his post by the Oneida. As details came in, most of them supplied by the Indians involved, the incident came into perspective. The attack on Stanwix was in fact an attack on a whiskey trading sutler who had apparently been giving or selling liquor to the Oneida warriors. The sachems and women, acting in the only manner left to them, sacked the sutler's store and destroyed the liquor. Nothing could have more emphatically underlined the desire of the Iroquois to stop the flow of rum through their villages. Johnson's response to this incident is also worth noting. Instead of a warning or mild rebuke as in the old days, he now demanded complete restitution of the destroyed property on pain of punishment by royal troops.[181]

No sooner had the Stanwix affair been made up than the Susquehanna Iroquois, or Aquagas, came to Johnson with the strong demand that the English posts in their country be "pull'd down & kick'd out of the way" immediately

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181"An Indian Conference", Johnson Hall, August 11-12, in Johnson Papers, X, pp. 480-83.

and that the English begin to fulfill their repeated promises to the Iroquois.[182] Shortly after this, a council was held at Johnson Hall, at the Iroquois' request, to settle the Fort Stanwix incident. Elements of all the Five Nations were present to pledge again their support of the Covenant. The tone of this exchange is interesting in that the Iroquois messages implied a strong fear of English retaliation.[183] This fear did not, however, prevent the sachems from again needling Johnson for a lack of good will. While apologizing for not promptly fulfilling their promises, primary of which was the immediate exchange of white prisoners held since the war, the Iroquois said that such was the case with a people who could not record such agreements. The English, on the other hand, with their written records, could more easily see the promises they had made and, logically, could act more quickly to fulfill them.[184] The council ended on much the same note as previous meetings. In addition to the gifts and pledges of brotherhood, there were reminders of bad treatment by troops in the Mohawk country, and of illegal settlements on the Susquehanna, all of which Johnson promised to investigate.

As 1762 drew to a close, indications of what would become common the following year began to appear. George Croghan, in a report filed from Fort Pitt on the diplomatic mission of Alexander McKee, noted evidence of a new effort by the Shawnee, Delaware, and Seneca to overthrow British power in the west. The

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[182] Aquagas to Johnson, Onoquaga, August 30, in Johnson Papers, III, p. 871.

[183] "An Indian Conference", Johnson Hall, September 8-10, in Johnson Papers, X, pp. 502-503.

[184] Ibid., p. 504.

reasons offered by McKee were the Indians' dread of English power and their fear of being annihilated and their lands taken from them.[185] These feelings, in turn, were brought about by the shortage of ammunition and, perhaps, the renewed warfare with the southern Indians.[186] Further, McKee suggested that the Iroquois and Ohio tribes were not returning their prisoners as a way of guaranteeing continued English good will.[187] Croghan ended his report by noting how fortunate it was that, through Johnson's effort at Detroit, the Iroquois and western nations were still very suspicious of each other, and that concerted action seemed remote.[188]

Just two weeks before Croghan's rather ominous report, an incident occured that, taken in the context of current Iroquois-English relations, seems to have been unavoidable. Johnson reported to Amherst that information had been received of the murder of William Newkirk, a trader, by some Seneca, supposedly from Ohio villages.[189] Little is known from the records of Nekirk or of the events that led to his death. However, given the tension within the Seneca nation, and the kind of behavior the Iroquois had come to associate with men such as Newkirk, his murder may not be so difficult to rationalize. For whatever reason, his death marked the first spilling of blood in Iroquoia since the fall of Niagara three years earlier. That it was English blood says much for

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[185] Croghan to Johnson, Fort Pitt, December 10, in Johnson Papers, III, p. 964.

[186] Croghan to Colonel Henry Bouquet, Fort Pitt, December 10, in Johnson Papers, X, pp. 596-98.

[187] Ibid., p. 597.

[188] Ibid.

[189] Johnson to Amherst, Fort Johnson, November 12, in Johnson Papers, III, p. 932.

how much the relationship between the English and the Five Nations had deteriorated over the past two years.

The murder of Newkirk and one other English trader, supposedly by Senecas from the Kanestio village near the Ohio, led to a prolonged exchange between the Iroquois and English. This exchange offers some insight both into English perceptions of their relations with the Five Nations, and what English actions meant to the Iroquois.

The murders could not have occurred at a more inopportune time in view of current Iroquois-English relations. The circulation of the Seneca war belts was still fresh in English minds and led to increased feelings of distrust which were enhanced by the murders. On the other hand, the continued occupation of the western posts and the reduction of gifts and ammunition contributed to feelings of jealousy and suspicion among the Five Nations.[190] In addition, the Mohawk were becoming more and more alarmed at the continuing attempts made on their lands by speculators like Ury Klock. Johnson was concerned with the possibility of violence as it became evident that the sachems were finding it difficult to control and placate their young warriors.[191]

To these problems, Johnson added another when he announced in council that Amherst would settle for nothing less than the surrender of the Kanestio murderers for trial in an English court. This request, which seemed reasonable to English authorities, took the Iroquois by surprise and created a crisis as English intentions became clear. The Iroquois sachems, particularly those from

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[190] Johnson to Horatio Sharpe, Johnson Hall, January 4, in Johnson Papers, IV, pp. 5-6.

[191] "A Meeting with Canajoharies", Canajoharie, March 10, in Johnson Papers, IV, p. 56.

Onondaga, attempted to stall Johnson's request by asking that time be given for them to reason with the Seneca and attempt to work out a compromise.

In March, the sachems returned and reported that they had been unsuccessful in their attempt to find the murderers. In compensation for this, they suggested that the Seneca make payment for the deaths, agreeable to the old customs. It was assumed that the English, as holders of the Covenant Chain would, conformable to tradition, accept this custom and not press the issue. The initial shock came when, in reply, Johnson returned the belt associated with this suggestion and demanded that the murderers be turned in immediately.[192] Johnson's refusal was a symbolic announcement that times had changed. For the English, the Covenant Chain no longer represented a diplomatic relationship based on equality. In the future, the Iroquois would have to accept an inferior status, and yield to English authority and custom.

The assembled sachems appealed to Johnson to do as he had always asked them to do: uphold the Covenant and its body of customs and reciprocal obligations. They underlined this request by stating that "it is not in our Power to deliver up the Murderers, having no laws for that purpose."[193] Johnson, in a threatening manner, again refused the offer of the condolence and demanded the return of the murderers.

For the Five Nations, Johnson's sudden, unwarranted demand must have come as a complete surprise. He was asking, in effect, that the Iroquois accept a new, radically altered, version of the Covenant; one that would place the Iroquois and their society at a marked disadvantage in dealing with the English.

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[192]"An Indian Council", Johnson Hall, March 16-19, in Johnson Papers, X, pp. 626-30, 630-31.

[193]Ibid., p. 629.

The request also had important political ramifications. In order to meet Johnson's demands and avoid the possibility of retaliation, the sachems had to attempt something for which there was no precedent in Iroquois custom. The limited power of a sachem effectively prevented the kind of police action the English were demanding. Only with the agreement of the people of Kanestio could the village, or Confederacy, sachems deliver up the murderers, assuming these could even be located. In so doing, the sachems would be in violations of the independence of the warriors who, in the case of the Seneca, were already losing respect for traditional authority. The tensions that Johnson's request for justice created were sufficient to divide villages, nations, and even the Confederacy itself. That it added to the jealousy many Iroquois were already feeling toward the English cannot be doubted.

On several occasions following the initial confrontation, the Iroquois again tried to get Johnson to honor the old Covenant. As before, Johnson's and Amherst's positions remained unchanged: the murderers must be given up. Privately, Amherst announced that he would no longer honor the Covenant, but demanded Iroquois obedience to the reality of British control on the frontier. Further, he told Johnson that, now that the French war was over, he would sharply reduce the supplies of gifts and provisions formerly given to the Indians.[194]

Finally, in May, the Five Nations made one final appeal. The speakers immediately took the moral high ground in chastising the English for breaking the Covenant. An Oneida sachem, Teyyawarunte, apologized for the necessity of having to remind the English of their ancient obligations, but felt such words

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[194] Amherst to Johnson, New York, April 3, in Johnson Papers, X, pp. 648-49.

warranted since the Chain "of late seems to contract a great deal of rust."[195] That the Iroquois saw the Covenant Chain as much more than a political expediency is evidenced by the speaker's entreaty that the English hold fast to the agreement lest the Great Spirit punish them for violating such a sacred oath.[196] Reinforcing moral argument with something the English could more readily understand, the speaker hinted that further violation of the Covenant would be a cause for war.[197] To Amherst, they expressed their concern for the murders but explained that they "could not prevail on our Nations to deviate from ye Custom, & rules of our Ancestors, neither was it so much insisted on until now."[198]

In their final arguments, the Iroquois sachems reminded Johnson of their own consistent support of the agreements entered into voluntarily by both sides. In a statement worth quoting at length, the speaker said:

> We have had many of our people killed by ye Bretheren since ye first Settlement of yr people here & never sought for any revenge or satisfaction (although in our power) after ye party offdg had condoled ye death of the slain agreeable to our custom. for wh reason, we cant help being of opinion, you must have some other cause for pushing us so much in this affair & that, as we have reason to think is for our lands . . . we can hardly believe he [King George III] would desire it. We therefore beg Brother you may look back to the Old Agreement & abide by it.[199]

With that stern reminder that agreements and abuses cut both ways, the Iroquois departed, allowing Johnson time to consider whether it was worth pursuing the

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[195] "An Indian Conference", Johnson Hall, May 20-28, in Johnson Papers, X, p. 677.

[196] Ibid., pp. 678-79.

[197] Ibid., p. 679.

[198] Ibid.

[199] Ibid., pp. 679-80.

matter.

Even while the confrontation over the Newkirk murder was building, the Iroquois and western nations were facing another unwelcome and unexpected situation. The articles of peace between England and France, signed late in 1762, had recently arrived in the colonies. Among Johnson's duties was informing the various Indian nations of the treaty and its meaning to them. In particular, he was faced with the necessity of announcing that the lands south of the Great Lakes, formerly part of French Canada, were now part of English North America. This news came as a special blow to the hopes of the Ohio Indians. George Croghan, at Fort Pitt, reported that the Delawares, Shawnee, and Mingo were very unhappy at his recent announcement of the treaty provisions. He told Johnson that the Indians were of the opinion that the lands would be returned to France, thus re-establishing the status quo and ensuring the continued independence of the Indians.[200]

In view of nearly three years of abuse and a radically and rapidly changing system of diplomatic and political relationships on the frontier, it is perhaps not surprising that, in the Spring of 1763, many Indians chose to resist. In fact, resistance seemed to be, for many, the only alternative reaction to what had been occuring on the frontier. To submit meant destruction of culture, loss of land, and perhaps loss of life. No middle ground was available. The English demanded that the Indians become vassals in an eighteenth century version of the old feudal system, with Johnson as the local baron and George III as the king-emperor.[201] This system was anathema for a people

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[200]Croghan to Johnson, Fort Pitt, April 24, in Johnson Papers, X, pp. 659-60. For the text of the council referred to in Croghan's letter, see: Wainwright, "Croghan's Journal", 439-43.

[201]Jennings, "Indians' Revolution", pp. 330-32.

who still regarded themselves as independent of any authority other than that which came from themselves. In addition, for many Indians, English actions, particularly the stopping of ammunition and control of trade, hinted of more sinister plans which would lead to their total destruction. The only recourse for warriors and many sachems alike was war.

The resulting struggle, hints of which began appearing in dispatches received by Amherst as early as May, ultimately involved more than a dozen tribes and led to massive destruction of military installations and settlements on the Ohio-Great Lakes frontier. So complete and successful were the initial assaults, that Amherst found himself unable to effectively resist since all the posts west of Forts Pitt and Detroit had fallen. The war also illustrated the wide gap between Amherst's warlike rhetoric and the realities of his situation. The British military was ill-prepared to undertake operations in 1763. Most regiments were in scattered garrisons and so badly depleted by deaths and desertions that it was all Amherst could do to raise five hundred malaria-ridden Scots for service in Pennsylvania.

