

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**GEORGE WASHINGTON: AMERICA'S FIRST STRATEGIC LEADER**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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George Washington is widely recognized as one of the greatest strategic leaders in our nation's history. His ability to lead a rag-tag group of militia against the most powerful nation of his time appears to be unexplainable. Through further analysis though, one can begin to see a pattern appear that may explain why Washington's personal theory of war was so successful, and hence explain why he became such a great strategic leader. George Washington was not a particularly successful tactical leader, and his experiences in leading troops culminated prior to the Revolutionary War at the Regimental level. He went on to lead a productive life as a statesman in the Virginia legislature until the war with Britain erupted and he was cast into the role as America's first Commander in Chief. His ability to comprehend the conflict for what it was, as well as his ability to understand the will of his fellow countrymen allowed him to craft a wartime strategy for victory against the most powerful nation on earth at the time. He kept the will of the people, the tactics of the army and the desires of the state in balance to devise a strategy that would allow him to go down in history as America's first strategic leader.



## GEORGE WASHINGTON: AMERICA'S FIRST STRATEGIC LEADER

I do not mean to exclude altogether the Idea of Patriotism. I know it exists, and I know it has done much in the present Contest. But I will venture to assert, that a great and lasting War can never be supported on this principle alone. It must be aided by a prospect of interest or some reward. For a time, it may, of itself push men to Action; to bear much, to encounter difficulties; but it will not endure unassisted by interest.

–George Washington<sup>1</sup>

Throughout history, strategic leaders have always emerged to lead nations or peoples through conflict to victory. Each of these leaders had certain personality traits or characteristics that made them successful when faced with the challenges of their day. Significantly, however, the key question remains: are successful strategic leaders born with a certain innate talent to progress beyond a tactical view of events and circumstances, or is that strategic ability the result of certain learned skills based on life events? In the case of George Washington, with no historic examples of how to organize, train, and equip an army belonging to a representative government, what enabled him to make the strategic decisions that he made? Ultimately, these would be decisions that formed the basis for one of the most successful civil-military relations in history.

At a time when a fledgling America was extremely vulnerable to foreign conquest, why did he embrace the idea of a small standing Army? Why did he insist on subordinating himself as the Commander of the Continental Army to the Continental Congress? Could any man of Washington's status have done as skillful a job, or was there something about his personal makeup that predisposed him to become the great strategic leader that he became?

While a comprehensive examination of George Washington's life is certainly relevant to understanding his decision making abilities, it is beyond the scope of this paper to address in detail all of the manifold experiences that shaped the man who would become the Commander of the Continental Army, member of the Continental Congress and the first President of the United States. Nevertheless, a review of selected episodes in his life will serve to illustrate how his views concerning military leadership, civil governance, and national leadership were formulated.

The power of personality and the influence of the strategic leader make all the difference; as such, this paper will address these factors through the lens of Washington's wartime career as a strategic leader of some genius.

## The Formative Years

Standing six feet, two inches tall and weighing 200 pounds, George Washington stood out as one of the largest men of his time. His sheer physical presence definitely allowed him to be easily recognized, but there was more to the outward manifestation of leadership that distinguished Washington from many other leaders of his day. He always made it a point to project himself as a professional soldier, dress like a professional soldier, and even to sit a horse like an officer and a gentleman. He conveyed a bearing and an air about him that personified what he felt it meant to be a professional soldier, officer, and gentleman. The word “professional” is overemphasized above for a reason – and that is because Washington fancied himself different than most soldiers in the colonies at that time. There was no professional army within the colonies, and instead, each colony maintained a militia of volunteers that could loosely be categorized as a military, let alone a profession.

Prior to 3 July 1775, the day that Washington assumed command of the Continental Army, he had served as an officer in the Virginia militia under the command of several British officers. He had seen the level of discipline among British soldiers and had likewise observed the professional relations existing between the enlisted soldiers and their officers. More importantly, he had been a keen observer of the contrast between the British Army and its colonial militia counterpart.<sup>2</sup>

Several historians -- including Don Higginbotham, David McCullough, and Samuel B. Griffith -- have written that Washington was not an arrogant man. They describe his personality as amiable, modest, and not the least bit austere.<sup>3</sup> He set the example with his words and actions for his soldiers and his country alike. These personality traits set him apart from most soldiers and officers of his day. In many militia units, the officers were not readily distinguishable from their enlisted men and they were far too friendly towards each other for Washington’s liking. “Be easy...but not too familiar, lest you subject yourself to a want of that respect, which is necessary to support a proper command” wrote Washington to William Woodford on 10 November 1775.<sup>4</sup> He was ever conscious of the relation between officers and their men, and he set the foundation for our modern relations between the officers and enlisted within the military service.

Washington encouraged his officers to,

...be strict in your discipline; that is, to require nothing unreasonable of your officers and men, but see that whatever is required be punctually complied with. Reward and punish every man according to his merit, without partiality or prejudice; hear his complaints; if well founded, redress them; if otherwise,

discourage them, in order to prevent frivolous ones. Discourage vice in every shape, and impress upon the mind of every man, from the first to the lowest, the importance of the cause, and what it is they are contending for.<sup>5</sup>

He would take these words to heart as he engaged his own officers, troops, and even the Congress throughout the war.

### Preparation for Command

As Congress met in the summer of 1775, Colonel George Washington of Virginia sat among the delegates. He was not dressed as they were though, as he wore the red and blue uniform from his French and Indian War days to remind the other delegates that rebellion and independence meant war. One of the most pressing issues facing Congress that summer was whether or not to adopt the band of militia surrounding Boston and form them into a new Continental Army. If congress did so, they would need to establish a military chain of command for the army and appoint a Commander in Chief. But who could be qualified for such a position?

George Washington hardly had the qualifications to become Commander in Chief of the nation's army. By June of 1775 he had been retired from military service for some 16 years. His only real military service up to that point had been along the colonial frontier, and his highest command position was as a regimental commander. His regiment had not distinguished itself and one could hardly have categorized Washington as a military genius. Yet, despite his lack of military prowess, he was extremely well respected among the delegates of the Congress. He was a wealthy Virginia landowner who was well connected politically and he was a man who could be trusted. Nevertheless, did he have the right qualities to command the army?

On 14 June 1775, Representative John Adams rose within Congress to address the house regarding the issue of who should become the commander of the army and stated, "I declare without hesitation that there is but one gentleman in my mind for this important command."<sup>6</sup> He went on to say, "...a gentleman from Virginia...whose skill and experience as an officer, whose independent fortune, great talents, and excellent universal character would command the approbation of all America."<sup>7</sup>

Washington immediately knew that Adams was referring to him. He was reluctant to accept the nomination. He was not terribly well educated, was not a scholar, and was not very well read, but he knew the issues of revolution facing the colonies and he was a staunch supporter of independence. Upon hearing John Adams announce his nomination as the commander, Washington rose and walked out of Congress. Although some delegates initially

opposed his nomination, the next morning George Washington was nearly unanimously appointed as the Commander in Chief of the Continental Army.<sup>8</sup> His commission would read:

We, reposing special trust and confidence in your patriotism, valor, conduct, and fidelity, do, by these presents, constitute and appoint you to be General and Commander in Chief, of the army of the United Colonies, and of all forces now raised, or to be raised, by them, and of all others who shall voluntarily offer their service, and join the said Army for the Defense of American Liberty, and for repelling every hostile invasion thereof: And you are hereby vested with full power and authority to act as you shall think for the good and welfare of the service.<sup>9</sup>

This was an enormous task placed before him, and Washington was not confident that he was up to the task. In his speech before Congress on 16 June, he stated,

Mr. President: Tho' I am truly sensible of the high Honour done me in the Appointment, yet I feel great distress from a consciousness that my abilities and Military experience may not be equal to the extensive and important Trust: However, as the Congress desires I will enter upon the momentous duty, and exert every power I Possess In their Service for the Support of the glorious Cause: I beg they will accept my most cordial thanks for the distinguished testimony of their Approbation.

But lest some unlucky event should happen unfavorable to my reputation, I beg it may be remembered by every Gentleman in the room, that I this day declare with the utmost sincerity, I do not think my self equal to the Command I am honoured with.

As to pay, Sir, I beg leave to Assure the Congress that as no pecuniary consideration could have tempted me to have accepted this Arduous employment [at the expence of my domestt. Ease and happiness] I do not wish to make any profit from it: I will keep an exact Account of my expenses; those I doubt not they will discharge and that is all I desire.<sup>10</sup>

Washington would continue this humble and subservient tone throughout the war in his dealings with Congress, and would establish a model for the foundation of modern civil-military relations.