Iroquois participation was not as immediate as that of the western tribes, nor were all Iroquois equally involved. Most of the disaffected warriors were western Seneca and Cayugas. The reasons for their hostility seem tied to the English encroachment on the Ohio, where the Seneca had particular interests, and to the general abuse suffered since the end of the French war.[202] In addition, the sudden shift in British behavior, as evidenced by the demand for the Kanestio murderers, seems to have played a major part in the Seneca decision to resist. It must be noted also that the Seneca and Cayuga participation was

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[202] Johnson to Colden, Johnson Hall, July 13, in Johnson Papers, IV, pp. 169-70.

not total. The eastern Seneca villages remained at peace and evidence suggests that only small parties of Cayugas became actively engaged. At one of his numerous meetings that summer, Johnson inquired of the Iroquois the reasons for the Seneca defection and the general uprising. He was surprised to learn that "the desire of the General to bring murders to punishment, with a design to prevent a general quarrel, & serve as an example to others, sho[d] be in the least considered as a pretext for the inciting the Senecas to act as they have done."[203] In addition to this, the Iroquois listed the "dearness of powder & goods" and "ill treatment, and want of any Supplies from the garrisons" as high on the list of reasons for the massive discontent.[204] Finally, as if the English were not faced with enough problems, the sachems noted that one end of the Covenant Chain, the Seneca, had already fallen and that the other end, the Mohawk, might do likewise if land frauds continued much longer.[205]

That the English had ample reason to be concerned about the actions of the Seneca became vividly apparent when, on September 14th, warriors from Genesee and Kanestio struck an armed convoy on the Niagara portage road. In a quick, totally successful assault, the warriors annihilated two companies of light infantry and destroyed wagons, horses, and supplies. A relief column from Fort Niagara was dealt with in similar fashion.[206]

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[203]"An Indian Conference", German Flatts, July 18-20, in Johnson Papers, X, p. 751.

[204]Johnson to Amherst, Johnson Hall, July 24, in Johnson Papers, X, pp. 754-55.

[205]Ibid., p. 755.

[206]See the following correspondence for details of this attack: Jean Baptiste de Couagne to Johnson, Niagara, September 16; Colonel William Browning to Johnson, Niagara, September 17; and Captain George Etherington to Johnson, Niagara, September 17, in Johnson Papers, X, pp. 815; 816-17; 817-18.

For Johnson, the issue was plain: the Senecas had to be pacified and the western nations brought to terms. In view of the limited military resources available to Amherst, the Superintendent turned to the still quiet, though not completely happy, lower Iroquois for military and diplomatic assistance. He asked the sachems of the lower three nations to apply reason with the Seneca or else Amherst would have no choice but to retaliate. In view of the Devil's Hole affair, it is doubtful whether the Seneca would have been impressed by such threats. The sachems agreed, however, to use their offices to promote peace. In September, the chiefs returned with delegates from all the Seneca villages except Kanestio and Genesee, in order to report on their mission. The Onondaga, speaking for the Seneca present at the meeting, outlined the reasons for the fighting and their inability to pacify the two western villages. Johnson, unimpressed, again pressed them to bring the Seneca to terms. He also strongly requested that the Iroquois hold to the Covenant and give military aid against the western nations, since the Iroquois must feel obliged to defend their English brethren. This was the same Johnson who, six months before, was prepared to abandon the Covenant and drive the Iroquois into civil war.[207]

The military aid was not forthcoming that year but, in December, the Genesee Seneca did come down to negotiate for an end to the fighting. They did not come to surrender.[208] The delegates, led by the venerable Silver Heels, announced their intention of ending hostilities and placed the blame for the war squarely on the Ohio Indians. He went on to say that the warriors of the

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[207] "Journal of Indian Affairs", Johnson Hall, September 1-28, in _Johnson Papers_, X, pp. 828-38.

[208] "Journal of Indian Congress", Johnson Hall, December 2-5, in _Johnson Papers_, X, pp. 961-62.

villages were acting alone and without the sanction of the councils. Johnson put them off, saying that he could take no independent action, but must await Amherst's instructions.[209]

Negotiations between the Iroquois and Johnson continued into the Spring of 1764. The western Seneca made several appearances at Johnson Hall in an attempt to begin negotiations aimed at ending the fighting and re-establishing good relations with the English.[210] Johnson noted additional reasons for the Seneca hostility of the previous year. Among them were the differences in treatment accorded them by the English and French and a loss of income derived from their employment by the French as carriers on the Niagara portage. While this is the only reference to such employment, it does offer an interesting alternative explanation of Seneca unrest. It is quite possible that, in the heyday of the French occupation of the west, the portage business might have provided substantial incomes for many Seneca families. A sudden loss of this income in the form of trade goods, ammunition, and food may have caused an economic crisis and much real suffering. The blame for this could easily be laid at the door of the English government whose occupation of the region had caused the disruption.

While sporadic contacts continued with the Seneca, Johnson sought Iroquois warriors to accompany the planned expeditions of that year against the Lakes and Ohio nations. It is interesting to note, however, that he spent most of his time and energy courting what may be termed "fringe groups", rather

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[209] Ibid.

[210] de Couagne to Johnson, Niagara, January 4, in Johnson Papers, XI, p. 1. Also see: "Journal of Indian Affairs", Johnson Hall, January 2-31, in Johnson Papers, XI, pp. 24-25.

than the Iroquois proper who, until late Spring, remained above the conflict. These groups were mainly Oneida and Tuscarora living on the upper Susquehanna. The documents suggest that most, if not all, were converts to Christianity. Johnson certainly appealed to their religious zeal when asking them to take up the hatchet. These groups clearly saw themselves as separate from the Five Nations proper and disassociated themselves from other "pagan" peoples.[211] Their speeches to Johnson reflected a zealous regard for the faith, suggesting that they may have been recent converts. Johnson undoubtedly hoped to gain from the evangelistic feelings of these people by associating proper Christian conduct with loyalty to the crown. In this he was successful, and the acculturated peoples of Aquaga and other upper Susquehanna settlements went out on raids led by officers of the Indian Department. That much of the old way still persisted among these people is evidenced by their continued performance of the condolence and the formal treaty protocol.[212] On the other hand, they were being served by their own minister, Issac, an Oneida from Aquaga. His credentials are uncertain, but in council with Johnson he left little doubt as to his total commitment to the new faith. This may have been both a spiritual commitment and a realization that, as a minister, he could command the respect and obedience of his people.[213]

With the less religiously inclined Iroquois proper, Johnson employed several methods of gaining aid, with varying success. One, which he used often,

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[211]"Journal of Indian Affairs", Johnson Hall, January 2-31, in Johnson Papers, XI, pp. 27-35.

[212]Ibid.

[213]"An Indian Conference", Johnson Hall, February 1, in Johnson Papers, XI, pp. 37-43.

was to make an appeal directly to the warriors, thus avoiding the tribal decision-making process and weakening the authority of the sachems.[214] He also requested that an Oneida war party be sent out to take scalps in order to replace the loss of Johnson's personal friend, Kanodock. To emphasize the point, he offered "a large Warrior's Belt of 3,300 wampum to excite them to war."[215] Something of Johnson's ulterior motive in all of this can be found in a report submitted to the new American commander, Thomas Gage. Johnson mentioned "makeing up a large Party to go against Kanestio, which is a numerous nest of villiams, composed chiefly of Senecas, Shawanese, & a few Delawares, when the Indians are once entered, it will inevitably become their own quarrel, and effectually break the union wh alone we have to dread."[216]

In late March, the western Seneca, numbering several hundred sachems and warriors, came to Johnson Hall to negotiate again with Johnson. The Superintendent hastily dispatched a message to Gage asking that any planned retaliation against the Seneca be postponed until the negotiations could be concluded. Early in April a formal council, witnessed by elements of all the Five Nations, convened, during which the western Seneca and the hostile Cayugas formally buried the hatchet and agreed to resume peaceful relations with the English. Johnson accepted on the condition that the Kanestio murderers be given up and that the Seneca allow the English free use of a strip of land five miles wide on both sides of the Niagara River. To this the Seneca agreed. They then announced

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214"Journal of Indian Affairs", January 2-31, in Johnson Papers, XI, pp. 24-35.

215Ibid., p. 32.

216Johnson to General Thomas Gage, Johnson Hall, February 3, in Johnson Papers, XI, p. 36.

their willingness to go to war with Johnson against the Ohio Indians.[217] The Seneca peace agreement gave Johnson the opportunity to circulate belts to the western tribes announcing his willingness to meet them that summer at Niagara to negotiate peace. Otherwise, he warned, Gage would strike them down with a force that would now include a reunited Iroquois Confederacy.

The reversal of policy on the part of the Seneca and western nations, from hostility to peace, has often been explained by historians as the Indians' recognition of defeat at the hands of a superior power. Quite to the contrary, nothing in the April treaty, or at Niagara, hints of surrender. The fact is that by the Spring of 1764, the war was deteriorating into a stalemate.[218] While they had destroyed several small forts, the Indians had not deprived the English of a foothold at places like Niagara, Oswego, Detroit, and Fort Pitt. On the British side, these forts were of little use in view of the fact that the army was in a decrepit state and unable to mount any offensives except at great cost. Indeed, in order to equip Colonel Bradstreet's army at Niagara in May, Gage had to strip all of his inland posts and enlist several hundred Canadians whose loyalty he questioned. In such a situation, with no prospects of immediate victory, and with no fear of immediate retaliation, the Senecas and Lakes tribes decided to end the expense and bloodshed of the war and agree to what amounted to a status quo settlement. Historians have pointed to the Seneca loss of the Niagara portage as proof of Johnson's hard retribution on a vanquished people. It should be noted, however, that the treaty termed this as "free

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[217] "An Indian Conference", Johnson Hall, March 24-April 23, in _Johnson Papers_, XI, pp. 139-41.

[218] Jennings, "Indians' Revolution", p. 335. See also: Gary Nash, _Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Colonial America_ (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), pp. 299-305.

use" of the land, not ownership, something Johnson did not dare bring up.[219] The Seneca, as they had demonstrated so well the previous year, still maintained the ability to interdict the portage whenever they felt the need. As to the return of the murderers, which had been such a sore point for months, the agreement went only so far as to "expect" the Seneca to comply. No hostages were taken to ensure compliance. The documents are not clear as to whether the murderers were in fact ever given up.[220] That they were is doubtful. Given the nature of Iroquois society and local government, only the murderers themselves could have guaranteed compliance. If they refused to submit, there was little that could be done.

At Niagara, between July 17th and August 4th, Johnson held a series of councils with representatives of the Five Nations and the western tribes designed to bring an end to the year-long war. The gathering was most impressive, including over 1,700 Indians from fourteen nations. The climax to the council came on July 31st when Johnson offered, and the western nations accepted, the Covenant Chain. Soon after, Colonel Bradstreet's army departed for the relief of Detroit. While Pontiac and several bands of warriors from the Illinois and the Ohio Valley continued to resist, the Indians' attempt to force British evacuation of the west was over.

The 1763 uprising and the Niagara treaty that ended it marked a watershed in Iroquois relations with the English. Force had failed to remove the English from the country and, even though the Iroquois and the western nations were

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219"An Indian Conference", Johnson Hall, March 24-April 23, in Johnson Papers, XI, p. 154.

220"At a Congress with the Chenussios, at Niagara July 25, 1764", in Johnson Papers, XI, p. 297.

damaged little during the conflict, it became increasingly apparent that such attempts could accomplish little. After 1764, the Iroquois chose to accommodate to the English in the hope of maintaining their independence and avoiding bloodshed. The full elaboration of this approach can be seen in the events surrounding the Fort Stanwix Treaty of 1768. In an effort to lessen the pressures of English settlement, and to avoid another war, the Iroquois, acting on the now largely mythical premise of dominance over the Ohio Country, ceded that land to England. Only by acting as the negotiators for other tribes and accommodating to English demands for land and frontier security could the Five Nations maintain a favorable status with the British colonial governments. The legacy of the Stanwix treaty was Lord Dunmore's War in 1774, as Shawnee, Mingo, and Delawares ultimately refused to be dispossessed by people to whom they owed no special deference.[221]

This same spirit of accommodation and avoidance of conflict can be seen in Iroquois diplomacy in the early years of the Revolution. Accepting early requests that they remain neutral and allow the rebels and king to settle matters alone, the Five Nations declared again an official neutrality reminiscent of the first half of the century. The climax came when, in 1777, British and American leaders were no longer satisfied with neutrality, but began asking for military aid. Torn between their responsibility to the Covenant Chain and their desire to remain neutral, the Confederacy began to fall apart. Unable to successfully reconstruct the old play-off system and pulled at both ends by demands, threats, and entreaties, the ancient council fire at Onondaga, age-old

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[221] Jennings, "Indians' Revolution", p. 334; Wallace, Death and Rebirth of the Seneca, pp. 122-25.

symbol of unity, was covered over. Coupled with this was a major internal crisis stemming from the sudden loss of several Confederacy sachems, resulting in a loss of leadership at a critical moment. By the end of 1777, the Iroquois were experiencing a civil war of Mohawk against Oneida, and Seneca against Tuscarora, the like of which had not been seen since the days of the prophet Deganawida.[222]

[222] Graymont, The Iroquois in the American Revolution, p. 2.