### Commander of the Continental Army

As he took command of the Continental Army, Washington knew all too well that the sword had now been drawn against England and he would urge the New England Colonies and the Congress to throw away the scabbard. His first task would be to dislodge the British from Boston.<sup>11</sup> Upon arriving in Boston, Washington wrote a letter to the Massachusetts Legislature emphasizing his responsibilities and subordination to the Government:

...When the councils of the British nation had formed a plan for enslaving America, and depriving her sons of their most sacred and invaluable privileges, against the clearest remonstrances of the constitution, of justice and of truth, and, to execute their schemes, had appealed to the sword, I esteemed it my duty to take a part in the contest, and more especially on account of my being called thereto by the unsolicited suffrages of the representatives of a free people; wishing for no other reward, than that arising from a conscientious discharge of the important trust, and that my services might contribute to the establishment of freedom and peace, upon a permanent foundation, and merit the applause of my countrymen, and every virtuous citizen.<sup>12</sup>

He was clearly making his position known as a patriot serving the call of his nation and its duly elected officials. He was also soliciting political assistance to increase enlistments in order to fill the ranks of his army. But there would be difficult times ahead that would test his leadership at the highest levels.

There were three major challenges that Washington faced as he took command of the Continental Army. First, the inability to unite the colonies against a common foe or interest; second, the deep rooted militia attitudes within the colonies that were counterproductive to the establishment of a Continental Army; and third, Washington needed control of all of the forces within the colonies to defeat the British.<sup>13</sup>

The American Revolution was not the first time the colonies had attempted to unite for a common purpose. In 1754, Benjamin Franklin had attempted to unite the colonies (minus Delaware and Georgia) under his Plan of Union. Washington was well aware of the outcome of that plan and its failure was due in part to the inability of the separate colonial governments to unite for a common purpose. Only twenty years after the Plan of Union failed, Washington faced similar challenges in attempting to unite the colonies under the auspices of the Continental Congress to form a Continental Army. He envisioned that this new Army would fight for the nation as a whole and not just on behalf of separate colonial or state governments.<sup>14</sup> Very early in the war, Washington realized that he need not win many (if any) battles. He wrote to Congress in September 1776, "On our side, the wars should be defensive." Many officers, politicians, soldiers, and citizens did not understand how America could win this war of revolution by not losing, but it is apparent that Washington was surprisingly aware that if he could hold the Continental Army together long enough, the British would lose the will to sustain the war and eventually withdraw. He maintained a view far beyond the tactical level and understood the strategic ramifications of his actions and the imperative to hold the colonies together under a united army.<sup>15</sup>

The deep-rooted militia attitudes within the colonies were formed in large part by the actions of the British forces. The colonists were well aware of the conduct of the British troops,

and by 1775, many colonists did not believe that a “national” army was needed. Indeed, the actions at Concord and Bunker Hill had shown that the militias could in fact be up to the challenge of defeating regular British forces. Over the long term, however, Washington knew that if the larger Imperial forces were to be outlasted, a Continental Army and not just disjointed bands of militia would be necessary.<sup>16</sup> He would need to convince the people and Congress that this was in fact the case. The arduous campaigns of 1776 would prove Washington correct. Simply, it would take the combined effort of all the colonies under a unified command to achieve independence from Britain.

Washington needed control of all the forces within the colonies to defeat the British. Many of the state leaders were of the opinion that their troops should remain subject to local provisional authority, and those same authorities would in turn dictate issues such as length of service and the number of men called out by the states for service. In addition, most states believed that their militias should remain under command of their own officers, even if called to national service.<sup>17</sup>

Washington had to ensure that his army did not act like the British forces had done up to this point. He was ever conscious of issues involving quartering of troops, impressment of equipment and supplies, the treatment of militia soldiers, and recruitment. He knew that any services rendered by his countrymen in support of the war would be adequately compensated by the Continental Congress, and Washington kept strict accountability of such expenses. He was so keenly aware of the sensitivities involving such issues that he agreed to execute the duties as Commander in Chief for the duration of the war free of charge, and asked only that his expenses be reimbursed by the Congress at the conclusion of the war, and even then, only if the Army was successful.<sup>18</sup>

Each of these challenges was eventually overcome by General Washington, and they paved the way for his future service to the nation. He brought the country together under a unified command to fight against the most powerful military of the day. But he did so by maintaining a thorough understanding of the people of the United States and their government. Washington understood that the military force under his command must serve two masters, the people and the government, and that it must be subservient to both. The tactical operations and training of the military would be the charge of military officers, and the government (in this case the Congress) would provide for the funding, equipping, and manning the army. While this seems intuitively obvious to Americans today, prior to 1787 no formal relationship existed between the people, the government, and the military. The link between the three was George Washington. He had been appointed by Congress and as such was responsible to them. He

was also the commander of the army and he had to ensure that it remained a strong military entity, while at the same time he had to ensure that the army must never be allowed to challenge civil authority. Additionally, he was the conduit between the army and the Congress for addressing grievances and issues that arose during the war. A leading scholar summarizes Washington's responsibilities as follows:

...to sustain an army; to drum up new recruits every spring while enticing the much-abused militia to hold the lines in the interim months; to procure sufficient provisions, uniforms, tents, guns and ammunition. All these tasks entailed endless appeals to civilian leaders not only in Congress but at the state and local levels as well. ...Washington faced the additional challenge of wiring together his heterogeneous throng, making it fight and occasionally win—all without unduly antagonizing civilians and public officials.<sup>19</sup>

His experiences as a colonial soldier under the British, as a Virginia statesman and representative, and as the Commander in Chief of the Continental Army gave him a unique perspective as to the form of civil-military relations required to defeat the British.

Washington enjoyed very few tactical successes as a commander. Many historians will point out that Washington was not a great military genius, but that was hardly relevant given the position he was appointed to in 1775. Even while serving as an officer with British forces during the French and Indian War, he saw defeats on numerous occasions. While these military setbacks obviously did not contribute to establishing a brilliant tactician, the experiences that Washington had as a member of the early Congress, in concert with his prior military service, did allow him to be a much more effective strategic leader while serving as the commander of the Continental Army.

He knew from the beginning that he had to continuously seek guidance from the elected members of the Continental Congress, even if that meant receiving an answer that he did not desire or anticipate. He would make it a matter of routine practice to consult with Congress on matters that many at the time would have thought mundane, but it was necessary to cement the concept of civil control of the military forces. One must keep in mind that during this period the Constitution had yet to be written and there was no formal establishment of who would control the military forces of the colonies during a war with England. When Congress established Washington as the commander, his commission was to, "...be careful in executing the great trust reposed in you, by causing strict discipline and order be observed in the army, and that the soldiers be duly exercised, and provided with all convenient necessaries."<sup>20</sup> They went on to add, "...And you are to regulate your conduct in every respect by the rules and discipline of war, (as herewith given you,) and punctually to observe and follow such orders and directions, from time to time, as you shall receive from this, or a future Congress of these United Colonies, or

committee of Congress."<sup>21</sup> The members of Congress desired to ensure that Washington knew that he was ultimately responsible for the actions of his soldiers and that he was responsible to them as a governing body to follow their orders. His personality allowed him to fully comply with their wishes and to maintain an open dialogue with them on a frequent basis.

The tactical prowess of the Commander of the Continental Army in 1776 was not nearly as important as his strategic genius. Washington quickly came to the realization that it was far more critical for him to maintain the army as an entity than it was to win any particular battle or campaign.<sup>22</sup> He had many talented officers to assist him with the tactical decisions associated with conducting operations in the field. During the siege of Boston, for example, on more than three occasions Washington made preparations to attack the town. His lack of tactical prowess was overcome by the abilities of his subordinate generals, most notably resulting from the many councils of war he held. It was fortunate that Washington's officers understood the tactical importance of laying siege to Boston and dissuaded their commander from conducting a clumsy frontal assault against the British defenses in 1776. The decision to hold out allowed the Continental Army to effectively drive the British into the sea without losing a man. In hindsight, had the army advanced on Boston they would have certainly suffered a tremendous blow, and the revolution could have ended in its first year. Washington realized intuitively that the revolution survived only as long as the army survived.<sup>23</sup> If he could maintain the war long enough, Britain would tire of the struggle across the Atlantic and independence would be gained...but it would take time. Washington always kept the political object of the war at the forefront, and his decision to subordinate himself and the army to civilian control ensured that the conflict that he waged against Britain would remain a Revolution vice an insurgency.<sup>24</sup> His decisions forged the way ahead for the formation of America.