CHAPTER V

UNREST IN THE LONGHOUSE: 1748 - 1764

The Iroquois people, during the middle decades of the eighteenth century, experienced internal stress and conflict that parallelled, and was to some extent influenced by, the crises faced in relations with the English. At the same time, the internal issues that faced the Five Nations, or elements of them, conditioned the types of responses made to these crises and, therefore, helped shape the pattern of Iroquois-English relations during these years. In order to fully understand those responses, or lack of them, the nature of Iroquois society and culture at mid-century must be investigated in some detail. This is important since, in a tribal society, the political functions of a people cannot be divorced from the cultural context as easily as it can in a more complex, western society. Further, if the processes by which certain Iroquois reached decisions concerning their relations with the English are to be seen as more than merely reactions to English actions, something must be said of the issues and people who shaped the internal affairs of the Five Nations.

Dealing with the internal politics and problems of the Five Nations presents certain difficulties. In the first place, there is a tendency to speak of the "Iroquois" or the "League" as though the Iroquois thought and acted as one group. This was no more true for the Five Nations than for any European society at the same time. Historians tend to speak of Indian people acting as "tribes",

and have given this ill-defined organization a life of its own. Recent ethnographic and ethnohistorical study has demonstrated, however, that the tribe, as used or abused by novelists and historians, seldom existed as anything more than a geographical or vague cultural expression.[223] These studies suggest that in order to identify and understand the people and issues that affected Indian political patterns, one must move beyond the tribe to the village and band levels. This seems to be particularly valuable advice in the case of the Iroquois. While speakers were most often identified in treaty minutes as "Mohawk", "Oneida", or "Seneca", they spoke as much on behalf of particular interest groups or villages as for the "tribe" as a whole, even though they often invoked the name of the tribe for diplomatic reasons. Finally, there is the problem of evidence. At certain times, usually corresponding to major issues concerning Iroquois-English relations, there is an abundance of information in council and treaty minutes concerning Iroquois leaders, conflicts, and concerns. At other times, however, such information is lacking altogether or is spotty at best. Therefore, it is difficult to make generalizations concerning the Iroquois as a collection of several nations and villages.

The effects of such problems can be lessened by approaching Iroquois affairs, both internal and external, in terms of specific issues and themes, and the interaction of several distinct groups in conflict or cooperation over those issues. By examining the Iroquois decision-making process and the problems and issues that shaped that process on an interest group basis, the pitfalls as-

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[223] For the problems of using the "tribe" as an organizational scheme in writing Indian history, see: Wallace, "Political Organization and Land Tenure Among the Northeastern Indians, 1600-1830", Metcalf, "Who Should Rule at Home", and Berkhofer, "The Political Context of a New Indian History".

sociated with the "League" or the "tribe" can largely be avoided. In such an approach, the village, faction, or sex group becomes dominant. Such groups were very real among the Iroquois and helped shape the political process, just as similar groups did in English and French societies. The League and the concept of the tribe can be accepted for what they appear to have been: cultural symbols which served, imperfectly, to weld people together and to reduce internal conflict. A localized approach to Iroquois politics can also serve to put a leader such as Hendrick Peter or Tanacharison in his proper position relative to his followers and other, competing, men and groups.[224]

That the Iroquois were experiencing some kind of internal conflict or dislocation can be inferred from statements made by both Iroquois speakers and English observers concerning the behavior and attitudes of Iroquois people. Further, this internal problem seems to have cut across the Five Nations, touching, to some extent, parts or all of the several nations. The most pronounced evidence of internal unrest are the abundant references in official documents to the use of liquor among the Five Nations. There are many references to Iroquois leaders being too drunk to negotiate at councils, of being, because of liquor, unable to accompany military expeditions, and of sachems and women demanding and pleading that the rum trade be stopped. Many of these references appear in documents from the war years and the years immediately following the conquest of Canada. While liquor had long been present among the Five Nations and, indeed, had often been used as a diplomatic lub-

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[224]For a detailed explanation of the interest group approach to native American history by a pioneer of this method, see: Bruce Trigger, "Brecht and Ethnohistory", Ethnohistory 22 (1975), 51-56. Robert Berkhofer takes a somewhat different approach by emphasizing factionalism and political conflict.

ricant at treaty councils, there seems to have been major concern about its effects in the middle decades of the century.[225]

Requests that the English do something to stop the rum trade among the Iroquois were frequently made at councils. By 1755 rum, and its influence on the Five Nations, had become a major issue in relations with the English. In that year the Iroquois listed it, along with land frauds, as their foremost grievance with the colonies. These complaints continued at intervals throughout the period until, in 1762, something of a climax was reached. Oneida women, apparently fearful of the adverse effects of liquor on their people, attacked a military sutler and destroyed his supply of rum.[226]

The number and strength of the complaints indicates that some Iroquois, usually village elders and women, recognized that drinking was becoming a significant social problem. While the evidence is not entirely specific, references in council minutes and reports seem to bear this out. Warren Johnson, undoubtedly reporting what he had heard from his uncle, Sir William, mentioned that the Iroquois "often kill one another in Drunken fits."[227] At another point in his somewhat disconnected narrative, he mentioned that "the Indians drink Rum greatly."[228] At a council with the Iroquois in December, 1758, Conochquieson, the "Chief Sachem" of the Oneida, requested that the liquor traffic be stopped because "it not only disturbs us in our Meetings & Consultations where

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[225]Many examples of the use of liquor in the negotiating process can be found in Lawrence H. Leder, ed., "The Livingston Indian Records, 1666-1723", Pennsylvania History 23 (1956), passim.

[226]"An Indian Conference", Johnson Hall, August 11-12, in Johnson Papers, X, pp. 480-83.

[227]"Journal of Warren Johnson", in Johnson Papers, XIII, p. 186.

[228]Ibid., p. 189.

the drunken People come in quarrelling & very often have Weapons in their hands, but it likewise carrys off many of our People both old & young."[229] The impulse to drink must have been very great, however. At the same meeting, Johnson observed, in answer to the above request, that several sachems said that if the liquor trade was stopped, their lives would be in danger.[230]

The nature of the evidence cited does not permit even an approximation of the quantities of liquor consumed or the number of Iroquois involved. However, when compared to an earlier period, it appears that the Iroquois of the mid-eighteenth century were experiencing a liquor problem sufficient to cause alarm among village leaders.[231] It will be suggested here that the seemingly increased use of liquor was a manifestation of internal change and dislocation among the Iroquois and that rum was being used either as a means to assert or bolster lost or assumed status, or as a way of avoiding turmoil and issues.

There are other references in the exchanges between Iroquois and Englishmen that suggest internal unrest. The few enumerations made of the Iroquois villages and people during the post-war period reveal that the Five Nations were undergoing a process of atomization. The treaty minutes and enumerations contain many references to "Schoharies", "Aquagas", "Oswegatchies", and "Mingos". Further, particularly in the case of the Mohawk, villages were given separate identities that lead one to assume, without further investigation, that they were independent entities, with no connection at all to the cultural unit "Mohawk".

229"Journal of Indian Affairs", Fort Johnson, December 10, in Johnson Papers, X, p. 69.

230Ibid., p. 73.

231By comparison, the Livingston Indian Records are relatively free of any complaints concerning the use of liquor.

Johnson's enumeration of 1763 reveals that the Iroquois were living in a large number of villages, scattered over an area stretching from Albany to the upper Allegheny and into the Susquehanna Valley. While the evidence says little of the status of these scattered communities in relation to the Five Nations proper, there is little doubt that English officials treated them as independent communities, without regard to parent villages or nations.

These splinter groups had a variety of reasons for existing, and some appear to have developed as a way of coping with internal pressures or conflicts. The Mingos appear to have evolved out of bands of western Iroquois who migrated to the upper Ohio for purposes of hunting or trade. On the other hand, the Aquagas of the upper Susquehanna seem to have had a far different motive for breaking with their parent groups, the Oneida and Tuscarora. Johnson noted in 1757 that "they are a flourishing & encreasing People, as many of our friend Indians amongst the Six Nations who are disgusted with the ruleing politics of their People leave their Castles and go & settle at Oghquago."[232] Their disgust with the "ruleing politics" may be explained by the fact that a large number of the Aquaga settlers were Christian converts, led by their own native minister. Their outspoken support of the new faith and ardent desire to protect it may have led them to migrate from their pagan associates at Oneida in much the same way as the Caughnawaga Mohawks did a century earlier.[233] Similarly, the Oswegatchies, also Oneidas, appear to have moved to the mission of that name near Montreal to be nearer their French missionary.

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[232]Johnson to Lord Loudoun, Albany, September 3, 1757, in Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 826-27.

[233]"Journal of Indian Affairs", Johnson Hall, January 2-31, 1764, in Johnson Papers, XI, pp. 27-35.

In addition to this scattering of the Five Nations, there were incidents of friction between the several nations. At Albany in 1754, the Mohawks of both villages complained bitterly to Johnson of the evil rumors and derogatory remarks made about them by other Iroquois. On two separate occasions, Johnson was warned by Mohawk informants against traveling to Onondaga on business because they feared that the upper nations could not be trusted. Further, in some pieces of correspondence, Johnson referred to the Five Nations as the "upper" and "lower" Iroquois as if, in his own mind, the two groups represented distinct interests and had to be dealt with accordingly. In most cases the friction centered on the Mohawk and appears connected to that group's special relationship with the English government of New York. When the Mohawk complained at not having been invited to several Confederacy councils, the reason may have been the lack of certainty on the part of the upper four nations that the Mohawk could be trusted with Iroquois business and confidences.[234]

Finally, there is a reference made by Sir William Johnson, in 1772, to witchcraft among the Iroquois. The reference was made in reply to inquires about the Five Nations made by Arthur Lee of Virginia. The reply was in the nature of a general summary of Iroquois politics, lifestyles, and customs, without specific references or dates. Therefore, it is impossible from this single reference to determine whether witchcraft played any significant role in Iroquois life during the middle of the century. It must, however, have existed in some form, at least a few years prior to Johnson's mention of it. Witchcraft and a strong belief in supernatural powers, good and bad, had been a corner-

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[234] "Indian Proceedings", Johnson Hall, April 21-28, 1761, in Johnson Papers, III, pp. 701, 705.

stone of traditional Iroquois belief systems.[235] In this respect, Johnson's observation may have been an isolated incident or merely his rendering of traditional rites and beliefs. On the other hand, the prevalence of witchcraft may have been symptomatic of internal trauma or dissatisfaction. Among the Iroquois, persons accused or found guilty of witchcraft could be killed with impunity with the complete sanction of the village involved. In a political conflict over basic questions of power and authority within the Iroquois communities, a charge of witchcraft might well have served the purposes of one party or another.

Several things could have accounted for the scattering of people, the use and increased concern over the use of liquor, and the friction among and between the Five Nations. The Iroquois were continuing to feel the effects of sustained contact with Europeans. Johnson noted in 1772 that "those nearest to Us [have] in a great measure lost their ancient customs or confounded them with ours."[236] European culture did not affect all Iroquois equally or simultaneously, and this may account for misunderstandings between those who had adopted English customs and economic patterns and those to whom such customs were still alien and unwelcome. The evidence of change in material culture is more abundant than of changes in attitudes and beliefs among the Five Nations. Warren Johnson observed that some Iroquois wore "check shirts & some Ruffles of the same & also Indian shoes stockings & night caps."[237] He also mentioned sleep-

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[235] On the subject of witchcraft among the Iroquois, see: Wallace, Death and Rebirth of the Seneca, Chapter 4.

[236] Johnson to Arthur Lee, Johnson Hall, March 28, 1772, in Johnson Papers, XII, p. 950.

[237] "Journal of Warren Johnson", p. 191.

ing in a "straw bed" at Old Brant's in Canajoharie, and that many of the Iroquois there owned sleighs.[238] Abraham, brother of Hendrick Peter and one of the sachems of Canajoharie, reported that he had been attacked in January of 1758 by soldiers while putting his horses in his stable after a sleighride from Johnson's home.[239]

On the other hand, the Iroquois still maintained many of their traditional practices. Even those who had contact with missionaries and who had, by their own statements, converted, still performed the condolence ceremony. The condolence, use of wampum, and other forms of public address were used without exception at meetings with English officials. Some old weapons and skills persisted in the face of European trade and technology. Warren Johnson noted that the Indians were good archers and "can kill anything with Bow & Arrows."[240]

While material culture continued to change, so did the population. Contemporary observers agreed that the Iroquois, while still a potent force on the frontier, were declining in numbers. On the eve of the American Revolution, Sir Guy Johnson placed Iroquois fighting strength at about 2,000 men.[241] This would give a total population in 1774 of between 8,000 and 10,000 people. These figures agree with those submitted by Sir William Johnson in the 1760s.[242] While

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[238] Ibid., pp. 192, 190.

[239] "Journal of Indian Affairs", Fort Johnson, January 13, in Johnson Papers, XIII, pp. 104-108.

[240] "Journal of Warren Johnson", p. 205.

[241] Guy Johnson to General Thomas Gage, Guy Park, November 24, in Johnson Papers, XIII, p. 695.

[242] "Enumeration of Indians within the Northern Department", November 18, 1763, in Documents Relative, VII, pp. 582-84.

no accurate population figures exist prior to 1763, Warren Johnson noted that when Sir William came to America in 1739 the Mohawk alone numbered 1,400 fighting men. In 1774 they numbered somewhat less than 300, if the separate community of Schoharie is included.[243] Allowing for inaccuracies in both sets of figures, it appears that the Mohawk suffered a dramatic decline in population in a relatively short span of time. The Seneca, on the other hand, continued to maintain an impressive number of men, representing over half of all Iroquois manpower in 1774. The differences in numbers between the two nations suggests that population stability or decline was in part influenced by the proximity of the Indians to European communities. That the Mohawk took a much more active role in the affairs of the English colonies than did the Seneca or other Iroquois may also account for the differences in population figures.

This decline can also be attributed to three other causes that may well have affected the attitudes and policies of the Iroquois. Of major significance was the Great War for Empire. The Mohawk protested on occasion that the war was draining them of their young men, and other Iroquois had similar feelings.[244] This war, like any other, caused disruption of normal living patterns, loss of life, and an abrupt increase in feelings of dread and insecurity. This disruption may well have manifested itself in drunkenness, migration to safer areas, and conflict between those willing to fight and those who wished to stay uninvolved.

The war placed Iroquois warriors in direct contact with large numbers of Eng-

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243"Journal of Warren Johnson", p. 194.

244Reverend John Ogilvie and Sybrant Van Schaick to Johnson, October 1, 1755, in Johnson Papers, II, pp. 125-26.

lish soldiers and civilians, thus increasing the threat of epidemic disease. European armies in the eighteenth century were notoriously filthy organizations, and those on New York's frontier were no exceptions. The records speak, albeit vaguely, of at least two epidemics among the Five Nations between 1757 and 1763. The first was an attack of smallpox that struck in the Summer of 1757. Johnson referred to having several Indians with the disease at his home at Fort Johnson.[245] At the same time, Johnson was met by requests from the Iroquois that current council business be taken care of quickly because, as Little Abraham explained, "of the helpless Condition we left our Families in at home, many of whom had the Small Pox very bad at the time of our Marching."[246]

Warren Johnson recorded that in the Summer of 1761 the Iroquois had been visited by an "epidemical distemper", the symptoms of which were "a Pain in their Side, attended with a fever of which they generally die in 4 Days."[247] Sir William, then on his way to Detroit, recorded the arrival in his camp of Nickus of Canajoharie. This Mohawk reported that several people of his village had recently died of a "malignant fever" and that the family of Old Brant was particularly stricken by it.[248] A similar illness struck the Seneca village of Canassadaga in the same year.

Coupled with disease and warfare, food shortages were also present during the period. Myndert Wemp's report of shortages among the Seneca has already

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[245]Johnson to Peter and Elizabeth Wraxall, Fort Johnson, July 17, in Johnson Papers, IX, p. 800.

[246]"An Indian Conference", Fort Johnson, August 28, in Johnson Papers, IX, p. 820.

[247]"Journal of Warren Johnson", p. 207.

[248]"Niagara and Detroit Proceedings, July-September, 1761", in Johnson Papers, XIII, p. 238.

been referred to.[249] In 1757, Johnson mentioned having supplied the Canajoharies with provisions "w^h they are verry scarce of."[250] In the same year, some Cayugas applied for food, a plough, and "a Person to Plough our Land as it is so stiff & worn that it will not otherwise yield any Crop."[251] At a meeting in late December 1758, the Oneidas asked for subsistence for themselves and the Canajoharies, since early frosts had all but destroyed their corn crop.[252] These shortages, coming as they did in the middle of a war, could be a reflection of the general disruption caused by the fighting and the periodic absence of the warriors, who carried the added responsibility of clearing new fields for crops.

While warfare, disease, and economic crises could have accounted for some of the symptoms of unrest and disunity within the Five Nations, their effects were, for the most part, localized, affecting several villages, or perhaps a larger body of the Iroquois. The unrest, however, seems to have been general, affecting most of the Iroquois on all levels, from warrior groups to the Five Nations as a whole.

It will be suggested here that the general unrest manifested by Iroquois behavior during and following the war resulted from what can be defined as a political struggle. Evidence suggests that the Iroquois, by mid-century, were in the midst of a crisis of authority. This crisis stemmed in part from the

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249 "Journal of Indian Proceedings", April 29, 1756, in Documents Relative, VII, pp. 100-101.

250 Johnson to Peter and Elizabeth Wraxall, Fort Johnson, July 17, in Johnson Papers, IX, p. 799.

251 "Indian Proceedings", Fort Johnson, April 23, in Johnson Papers, IX, p. 689.

252 "Journal of Indian Affairs", Fort Johnson, December 9, in Johnson Papers, X, p. 68.

natural friction inherent in the Iroquois political structure. However, it appears to have been intensified by the pressures placed on the Five Nations from the outside, in the form of two major crises involving relations with the English colonies. These crises forced the Iroquois to re-examine their traditional policies and role vis-a-vis the English, and to adjust to the reality that the number of options available to them in dealing with new political circumstances was becoming severely limited after 1754 and especially after 1760.

The internal crisis thus created seems to have taken two directions. On one hand, there was a basic conflict over goals and policies, as Iroquois of all levels and affiliations sought to create positive responses in the face of threats to their security and culture from without. At the same time, there was increased dissatisfaction with the contemporary leadership group, represented by the village sachems and Pine Tree Chiefs. These men, normally associated with the traditional policy toward the English, were being called to account as that policy became increasingly untenable. Thus, while the Iroquois were attempting to restructure their policies, they were also attempting to redefine the concept of leader at a time when new ideas and creative responses seemed imperative.

The crisis, as it developed, became very complex and involved a number of groups and individuals representing special interests. The most visible conflict arose between the sachems, representing traditional authority and leadership, and the warriors, who demanded a different response to English pressures. In addition, however, other points of friction developed. The Ohio Valley Iroquois, led by Tanacharison and Scarouady, embarked on an independent course in dealing with English colonies and the French on the Ohio. They did this in the

face of the Onondaga council which wished to maintain the position, by 1754 largely fictional, of dominance over those whom they consistently termed "hunters", and thus unfit to conduct serious business. The Mohawk, especially those of Canajoharie, found themselves at odds with the western Iroquois. This stemmed in part from the cooperative attitude displayed by the Mohawks toward the colonies; an attitude that western Iroquois often felt was too cooperative. Adding to this already complicated struggle was the confusion that must have resulted from the loss during this period of several important men. Between 1749 and 1764, the Iroquois lost the services and negotiating abilities of a number of sachems and men of ability, such as the Oneida sachem Kindarunte and Scarouady of the Mingo. These men, elder statesmen, had, in their time, developed friendships and the respect of English officials and followings among their own people. The loss of these men was in most cases irreparable.[253]

The struggle between warriors and sachems was a manifestation of a conflict that had its roots in traditional Iroquois culture. By the nature of the political system, with its division of powers between war leaders and civil chiefs, tension and competition were common. The warriors were, by definition, concerned primarily with the affairs of war, protection of the community, and the security of the land. Warfare, by presenting young men with the means of earning prestige at home, was an important concern of the "young men" of the villages. The sachems, ever since the giving of the Great Law by Deganawida, were concerned with the preservation of order and peace. The dominance of one group naturally

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[253] The list of major leaders who died during the period includes: Canasatego in 1750, Hendrick Peter in 1755, Tanacharison in 1755, Abraham of Canajoharie in 1757, Kindarunte, who was murdered in 1758, and Red Head of the Onondagas, who apparently died of a stroke in 1764.

led to the suppression of the interests of the other. Normally the warriors could not participate in council, a duty reserved exclusively for the sachems and elder women of the villages. In time of war, when a consensus to fight had been reached, the war leaders came to the fore, while the sachems, bowing to the will of the young men, stood aside. Many sachems took part in battles as common warriors. Once peace had been restored, however, the warriors were expected to remove themselves from the political arena.

What appears to have happened during the course of the eighteenth century was a basic shift in leadership from sachems to war leaders. The changing technology of warfare seems to have contributed to this. Sir William Johnson noted that the military and civil prestige of the sachems had declined because "since the introduction of fire arms they no longer fight in close Bodies, but every Man is his own General--I am inclined to think this circumstance has contributed to lessen the power of the Chief."[254] The renewal of warfare after 1748 and the shift in English frontier policy also served to alter the context of the conflict between the two groups. The war and the new English policy served to raise fundamental questions of how best to cope with the changing situation and still maintain the cultural integrity of the Iroquois people. The warriors represented, in large part, those who supported an active, even aggressive attempt to overthrow English encroachments on the land and to withstand English attempts to overthrow Iroquois power. The sachems, many of whom had close connections with English officials, and all of whom were pledged to support a policy of conciliation and peace, were looked upon as at least ineffective in withstanding the English

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[254]Johnson to Arthur Lee, Johnson Hall, March 28, 1772, in Johnson Papers, XII, p. 952. See also: Fenton, "The Iroquois in History", p. 148.

and, at worst, cooperating with them. The war served as a catalyst for this conflict by enhancing the power and prestige of the warriors. Emboldened by military power, "chief warriors" took an increasingly aggressive stand against the traditional policies and leadership of the sachems.

It should be noted that, while there are hints of this conflict among most of the Five Nations, it seems to have been most intense among the western nations who were as yet little touched by the forces of change resulting from contact with the English. These people, less acculturated than were the Mohawk and Oneida to the east, were determined to preserve their land and culture. For this reason it is understandable that the western Seneca should have allied themselves with the Lakes tribes and ignored the traditional Iroquois policies toward the English. In point of fact, the Senecas' interests were better served by joining the resistance on the part of the western tribes than by following the lead of the Mohawks.

Evidence of this internal struggle over goals and directions began to surface during the war. The surviving evidence of this conflict serves not only to verify that it existed, but also to suggest the issues at the heart of the struggle.

The renewal of the Anglo-French conflict in America provided an opportunity for Iroquois men to engage in one of their primary cultural roles. Even before campaigning began on the New York frontier, Johnson noted that the "young men are all growing very warm."[255] This apparent eagerness on the part of some Iroquois warriors to fight was skillfully played upon by Johnson and other colonial officials. Realizing the inherent friction between civil chiefs and warriors,

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[255] Johnson to Loudoun, Fort Johnson, August 5, 1756, in Johnson Papers, IX, p. 494.

Johnson deliberately directed his council speeches to the latter and held up war belts and offered the hatchet to the young men, taking little or no regard of the sachems who were largely responsible for the continued neutrality of the Five Nations.[256]

In a sense, the heightened conflict between the two contending groups was induced by English officials who were eager to get warriors into the field and equally eager to turn the Iroquois from their avowed policy of neutrality. Gradually, the policy of courting the warriors worked. By enhancing their position in council, and by offering them rewards and chances for glory, Johnson helped create a de facto decision-making body within the political structure of many of the Iroquois villages. The Iroquois living closest to the English and the scenes of battle were the first to show the effects. At a council held in the Spring of 1755, the Mohawk sachems announced that, henceforth, they would sit back and do as the young men thought proper. In the on-going struggle for control, the warriors were now dominant.[257] This acquiescence on the part of the civil leaders was done to preserve internal order and avoid the secession of large numbers of disaffected people. This surrender of authority was symbolized by the Mohawk leader Hendrick who, as a common warrior, followed his young men to his death at Lake George later that year.