### After the War

On 23 December 1783, Washington resigned as Commander in Chief. His original plan was to retire to Mount Vernon and leave government service altogether. Because of his position during the war, however, he continued to correspond with influential members of Congress and would eventually play an even more pivotal role in the strategic leadership of America.<sup>25</sup>

Prior to 1789, only the Articles of Confederation bound the Colonies together politically. Most states lacked financial resources and the majority of state leaders felt that it was impossible to unite the former colonies without sufficient funds to form a nation. Eight years of war with Britain equated to a great deal of debt for the colonies.<sup>26</sup> Washington had commented

that without a more formal federal government, "...we are no more than a rope of sand, and shall as easily be broken."<sup>27</sup>

The nation was divided as to what form this new government should take. Should there be a strong centralized federal government or a loosely affiliated arrangement of states? These two opposing points of view would form the political parties of the Federalists (in favor of a strong central government) and the Anti-Federalists, later called the Democratic-Republicans (who were in favor of a loose affiliation of states). Washington seemed to bridge the gap between these two groups. He was arguably the embodiment of Federalism, but at the same time he was first among rural magnates (who tended to strongly favor Republican ideals).<sup>28</sup> On 18 May 1786, Washington wrote, "...that it is necessary to revise and amend the Articles of Confederation, I entertain no doubt; but what may be the consequences of such an attempt is doubtful yet something must be done, or the fabric must fall, for it certainly is tottering."<sup>29</sup> By February 1787 it became clear to Washington that a Constitutional Convention would be held in May 1787. Washington and several other congressional delegates actually had little intention of merely amending the Articles of Confederation. Instead, Washington's aim was to replace them with a Constitution to provide greater national unity. He was not initially a member of the convention, and had resigned himself from public service altogether by this time.

The convention was initially billed as a meeting to consider the trade and commerce of the United States. Alexander Hamilton and James Madison were attempting to expand the focus of the convention in order to convince the rest of the delegates that a new constitution was in order (one that, by the way, they had already drafted). Most members of the convention wanted only to discuss the initial intent of the meeting until Washington wrote to Madison and stated, "Without some alterations in our political creed, the superstructure we have been seven years raising at the expense of so much blood and treasure, must fall. We are fast verging to anarchy and confusion."<sup>30</sup> The opinion of this one man, George Washington, made the difference to the other members of the delegation and they later agreed to expand the convention in order to address issues of a new constitution.

Washington now faced a quandary. If he did not attend the convention, many believed the convention would be viewed as irrelevant. If he did not attend, would his absence be viewed as a sign of Anti-republicanism? He also struggled with a comment that he made upon his retirement concerning his intention to no longer engage in public matters:

I consider it an indispensable duty to close this last solemn act of my Official life, by commending the Interests of our dearest Country to the protection of Almighty God, and those who have the superintendence of them, to his holy keeping. Having now finished the work assigned me, I retire from the great theatre of

Action; and bidding an Affectionate farewell to this August body under whose orders I have so long acted, I here offer my Commission, and take my leave of all employments of public life.<sup>31</sup>

But Washington's keen sense of patriotism and obligation led him to attend the convention, and on 25 May 1787 a quorum of states had arrived in Philadelphia and the convention commenced. Washington was unanimously chosen as the President of the convention.

On 17 September 1787, the finished Constitution was handed to the President of the convention. Interestingly, that constitution was written with an almost certainty that Washington would become the first President of the newly formed United States.<sup>32</sup> Because the founding fathers knew this, the role of President also carries with it the title as Commander in Chief of all armed forces.<sup>33</sup> This was almost certainly done because of Washington's role during the Revolution. Washington's strategic leadership directly shaped the establishment and founding of this nation.

### Conclusion

In evaluating George Washington as a strategic leader, the man and his experiences made all the difference. Noted Washington scholar Mackubin Owens concluded that events in history are not predetermined; therefore, if someone other than Washington had been chosen to lead the Revolution, the outcome would have been radically different for America.<sup>34</sup> He points out that Washington was not infallible and that he made mistakes, but he did not make a mistake in choosing the strategy to defeat the British.<sup>35</sup> Washington did not choose a war of mass resistance or "people's war" strategy to engage the British; rather, he chose to assemble a Continental Army in order to engage the British on the field of battle.<sup>36</sup> Mackubin claims that Washington "would have recoiled with horror from such an idea" because a war of mass resistance would have changed "the war for independence into a genuine civil war with all its grisly attendants – ambush, reprisal, countereprisal. It would have torn the fabric of American life to pieces."<sup>37</sup> Mackubin also points out that Washington knew that such a strategy would have undermined the political process and given power to a junta, which was exactly the opposite of what Washington was trying to accomplish.<sup>38</sup>

While Mackubin is fundamentally correct in his assumptions of why Washington was successful as the leader of the Continental Army, he fails to acknowledge the larger reasons that Washington's strategy was successful in winning the war. As a Virginia landowner and a leader of the revolutionary cause, Washington was intimately familiar with the reasons why independence was so vitally important to the colonies. He also understood the nature of the conflict that he found himself in, because he knew the desires and the will of the colonial

populace. John Adams observed that, “The American Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people, and in the union of the colonies; both of which were substantially effected before hostilities commenced.”<sup>39</sup> Washington, as well, knew this to be true and made strategic decisions based on his knowledge of colonial sentiment.