As the war continued, the dissatisfaction that the warriors felt toward the policies and leadership of the sachems began to take on a standard, revealing tone. In 1756, at a meeting with several Indian groups, the Seneca warrior

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[256]"Journal of Indian Affairs", Fort Johnson, May 15-June 21, 1755, in Johnson Papers, I, pp. 638-39. At this meeting both warriors and sachems attended. The speaker was Canadagia, a warrior.

[257]Ibid., p. 639.

Kindarunte asked Johnson to summarize an earlier conference held with his people. The reason given was that the "Sachems sometimes keep them [the warriors] in the Dark by misrepresentations."[258] What kind of misrepresentations he referred to are not mentioned, but the reference does suggest that perhaps the civil chiefs were using whatever means, including subterfuge, to keep the warriors from becoming involved in the war. Johnson encouraged such ill feelings by suggesting that the warriors not listen to the "silly reasons" offered by the sachems for remaining at peace, and pressed them to take the field with British troops.[259] When he spoke harshly to a group of Onondagas and Cayugas about their slowness in joining the army, he was told that the fault lay with the civil leaders who, by "their backwardness" had prevented the young men from leaving earlier.[260] This kind of exchange became a standard part of the wartime councils as the Iroquois continued to struggle with the problems presented by the war and a commitment to peace.

As the war ended and British policy relative to the Five Nations began to change, the pronouncements of the warriors became more assertive and their attacks on the sachems more severe. This shift in tone, coinciding as it did with the changes in Iroquois-English relations, stemmed from the attempts within the Confederacy to adjust to new policies and to develop responses and programs to meet the changes. Distrust of the French as a military threat had given way to a distrust of the English as double-dealing allies bent on taking the land

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[258] "Indian Proceedings", Fort Johnson, July-September, 1756, in Documents Relative, VII, p. 178.

[259] "Journal of Indian Proceedings", Fort Johnson, January 15, 1757, in Johnson Papers, IX, pp. 586-88.

[260] "Journal of Indian Proceedings", Fort Johnson, March 4-9, 1757, in Johnson Papers, IX, p. 632.

and destroying the people of Iroquoia. In this on-going attempt to create a new policy after 1760, the warriors, as protectors of the land and its people, became increasingly militant. They believed that, in view of the present threat, the best option was resistance. Such resistance would mean the replacement of the sachems with war leaders. Distrust of the civil chiefs stemmed in part from the fact that many of them were closely tied to English officials and some were instrumental in the fulfillment of English policy.[261] Sir William Johnson had been involved in the appointment of several men to sachemships during the previous decade. It would be fair to say that he tried to ensure the elevation of men whose interests lay with the English. Such men, in order to maintain or enhance their relatively limited powers or prestige at home, could be expected to follow Johnson's lead on major issues. In general, the decade from 1755 to 1765 saw a marked decline in the prestige of local chiefs. At least part of this was due to British meddling in the internal affairs of the Confederacy. Something of the magnitude of this decline in sachem authority can be seen in the diplomatic exchanges in the immediate post-war period. Again, the tension and resulting shifts in power are most evident among the western Iroquois, who felt most threatened by English policies.

At a major conference with the Five Nations in 1762, Johnson was confronted by a Genesee warrior who announced that he would procede to speak for his village. He offered as the reason the unfortunate delay of the civil delegation. His real motive, however, was revealed when he went on to say that "We, are in fact the People of Consequence for managing Affairs, our Sachems being generally a parcell of Old People who say much, but who mean & Act very little, so that we

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[261]In particular, Hendrick and Nickus, both of Canajoharie, and the Onondaga, Red Head, were very helpful in forwarding Johnson's plans.

have both the power and ability to settle matters."[262] This theme surfaced again at a later meeting the same year. At that time, the Seneca warriors then present, speaking through the Onondagas, said that the sachems "did not act right & that they only talked . . . that the Senecas said they had no wise men to lead them & this was a cause for war."[263] The feeling that the sachems could not provide effective leadership during a time of crisis must have led the warriors to assume authority illegally in the hope of dealing with the problems at hand. In fact, throughout the period from 1760 to the end of the western uprising, the Senecas, whenever attending a council with Johnson, were represented by their "chief warriors". Under such circumstances, it is understandable that the Seneca would have responded to English threats and force in a like manner. At a time when effective leadership was scarce and options limited, force seemed the one way of defending the Seneca people against an aggressive, unfeeling colonial power.

The factionalism evident at the village level between warriors and sachems was parallelled by considerable friction between villages and what, for the sake of convenience, can be termed tribes. The reasons for this inter-Confederacy conflict also included the war and its aftermath. It might also have had roots in traditional culture much as did the power struggle at the village level. Ethnographic information does not permit any definitive statement on the relationships, normal or otherwise, between the Five Nations. As an ethnic confederacy, the Iroquois League allowed its member nations and villages the greatest possible latitude in making policies and establishing living patterns. This, added to the dis-

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[262]"An Indian Conference", Johnson Hall, 1762, in Johnson Papers, III, pp. 697-98.

[263]"Journal of Indian Affairs", Johnson Hall, September 1-28, 1762, in Johnson Papers, X, p. 833.

tance between the eastern and western doors of the Longhouse, may have spawned competition or even hostility between villages, or tribes, as interests clashed. Whatever the circumstances, localism was the rule and the Confederacy never achieved the kind of harmony and unity of purpose attributed to it by Francis Parkman or George T. Hunt.

The inter-tribal friction actually involved two distinct conflicts. One evolved from the differences between the Mohawk and the so-called upper nations in their dealings with, and attitudes toward, the English. The other developed as the Iroquois on the Ohio, the Mingo, attempted to assert their independence apart from the Confederacy, or at least assert their equality as a part of it. In the latter case, the Mingo, faced with an invasion of their lands, sought ways of dealing with the threat. Tradition dictated that they ask for aid through the Onondaga council and follow the lead of the Five Nations in the matter. This lead, however, proved to be ineffective in dealing with a military invasion and the threat of war. By acting and independent part, Tanacharison and other Ohio leaders, in cooperation with the Shawnee and Delaware, could negotiate directly with English and French agents and work out an accommodation suitable to all parties. That this did not actually happen should not obscure the fact that Ohio leaders and their people did actively seek to create a policy best suited to their own needs. In so doing, however, they flew in the face of Iroquois tradition and custom. Those Iroquois living on the Ohio were, by definition "Hunters", unfit to take part in council without the services of their elders in New York. They were, as seen from Onondaga, merely frontiersmen of a sort, occupying and making good the Five Nations' longstanding claim to the Ohio Valley. Throughout the crisis of 1748 to 1754 in the Ohio Country, the Five Nations maintained their position that the Mingo bands could not negotiate directly with the rival Europeans.

This position had become, through the state of affairs in the Valley and the Iroquois' own lack of initiative there, untenable. During the years following the war, the Ohio Iroquois continued to assert their independence until, as the Mingo, they took on the airs of, and were accorded the recognition due, a separate nation of the Confederacy.

The friction between the Mohawks and their brothers to the west stemmed in large part from the closeness of the former to the English and the resultant distrust accorded them by many Iroquois who feared or distrusted the English and their designs on the frontier. The jealousy of the upper nations toward the Mohawk apparently pre-dated the war, although the military conflict with its attendent disasters and uncertainties must have sharpened the dispute. In 1754 at Albany, the Mohawks deliberately came in late so as to allay any suspicion that, having arrived early, they had had a hand in planning the agenda and fixing the policies to be followed.[264] The following year, Johnson noted that the French had "worked up a jealousy in the upper Nations against the Mohawks."[265] With the bitter words of the Albany meeting less than a year old, it is doubtful that the French had to work very hard to stir up ill feelings.

During the war, the Mohawk, especially those from Canajoharie, were steady supporters of English policies and contributed by far the largest number of warriors until late in the conflict. Some of the bad feelings toward them resulted from the fact that French agents were active among the Five Nations, especially

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[264] Albany Congress Minutes, June 27-July 6, in Documentary History, II, pp. 335-37.

[265] Johnson to Braddock, Fort Johnson, June 27, 1755, in Johnson Papers, I, p. 664.

among the western Seneca. Friction also resulted from the desire on the part of many Iroquois, including the Onondaga and Cayuga, to remain neutral in the conflict. To them Mohawk participation on the English side jeopardized that neutrality and threatened to bring the war into Iroquoia. In what was perhaps the strongest threat employed by the Five Nations against a member of the Confederacy, the upper nations sent a belt to the Mohawk and threatened to "kick them from them and have no more to say to them" if they continued to participate in the war.[266] The Mohawk, on the other hand, became increasingly unhappy at what they saw as a lack of support from the other nations. This was particularly true after the casualties from the Lake George battle began to come in.[267]

The upper nations of the Confederacy may well have had some cause for their suspicion of the Mohawk. Throughout the war, Johnson's close associates at Canajoharie provided him with an unending stream of information, of mixed quality, concerning the attitudes and policies of the other Iroquois. If such reports are taken at face value, the upper nations were constantly on the verge of either going over to the French or attacking the English garrisons. At one point, early in 1757, Jelles Fonda, an officer in the Indian Department, was warned by the Canajoharies not to proceed to the west as it "was not safe to go among the Six Nations, and that he wou'd stand a chance to loose his Scalp among them."[268] Fonda made the trip anyway and came back intact. One possible explanation of the Mohawks' behavior was a fear that, if Johnson managed to establish close relations with the

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[266] Goldsbrow Banyar to Johnson, New York, September 24, 1755, in Johnson Papers, II, p. 86.

[267] Condolence Ceremony, October 1, 1755, in Johnson Papers, II, p. 127.

[268] Report of Captain Thomas Butler's trip to Onondaga, January, 1757, in Johnson Papers, II, p. 667.

western Iroquois, their favorable position would be jeopardized.

This inter-tribal conflict lessened as the war ended. By then, all Iroquois, especially the Mohawk, were feeling the pressures of English expansion and the threats imposed by England's new western policy. In that regard, England's post-war policy served to reunite the bickering Iroquois.

Having examined the historical context of the problems confronting the Iroquois and their decision-making process at mid-century, it would be well to study that process in specific cases. Such a study can reveal what relations with the English meant to the Five Nations in a political sense. The European conflict over control of the Ohio Valley from 1748 to 1754 offers one such case. The post-war change in English frontier policy and the changing nature of the Iroquois' place in frontier diplomacy provides another. In each instance, the Five Nations were confronted with immediate, significant crises that ultimately affected their relations with each other, other Indians, and the British government.

CHAPTER VI

THE IROQUOIS AND THE OHIO VALLEY:

AN ANALYSIS

In a letter designed to apprise the newly arrived governor of New York of the present situation on the frontier, William Johnson noted that, in the face of French aggression in the west, the Iroquois had continued to "Act a timid & neutral Part."[269] This statement, while it accurately summarized the English view of Iroquois policy up to 1754, did not accurately reflect or account for Iroquois behavior as seen from the point of view of the Five Nations.

The French military occupation of the Ohio Valley in 1753 presented the local Indians and their English trading partners with a threat that had economic, political, as well as international implications. This invasion likewise created a crisis for the Five Nations. As the nominal owners of the region, the Iroquois were faced with the prospect of a war that would threaten their security at home as well as their control over what was still an important hunting region and political buffer zone. Why then, in the face of a military threat and the possibility of territorial loss and warfare, did the Five Nations not take a more aggressive stand in the Ohio Country? Why did they appear to "Act a timid Part"? Certainly the English governments of New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia expected that the Iroquois would immediately act to drive the French away. The answer to this question lies in the nature of Iroquois relations with the native people on the Ohio

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[269] William Johnson to George Clinton, March 12, 1754, in <u>Johnson Papers</u>, IX, p. 127.

and the English colonial governments. It is also to be found in the state of inter-Confederacy affairs between 1748 and 1764.

While the Iroquois had maintained a long-standing position of dominance over the Ohio Valley, that dominance was, in many respects, ambiguous. The Five Nations had, early in the seventeenth century, driven the original occupants of the Valley away and had, since then, maintained their ownership of it by right of conquest. During the succeeding century, migrant bands from the southwest, the Delaware Valley, and from Iroquoia had moved into the area. While these bands maintained their own local identities, they appear to have placed themselves under Iroquois dominion or protection. The nature of this relationship must be clearly understood from the Indians', not European's, point of view. Apparently, in return for Iroquois protection and the use of the land, the local bands submitted to a technical position of fealty which included their inability to act the part of owners of the land or as councilors. Both of these privileges were reserved for the Five Nations. What must be emphasized is that the Iroquois did not dominate these people as a conquerer dominates the conquered. Rather, the dominance was in the form of reciprocal obligations. In this regard, the dominance of the Iroquois over the Valley was due as much to the local Indians' willingness to be controlled as it was to any Iroquois ability to enforce their control.[270]

Beyond this reciprocal relationship, any Iroquois pretentions to dominate the Valley were largely a function of the Covenant Chain. Indeed, it would appear that the idea of total Iroquois control over the region and its people was developed by interested English governments, notably Pennsylvania, in an effort to gain some measure of influence over the area and its rich land and resources. By support-

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[270] Hunter, Forts on the Pennsylvania Frontier, pp. 9-11; Jennings, "The Indians' Revolution", p. 324.

ing and enlarging Iroquois claims to the Ohio Country, the English hoped to influence the resident Indians and develop a claim to the land to counter any French pretentions to dominate the region.

The value of the Ohio Valley to the Iroquois must also be taken into consideration in evaluating their actions after 1748. Aside from its obvious worth as a hunting domain, the Valley served as a buffer between hostile tribes and Europeans and the Five Nations proper. One of Tanacharison's primary duties was to maintain this buffer and defend the region against any outside threat. Through the Valley passed the Warriors' Path that led to the southern tribes with whom the Iroquois were periodically at war. Further, the Valley gave access to the more important hunting lands in Kentucky which, as the "Dark and Bloody Ground", was also the scene of inter-tribal conflicts. It does not seem, however, that the Iroquois possessed any plan to settle or in any way incorporate the Ohio Country into their lands in New York. The hunting bands of Iroquois, as has been suggested, settled in the region without official sanction and continued there because of the greater economic or security opportunities offered on the Ohio. Therefore, if the Valey had any great importance to the Five Nations, it was as a barrier to outside aggression and as a potential source of supply, not as an integral part of Iroquoia.

Indeed, the real crisis for the Iroquois, in terms of the Ohio Country, lay less in the threat of dispossession than in the changes that the French activity in the region made in Iroquois-English relations. The lack of response on the part of the Five Nations may well have been due to their unwillingness, or inability, to deal with these changing circumstances.

The intense competition between England and France for control of the Ohio Country and its lucrative trade demanded that each side try to gain the support of the Indians in that region. The English, relying on the Covenant Chain a-

greement with the Five Nations, expected that body to actively stop the French expansion and also to keep the local Indians faithful and under control. When the Iroquois appeared unwilling to accept such an active role in the region, the English, first in Pennsylvania, then in Virginia, significantly changed their long-standing policies and began to negotiate with and directly aid the Indians on the Ohio. William A. Hunter has adequately summarized the situation by noting that "the growing significance of that region made direct negotiations with the Onondaga council in fact the slower and more devious procedure."[271]

The French also altered the traditional pattern of relationships in the Ohio Country by seeking a military solution to the problem of a westward moving English fur trade: one that threatened French dominion over the Great Lakes and the Illinois region. Convinced that the Five Nations could not, under the circumstances, maintain a political status quo in the region, the French gave up the idea of negotiations through Onondaga and took unilateral steps to promote their interests on the Ohio. In so doing, they negated the play-off system by ignoring the Iroquois altogether.[272]

The question remains, however, why the Iroquois behaved as they did toward the Ohio Country and thus gave both English and French leaders cause to seek new, and ultimately dangerous, solutions to the continuing rivalry on the frontier. Randolph Downes, in his study of Indian-white relations on the Ohio, has suggested that the Iroquois separated themselves from affairs in the Valley when it became apparent to them that the English could not be relied upon for military and diplomatic assistance.[273] Thus, in order to escape involvement in a struggle that

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[271]Hunter, Forts on the Pennsylvania Frontier, p. 12.

[272]Wallace, Death and Rebirth of the Seneca, pp. 112-13.

[273]Downes, Council Fires, p. 45.

they assumed the English had little stomach for, the Iroquois abandoned the Valley and its people to the French. While Iroquois perceptions of English power and commitment to defend the region did play a part in influencing the Five Nations in their actions toward the Valley, Downes' arguement fails to consider other aspects of the problem. In the first place, such an explanation would place an Iroquois decision on the Valley issue relatively late, around 1753 or 1754, when English ineptitude and disunity had allowed the French to take control of the region. It will be argued, however, that the Iroquois, throughout the period from 1748 to 1754, maintained a limited, rather ambiguous position toward the Ohio Country that was marked by a desire to remain apart from the conflict growing there. Further, Downes views the Iroquois treatment of the Ohio problem as a reaction to English initiatives, or in this case, lack of them. In addition, this reaction seems to have included the abandonment of people to whom the Iroquois owed a measure of security and political support. Again, the evidence does not bear this out. Rather, the Five Nations' response to the conflict brewing on the Ohio was based in part on traditional policies toward European expansion and was influenced by a wide range of internal and external events and problems.

At the time that the French and English renewed their competition for control of the Ohio Country, Iroquois relations with the English colonial governments were at a low ebb. Remembering past British behavior during time of war, the Five Nations, with the exception of the Mohawk, had largely avoided involvement in the recently ended King George's War. This lack of involvement had led the English, particularly those in New York, to view the Iroquois with suspicion, since they feared that the Indians were leaning toward the French who had benefited from such neutrality. At the same time, those Iroquois who had close dealings with the English government were thrown into consternation by the resignation of William Johnson

as New York's Indian agent. His replacement by a panel of land-jobbers and political favorites did little to ease Iroquois fears for the future.

Coupled with these local issues, the Confederacy faced problems elsewhere. The colony of Virginia, which had long coveted lands lying beyond the Blue Ridge, began actively to promote the settlement of the Ohio lands recently ceded to the Ohio Company. It was the Virginians who were most active in attempting to get Indians, any Indians, to agree to land cessions. On this point the Iroquois had long remained adamant: they wanted no settlement, neither English nor French, in the Ohio Country.[274]

From Connecticut came a threat even more severe. Speculators, reviving the old "sea to sea" charter of the colony, laid claim to a large tract of land in the upper Susquehanna Valley. This tract would place white settlement on the very back door of the Longhouse. The Iroquois knew full well that one settlement would lead to others, legal or not, and began a long, bitter campaign to have the Connecticut scheme stopped.

Finally, there was the presence on the Ohio of large numbers of English traders, most from Pennsylvania. While these men presented few major problems in their conduct, their presence, at the invitation of, and with the sanction of, the Iroquois, meant that the Five Nations were at least partly responsible for their safety under the terms of the Covenant agreement. To protect them might mean becoming involved in a conflict with the French. Not protecting them would risk having the trade disappear, something the Five Nations likewise hoped to avoid. One of Tanacharison's additional headaches after 1750 was the necessity of providing a climate in which the English could trade freely with the Mingo and other resident Indians.

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[274]Andrew Montour's report, in Pennsylvania Colonial Records, IV, p. 635.

Added to these purely external matters were others of an internal nature. At the same time that the Ohio problem was growing, the Iroquois were renewing their conflict with the Catawba of the Carolina back country. While this conflict never involved all, or even most, of the Iroquois' manpower, it did serve to draw attention to the south, where issues of prisoner exchanges, raids, retaliatory attacks, and alliances with other tribes became more important for many than the possibility of trouble on the Ohio. Further, the Catawba war caused friction between the Five Nations and the Carolinas and Georgia, who were allied with the Iroquois' enemy. Thus, the Iroquois had also to contend with demands from the southern colonies that livestock killed or run off by raiding parties be replaced and that the warriors refrain from entering settled lands.

Finally, at the moment that trouble began on the Ohio, the Iroquois lost the services of at least two important men. The Onondaga orator, Canasetago, well known for his leadership in council and his ability to out-argue and out-wit his European adversaries, died in 1750.[275] His death had been preceded two years earlier by that of Shickellamy, the Oneida half-king on the Susquehanna. While not a sachem or an especially skilled orator, Shickellamy served an equally important function. He had, for many years, acted as the Iroquois representative to the Indians in eastern Pennsylvania. In this position he had, through his friendship with James Logan and Conrad Weiser, become an important intermediary between the colony and his own people. In a real sense, he was the living embodiment of the Covenant Chain in Pennsylvania, since he had helped bring the Quaker colony into that relationship. His death deprived the Five Nations of a valuable source of information on colonial affairs and English policies. That of Canasetago deprived

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[275] For examples of Canasetago's oratory skills, see Van Doren and Boyd, eds., Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin, 1736-1762, pp. 15-101.

them of a skilled verbal warrior. The available materials do not permit an accurate evaluation of what their loss meant. However, in view of the power and prestige wielded by these two men, and their relationship to English councils and other Indians, the loss must have been significant. These influences, then, added to the normal pattern of Iroquois politics and decision-making as discussed earlier, influenced and placed limits on the kind of response the Five Nations could make to the conflict that developed on the Ohio after 1748.

That response, as Johnson mentioned in his report, was limited and low-keyed. At no time did the Iroquois even suggest the use of force in order to clear the Valley of the French and English antagonists, or to ensure the continued fidelity of the resident Indians. Rather, their response took the form of intermittent, and somewhat ambiguous, statements concerning the Valley's relationship to the Iroquois and the Confederacy's unhappiness at the European invasion of the region.

Prior to 1752, the Five Nations contented themselves with periodic, mild protestations against the growing European occupation of the Ohio Country, but stopped short of asserting any special claims to either the land or its inhabitants. This position changed somewhat in the aftermath of the Logstown Treaty of 1752. Andrew Montour, acting as Pennsylvania's agent to the Iroquois, noted that the Confederacy was very upset at the proceedings. The Iroquois strongly maintained their authority over the region and referred to the Ohio Iroquois and other participants in the treaty as "young giddy men & children", who had stepped out of line in negotiating with Virginia.[276] This position came from the Onondaga council, whom Montour had visited at he time. It is impossible, from the evidence, to assess how the various nations of the Confederacy viewed the Ohio situation. Certainly the western Iroquois would have taken a more serious view of the Virginia and French encroachments

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[276] Andrew Montour's report, in Pennsylvania Colonial Records, IV, p. 635.

than would the Mohawk, who were having serious problems of their own in the Mohawk and Schoharie Valleys. Nonetheless, the statement does indicate a shift from silence to assertion on the part of the Five Nations.

This shift in stance over the Ohio might well have been triggered by the results of the Logstown meeting. By the provisions of the treaty, Virginia, through the Ohio Company, gained the right to establish a "strong house" somewhere on the Ohio. To the Iroquois, such an establishment may have represented a step toward colonization, something the Confederacy wished to avoid for diplomatic as well as security reasons. That this treaty was negotiated by Tanacharison and his Ohio Iroquois may have angered the Seneca and Cayuga, who had particular claims to the Valley. The Iroquois undoubtedly realized, further, that any English establishment on the Ohio would necessarily be countered by the French, thus leading to an arms race in a region the Iroquois wished to remain neutral.

This pronouncement by the Onondaga council represented the strongest verbal stand taken by the Five Nations concerning the Ohio Country. The only other action taken by them in the Valley was a negative one. In the same year as the Logstown council, the Twightwees applied for aid and diplomatic support from the Iroquois against the French. This the Five Nations, in council, refused to give.[277] No reason was given for this refusal, which amounted to the abandonment of a member of the Covenant Chain. It is suggested here that the divisions within the Confederacy, as previously outlined, coupled with the consensual and local nature of decision-making, did not, at that time, permit the Iroquois to take steps to aid the Miami. This in turn may have hinged on the desire of most Iroquois to avoid entering a conflict over land that did not seem important except in the sense that it be left un-

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[277]Gist's report to the Ohio Company, in Mulkearn, ed., Mercer Papers, p. 423.

settled by Europeans.

One other explanation appears in the sources to account for the Iroquois refusal to take any positive steps on the Ohio. Daniel Claus noted to Richard Peters in 1755 that the Iroquois were uneasy because of rumors sent among them by French agents. Those rumors suggested that the English were, by their western policies, conspiring to "destroy all the Indians", including the Five Nations.[278] The Iroquois had come to fear that any Anglo-French conflict on the Ohio was actually a sham, designed to trap the Confederacy and other Indians into a war that would result in the loss of land, freedom, and perhaps life. In view of existing relations with the colonies of New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, as well as the French military build-up near Niagara, this fear was, to the Five Nations, well justified. It was to allay these fears that the Albany conference had been convened the previous year at the instruction and insistence of the Board of Trade.

Finally, it will be argued here that the Iroquois response to the growing crisis on the Ohio was, from the Iroquois perspective, not as timid or neutral as Johnson had suggested. In fact, the Five Nations' reaction was in keeping with long-standing policies and reflected the limits to which the Confederacy could go in making a unified response to an external threat. In the past, threats, pronouncements, and claims of authority or rights had always succeeded in limiting English and French advances against the Iroquois. This was true because of the central position held by the Five Nations in the diplomatic and military schemes of both powers. By 1754, however, those schemes had changed, so much in fact that the Iroquois were no longer accounted an effective force on the Ohio. Rather, both English and French officials began, in earnest, to court the favor of the local

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[278] Daniel Claus to Richard Peters, February 10, 1755, in Johnson Papers, IX, p. 161.

Indians, particularly the Delaware and Shawnee.

In addition, bearing in mind the nature of the political process among the Iroquois, it would have been too much to expect a concerted, definitive policy or action related to the Ohio Country. In a society based on and controlled by locally autonomous village units, a Confederacy "policy" would have been impossible, except insofar as all Iroquois felt some attachment to the Ohio land as part of their collective heritage. This, however, would have been insufficient to permit the Mohawk or Oneida from joining their western brethren in a military campaign to clear the Valley of foreign invaders. Inter-Confederacy jealousies, intra-tribal friction, consensus government, and the abiding suspicion of English motives, coupled with a long-standing ambivilance over the status of the Confederacy in the Ohio Valley, would not have permitted anything more than what the Iroquois actually did. That their stand was ultimately ineffective should not denegrate the native political process. The problem lay ultimately with the English who, expecting more support than the Iroquois could give, moved ahead with a plan to occupy and defend the Ohio Country in order to deny that rich land to their European rival.

CHAPTER VII

THE IROQUOIS IN THE POST - WAR PERIOD: AN ANALYSIS

Events after 1760 led to a second crisis for the Five Nations that was, in some respects, similar to the one faced earlier in the Ohio Country. In both cases, the Iroquois were faced with a rapidly changing situation that tended to negate traditional policies and actions. Both situations involved the relationship of the Iroquois to the English relative to affairs on the frontier. And, as in the case of the Ohio Valley, the post-war crisis resulted in a lessening of Iroquois power, prestige, and authority as they related to both other Indians and the English governments in America.

While the two crises were similar, the one faced by the Five Nations following the Great War for Empire was far more severe. The end of the war unleashed a tide of speculation and settlement along the frontier that had been kept in check earlier by the threat of French retaliation. The English, now firmly in control of New France, looked to the western regions of that colony as a source of wealth and as a strategic center of England's new American empire. As a result, the Iroquois lost much of their former military significance as the Mohawk Valley became less important as a center for British military and trading activity. Finally, the war had created much hardship and unhappiness among the Iroquois. The Five Nations were experiencing a particularly difficult period in their internal affairs as well as with their relations with the English. Jealousy, bitterness between sachems and warriors, loss of population, and the realization that something in their relationship with the English was changing, all caused consternation and apprehension

within the Longhouse.

As in the case of the Ohio Valley conflict a decade earlier, the post-war crisis had less to do with losses of land than it did with a loss of Iroquois power and ability to control their own future. This is not to say that concern for the land base was not an important force in the politics of the post-war years. Indeed, speculation and fraudulent land sales were a constant source of friction between the eastern Iroquois and the New York and royal governments. Beyond this, however, was the realization by some Iroquois that the end of the war meant more than a renewal of the traditional struggle to maintain the land intact. The presence of British troops in the west, the sudden shortage of ammunition, and rumors that Canada would be given permanently to England suggested a far greater crisis was at hand. The issue for the Five Nations, then, was how best to act once British intentions on the frontier became clear.

Alternatives were few and problems many after 1760. It will be emphasized here that each of the Iroquois nations attempted to find solutions to its own immediate problems and that a "League" response to the new frontier situation was not in evidence. The only unifying factor that might allow one to speak of an Iroquois "policy" in the years following the war was the attempt by all Iroquois to defend themselves against policies and actions by the English that were harmful to themselves or their Indian allies in the west.

The range of alternative responses to the sudden and hostile changes in English frontier policy available to the Five Nations ranged from outright submission to outright resistance. Between the two extremes, the Iroquois could attempt to accommodate, as they had in the past, to the new circumstances in the hope of establishing a new balance of power. For those who saw the impossibility of success in any of the above responses, their was the spiritual avenue. While there is no

evidence of a spiritual revitalization among the Five Nations before the post-Revolutionary period, other Indians, especially those on the Ohio, were experiencing a spiritual rebirth immediately following the war. The source of this revitalization movement was the Delaware prophet Neolin. His message, consisting of a mixture of native beliefs and Christianity, aimed at restoring the good life for the Ohio Indians. This could be accomplished by a return to a purely native culture and a close adherence to the message of the Creator. The result of this, according to believers, would be a total cultural and spiritual rebirth of the Indians and a recreation of life prior to the white invasion.

Neolin's message stirred the imaginations and feelings of many Indians in the west, and seems to have influenced the Ottawa leader Pontiac in his attempt to rid the Great Lakes of British troops. While the available evidence does not permit an assessment of the impact of Neolin's message on the Five Nations, it can be assumed that some Iroquois, experiencing the adverse effects of the English western invasion and European material culture, may have listened to and followed his teachings.[279]

The responses made by each of the Five Nations was the result of both internal cultural and political imperatives and the influence of English policy and behavior. Geographical location also played an important part in determining how the Iroquois would deal with the post-war crisis. The eastern Iroquois, to include the Mohawk and Oneida, were, by 1760, living within the settled regions of New York. At Canajoharie, Fort Hunter, Stone Arabia, and the Oneida Carry, growing numbers of English settlers and soldiers were living side by side with the Iroquois in an uneasy relationship.

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[279] For a summary of the teachings of Neolin, see Wallace, Death and Rebirth of the Seneca, pp. 117-21.

This close association with the English had worked some hardship for the Mohawk. A shortage of food due to natural conditions was aggravated by the accidental or deliberate destructiveness of the king's troops. In one such incident, the leaders of both Mohawk villages complained that droves of cattle being sent to the upper posts had ruined their corn crop.[280] The Oneida problems with military sutlers has already been dealt with at length.

Of all the Iroquois, the two eastern nations were the most acculturated and had had the longest association with the English. Further, in political and military affairs, these people, especially the Mohawk, had developed strong attachments to the colonial and royal governments. Village leaders, such as Hendrick Peter or Old Brant, came to rely as much on the support of men like Sir William Johnson as on the aid and support of their own people. Having learned over a century or more to adjust and deal successfully with European society, the eastern Iroquois continued to do so throughout the post-war period. Their numbers, the close proximity of troops and large numbers of settlers, and their personal attachment to men in the English community precluded the use of force in order to stop English encroachment or changes in policy. Further, the Mohawk and Oneida were more accustomed to the presence of British troops than were the western nations of the Confederacy.

This is not to say that the eastern Iroquois simply rolled over and played dead in the face of British policy changes that threatened their security and way of life. Rather, they attempted to use their connections to the colonial and royal governments, notably Johnson, to gain redress of grievances. Foremost among these was the continued encroachment by settlers and speculators on Iroquois lands.

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[280] Johnson to Gage, Fort Johnson, April 8, 1760, in Johnson Papers, III, p. 218.

The Mohawk in particular were all but surrounded by the new English settlements. The Mohawk approach to this land problem was largely legalistic. While hinting at their dissatisfaction and the consequences of continued abuse, they protested primarily through the use of the council, petitions, and deeds; using English methods to combat English practices.

In one of the first exchanges in this post-war dispute over land, the Mohawks of both villages sent a request to Johnson for a survey of the lands along the Mohawk River. The purpose was to establish a definitive boundary between the English settlers and Indians.[281] Several weeks later, the Canajoharies again met with Johnson, this time about the fraudulent sale of Iroquois lands by speculators such as Ury Klock. The speaker on that occasion, Old Brant, did not press the matter too firmly, apparently expecting that, as a matter of course, their friend and supporter, Johnson, would take care of the matter.[282] At this same meeting, Brant asked that a missionary and schoolmaster be sent to them, to match the ones already at work in the Fort Hunter village.

Finally, in 1763, at yet another meeting about land frauds, the Mohawks produced a deed to verify their claims to lands being taken up by residents of Schenectady. After a century of such negotiations, the Mohawks had come to appreciate the special power of the written word in European society.

Such council meetings and legal confrontations represent the effective limits of Mohawk and Oneida responses to the problems of land and settlement. The Oneida attack on the Fort Stanwix sutler caused a stir among British military officials precisely because it was the one significant, violent, exception to the pattern

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[281] Johnson to Cadwallader Colden, Fort Johnson, December 29, 1760, in <u>Johnson Papers</u>, III, p. 292.

[282] "Journal of Indian Affairs", Canajoharie, February 17-18, 1761, in <u>Johnson Papers</u>, X, pp. 216-21.

of eastern Iroquois response to English policies.

In view of the situation faced by the eastern Iroquois, this relatively limited response is quite understandable. Armed resistance would have been impossible by 1760, especially since the Mohawk Valley was then teeming with English troops. The sudden reduction of ammunition sales made such a policy doubly difficult. Further, the Mohawk, in particular, were suffering from internal disagreements that stemmed from the land problem itself. Johnson noted in 1763 that nineteen Canajoharies arrived who "for two years before had deserted their Castle, and lived at, and about Ury Klock's, on account of a dispute with the Chiefs of that Castle, concerning the lands, the latter live, and plant on . . ."[283] It must also be remembered that the Mohawk, due to their cool relations with the western Iroquois, could not expect aid, diplomatic or military, from these people in any armed dispute with the English. Finally, it must be borne in mind that the Mohawk and Oneida were the most acculturated of the Five Nations. Their settlements and lifestyle most closely imitated that of their English neighbors. They had grown rich in material goods, including plows, sleighs, ironware, cloth, and money, through that close association. Their response to English settlement and frontier policy in general must be measured in terms of their contact with the British community. A more aggressive stand might well have jeopardized the lifestyle to which these people had grown accustomed.

The western Iroquois, particularly the Seneca, chose a far different response to the post-war changes in relations with the English. As has already been seen, that response was far more aggressive, including at least one, possibly more, attempts to overthrow English power in the west prior to 1763. What must be con-

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[283]"An Indian Conference", Johnson Hall, October 20, 1763, in Johnson Papers, X, p. 900.

sidered here, however, are the issues and circumstances that caused the Seneca and Cayuga to resist English policy rather than accommodate to it or develop another response.

In any discussion of Iroquois actions and policies during this period, one must consider the role of English post-war programs and Iroquois perceptions of what these meant. That British attitudes toward the Five Nations were changing after 1760 cannot be denied. The English victory in 1760, coupled with the conquest of the Great Lakes west, made the Iroquois a less critical factor in British military and diplomatic planning. The tone of Johnson's messages to the Five Nations between 1760 and 1763 reflect a growing feeling that the Confederacy could now be treated with no more special consideration than had been given to other Indians long associated with the colonies. The war had also impressed upon the English military the potential danger of a well-armed, well-led Indian force to the back settlements. Based on this experience, General Amherst sought to disarm the Indians by placing severe restrictions on the supplies of powder and lead that moved into the west. To further pacify the tribes and further the complete occupation of the frontier region, the British also decided to maintain, at least for the moment, a large number of garrisons at strategic locations throughout the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley. These garrisons would serve also to regulate the Indian trade which, after 1760, was to be conducted at a few designated posts and not, as under the French, in an open, unrestricted manner.

While such policies made sense to Englishmen whose primary concern was the occupation and integration of the west into a new, sprawling empire, these same policies took on an entirely different meaning when viewed from the longhouse. To the western Iroquois in particular, these policies appeared to threaten the traditional patterns of life, trade, and the security of the Five Nations. Further, they

seemed to confirm something that many Iroquois had continued to believe since the Ohio Valley conflict: that every British action, regardless of how innocent it seemed, was part of a master plan to dispossess and destroy the Iroquois people.

What made English actions and programs after 1760 seem particularly dangerous to the Seneca and Cayuga was the fact that, in the first place, the English had made many promises and statements of policy that now, after the war, were not being adhered to. Among these were guarantees of a free and fair trade and the evacuation of all military posts in the west once the fighting had ended. In the second place, the Iroquois never considered the possibility that Canada might change masters at the end of this war. In all previous conflicts the status quo had been restored at the end of the fighting. The Five Nations and, for that matter, other Indians on the frontier, had no reason to assume that conditions would be any different at the end of the latest conflict. A major part of the Iroquois post-war crisis stemmed from an inability to conceive of the struggle in North America in terms other than those that had prevailed for over fifty years. This was of particular importance to the western Iroquois who, with their westward orientation, felt most threatened by the continued presence of British garrisons at Niagara, Detroit, and Fort Pitt. The unfulfilled or broken English promises and the sudden, inconceivable change in the power structure on the frontier served to warn the Seneca and Cayuga of the danger of continued acceptance of English words and actions.[284]

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[284]George Croghan, at Fort Pitt, noted in 1761 that the Iroquois were "very uneasy" about Amherst's policies; see Croghan to Johnson, Fort Pitt, July 25, 1761, in Johnson Papers, X, p. 316. A year later, Croghan noted that the Delaware and Seneca "say it's full time for them to prepare to defend themselves & their Country from Us, who they are convinced design to make war on them . . ."; see Croghan to Colonel Henry Bouquet, Fort Pitt, December 10, 1762, in Johnson Papers, X, p. 597.

The perceptions of what English policy meant to them was just one element that led the Seneca and Cayuga to make attacks on the British at Venango, Devil's Hole, and elsewhere in 1763. The other element was the nature of politics and leadership among these people. While the western Iroquois were experiencing and trying to cope with an external crisis, they were also experiencing an internal crisis of great significance. As has been noted earlier, the heart of that crisis lay in a dispute over goals and power between two basic political factions in Iroquois society: warriors and sachems.

That dispute, while having its origins in Iroquois society and political practices, was aggravated by English policies. The sachems, dedicated to the principles of peace as their office demanded, sought a non-violent solution to the continued problems associated with English military activities and western expansion. The warriors, battle-oriented, saw the best solution not in accommodation but in aggressive resistance to this external threat. From the warriors' point of view, the English had come to represent a serious threat to the land and its people and their culture. Traditionally, these were to be protected by the "young men" through military action. Further, it was the warriors who were most hurt by British frontier policy, especially as it related to the sale of ammunition. The Iroquois, particularly the western nations, had just renewed their old conflict with the Indians of the Carolinas. To be told that ammunition would no longer be forthcoming was almost more than the warriors could bear. It seemed just one more example of English treachery, this time involving the use of the southern tribes as a diversion while the English delivered the death blow in New York. This same reasoning may well have been stirred by British solicitation of the Great Lakes Indians, many of whom had been occasional enemies of the Five Nations. On more than one occasion, the Iroquois tried to disuade the English from developing a relationship

with these people, but to no avail.[285]

These perceptions of the post-war situation appear to have been accurate enough. In 1763, in a report to the American military command, Johnson offered four causes of the present Indian uprising, as given to him by the Iroquois: the war belts sent to the western Indians by the French; the "dearness of powder & goods"; "ill treatment, and want of any Supplies from the garrisons"; and their dislike of "our keeping many of the small posts which had been promised formerly to be destroyed".[286] Any one or a combination of these provocations would have been sufficient to lead the Seneca to war with England. At home, the sachems were being discredited as ineffective leaders and as men in the British interest. The Seneca, faced with serious external threats, sought to redefine leadership to fit the occasion. In warrior leaders they found men willing to oppose the English and protect the Seneca people. The Seneca and, to a lesser degree the Cayuga, did not merely follow the lead of the Ottawa leader Pontiac. They allied themselves with the warring tribes for specific reasons rooted in the Iroquois experience with the English both before, during, and after the French war.

The Seneca solution to the crisis did not, however, fully succeed. While the 1763 uprising did temporarily rid the west of military posts, and while the English, unable to take decisive military action, willingly agreed to a compromise settlement, the war did not drive the English completely out of the west. Recognizing this fact, and their own limited resources, the western Seneca, with the

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[285]An Indian informant at Niagara told one of Johnson's agents that "it is not proper for the traders to go so far up the Lakes among strange Indians", since trouble could result. See De Couagne to Johnson, Niagara, May 26, 1763, in Johnson Papers, X, pp. 684-85.

[286]Johnson to Amherst, Johnson Hall, July 24, 1763, in Johnson Papers, X, pp. 754-55.

prompting of their eastern brethren, negotiated a status quo agreement with the British military. This uprising marked a watershed in Iroquois-English relations. After 1764, the Iroquois settled into a period of negotiations and accommodation. Friction was never entirely removed from their dealings with the English and, on many occasions, frontier commanders were seldom certain of the true sentiments of the Five Nations. Indeed, in 1774 the Seneca, Cayuga, and Mingos again took up arms in an effort to drive Virginia frontiersmen from lands south and west of the Ohio, in what became known as Lord Dunmore's War. In the ten year interrum, the Iroquois, in an effort to preserve themselves intact against ever-increasing numbers of Englishmen, negotiated and gave ground when necessary. The most famous instance of this was the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768. At that meeting, the Five Nations, in order to lessen the possibility of another war on the Ohio frontier, ceded the territory south of that river and east to the Appalachians to the crown in exchange for a defined, and hopefully enforced, boundary between English and Indian settlements. At that meeting, the Five Nations gave away the very lands and disinherited the very Indians they had earlier agreed to protect. Further, the Stanwix treaty represented the biggest loss of Iroquois territory at any time prior to the Revolution. That land had been lost to the Iroquois' ancient ally, England. By the time the Iroquois sat in council at Fort Stanwix, the Covenant Chain and much that it represented had ceased to have much meaning to either Iroquois or Englishman.

CHAPTER VIII

IROQUOIS POLITICS AND RELATIONS WITH THE ENGLISH, 1748 - 1764: SOME CONCLUSIONS

A study of Iroquois-English relations during the middle decades of the eighteenth century makes clear a number of points concerning both Iroquois politics and power and their relations with the colonies. These points help clarify the nature of Iroquoia political processes and internal dynamics at the time as well as the break-down of the Confederacy during and after the Revolution.

One of the more striking aspects of Iroquois-English relations after 1748 is that that relationship, typified by the Covenant Chain and the policies that supported it, were undergoing rapid, significant changes. While these changes appear, on the surface, related to the equally rapid and significant changes taking place in frontier relations between England and France; in actuality, the perceptions and attitudes that Iroquois and Englishmen held toward each other were fundamental in influencing the direction of their relationship. From the time of King George's War through the western uprising, the analysis of one side's behavior and policies by the other had much to do with the responses that each made to the major crises of the period. Whether English perceptions of Iroquois intentions and power on the Ohio or Great Lakes, or Iroquois assumptions about English goals and policies were in fact correct is less important than that each side acted as if they were. The cumulative effects of these actions and judgements was severe internal disruption and political change for the Iroquois, and a substantial loss of their former influence and power.

By 1764, the Five Nations were living in a world that they could no longer control and one in which the patterns of internal politics and leadership had been significantly altered.

Throughout the period, changes in British policy worked against the Iroquois and their ability to maintain control over their relations with the colonies. Recognizing in Iroquois inaction on the Ohio an inability to deal effectively with the growing crisis there, English officials determined to seek direct influence in the region by negotiating directly with the local Indians. Such a policy abrogated the time-honored concept of Five Nations dominance over the so-called "hunters" of the Ohio Country. This dominance had, for nearly a century, enabled the Iroquois to exercise great influence in English and French councils by their ability to manipulate other Indians or police disputed regions. Once the English discovered the advantages of direct negotiations with these Indians, however, the significance of the Iroquois in British plans began to decline. Of even greater importance was the conquest of Canada in 1760. To the English, such an event presented a grand opportunity to re-establish colonial and Indian affairs on a more sound, more centralized, basis. With complete control over the west assured by the 1763 Treaty of Paris, the British government in America could proceed to reduce the colonies, and the Indians, to a systematic level of obedience and order. In the schemes of Sir Jeffrey Amherst and Sir William Johnson, the Iroquois, like other Indians, would be subordinated as merely a part of the new empire.

What the English saw as the unwillingness or inability of the Iroquois to properly support the concepts of the Covenant Chain was in reality a manifestation of changes then taking place within Iroquois society. These changes, in the areas of politics and leadership, were the result of both inherently Iroquoian processes and of Iroquois perceptions of English actions and intentions. Fearing

that a new Anglo-French war would lead to their destruction as a people, the Five Nations tried, within the limits imposed on them by their political system, to limit French and English actions on the Ohio. Their lack of success was due primarily to the fact that the European powers were no longer willing to abide by the old rules of the diplomatic game on the frontier. This sudden alteration in diplomatic realities on the frontier and the war it produced began to aggravate pre-existing friction within Iroquois society. That aggravation climaxed in the period from 1760 to 1764, as many Iroquois determined to seek new solutions to the diplomatic revolution that had accompanied the defeat of France in 1760. That revolution robbed the Iroquois of the play-off system and severely limited the options available to them in dealing with an expansive, increasingly dangerous, English empire.

The internal political conflict that embroiled the Five Nations during and after the Great War for Empire contained many elements that had persisted since pre-contact times. The age-old struggle between warrior groups and sachems, and the jealousies between villages and nations were very much in evidence. What made this situation different, however, was that the new English policies, and the new definition of the Covenant Chain that England was attempting to force on the Iroquois, were creating problems such as the Five Nations had not heretofore experienced. Old solutions could only deal imperfectly with new threats. As a result, many Iroquois began to rethink the concepts of leadership and prevailing responses to English policies in an effort to construct a workable system to replace the now defunct play-off system. The degree to which groups of Iroquois attempted to alter their political system and policies toward England was dictated primarily by the distance between them and the English and the degree of acculturation of the Iroquois involved. Thus the Mohawk, with over a century of contact experience behind them, and living close to English settlements,

developed responses that differed greatly from those created by the western Seneca.

This internal political conflict over goals and leadership reveals something else of significance about the Iroquois. The responses of the Five Nations to both internal and external crises were universally localized and marked by considerable factionalism. While speakers in council continued to evoke the concept of the League, that concept served primarily as a diplomatic mask to cover the growing disunity within the Confederacy. Indeed, when compared to earlier periods in relations with the English, this disunity and localism appear to have been the norm, not the exception. In this regard, the League appears to have been a cultural, not political, expression. At no time during the period under discussion does there appear to have been a unified Iroquois policy or response to problems of politics at home or relations with England. In the face of both internal and external crises, the Iroquois tended to develop responses that reflected the imperatives of the village or interest group involved, not the Five Nations as a whole. This goes far toward explaining the essentially limited actions taken by the Iroquois on the Ohio, and the variety of responses to England's new frontier policy. It also helps explain why, after 1777, the Confederacy, which has been traditionally viewed by historians as a monolithic organization, seems to have collapsed. Actually, the division of the Confederacy into warring factions is not unusual when viewed in the context of Iroquois internal affairs since the 1740s. Further, the reduction in Iroquois power on the frontier and the limited options available to them after 1760 made a fracturing even more likely. Unable to successfully recreate the old play-off system, and faced with two warring groups determined to have the complete support of the Five Nations, the Iroquois did the only thing possible under the circumstances:

each nation or village went the way best suited for it. The fracturing of the Confederacy was made more complete due to the loss of leaders and the effects of severe internal conflicts over policies and control of the decision-making process that the post-1760 period had unleashed.

By 1777, the Iroquois were already in a state of decline in terms of their ability to control events and their own future. Problems with the English on the frontier had led to internal unrest and distrust by many people of their traditional leaders. Britain's new frontier policy reduced the necessity of courting the favor of the Five Nations and the need to support them against outside threats. The Iroquois ability to cope with changing circumstances was limited both by the destruction of their own diplomatic system and their inability to conceive that changes in that system were in fact possible. Forced into a period of bargaining from an inferior position, the Iroquois continued intact until the Revolution because they were still of use to the English and because they were willing to compromise, albeit at the expense of other Indians, in order to forestall English expansion into Iroquoia. The end came when the Five Nations unsuccessfully attempted once again to use the play-off system, this time with England and her rebellious colonies. The failure of that attempt led to civil war and dispossession. The Revolution did not bring about the collapse of the Confederacy, it merely culminated a process that had been in effect for the previous forty years.

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