In addition, Washington fully understood the workings of Congress. He had served as a member of that body after his initial military service was completed and he was a well respected member of that body. The political motivation for the war, and for independence, was not lost on Washington. Moreover, after years spent as the commander of the Continental Army, Washington knew the intricate details of the military and he understood the relationship between the government of the day and the military. His ability to balance the needs of the people, the desires of the government, and the capabilities of the military is what allowed Washington to become the great strategic leader that history has rightfully painted him to be.

Students of military history will quickly recognize the three elements listed above as comprising the “paradoxical trinity” that Carl Von Clausewitz describes in *On War*:

War is more than a true chameleon that slightly adapts its characteristics to the given case. As a total phenomenon its dominant tendencies always make war a paradoxical trinity—composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone.

The first of these three aspects mainly concerns the people; the second the commander and his army; the third the government. The passions that are to be kindled in war must already be inherent in the people; the scope which the play of courage and talent will enjoy in the realm of probability and chance depends on the particular character of the commander and the army; but the political aims are the business of the government alone.<sup>40</sup>

Clausewitz states emphatically that in order for warfare to be successful, the relation between the three elements of the people, the military, and the government must remain in balance.<sup>41</sup> A truly great strategic leader must have an innate ability to recognize how the three elements of Clausewitz’s trinity relate to each other and then focus them all towards the ends desired. Remarkably, George Washington intuitively recognized and understood the relationship between the people, the government, and the military without ever reading Clausewitz.<sup>42</sup> Washington was the magnetic force that kept the three elements of the trinity in a delicate balance, never allowing any one element to encroach upon or collide with another. Simply, he served as the gravitational force that bound these three elements together in pursuit of a common end: independence from Great Britain. Given the infant and mercurial nature of the

colonial government, popular sentiment and support, and the fledgling Continental Army, Washington's achievement remains extraordinary.

His love of country and dedication to the cause of freedom caused the people of America to naturally gravitate towards him and rally behind the call to independence. His force of personality as a statesman made him one of the most highly regarded and revered members of Congress. His natural leadership ability, strategic vision, personal example, and adherence to discipline and moral values made him the model for all soldiers within the Continental Army to emulate. Without his example of personal sacrifice and selfless service, the march to freedom could have been without popular support of the people of the colonies. Without his genuine humility and adherence to his personal beliefs, the colonies could have easily established Washington as a monarch to rule over the newly independent colonies. Without his vision and personal ability, it is easy to see how the military could have grown to become the dominant force within the colonies. Arguably, no other person could have traveled the strategic path that George Washington blazed, because he was the personification of the link that bound the three elements of the trinity together in order to prosecute a successful war of independence. Fortunately for the nation, George Washington stepped upon history's stage at the right time, place, and circumstance to emerge as America's first strategic leader.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Don Higginbotham, *George Washington and the American Military Tradition* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 90.

<sup>2</sup> Burke Davis, *George Washington and the American Revolution* (New York, NY: Random House, 1975), 8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> David McCullough, *1776* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2005), 43.

<sup>5</sup> John Frederick Schroeder, *Maxims of George Washington* (Mount Vernon, VA: The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, 1989), 87.

<sup>6</sup> Davis, 10.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Bruce S. Thornton and Victor Davis Hanson, "The Western Cincinnatus': Washington as a Farmer and Soldier," in *Patriot Sage; George Washington and the American Political Tradition*, ed. Gary L. Gregg II and Matthew Spalding (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 1999), 50.

<sup>9</sup> “Honorary Degrees, Memberships, and Certificates of Appreciation, 1775-1798 Continental Congress to George Washington, June 19, 1775, Commission as Commander in Chief,” *George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress, 1741-1799* (Series 8b); available from <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=lljc&fileName=002/lljc002.db&recNum=95> ; Internet; accessed 16 March, 2007. Hereafter referred to as “Commission”.

<sup>10</sup> Davis, 13.

<sup>11</sup> William B. Allen, “George Washington and the Standing Oak,” in *Patriot Sage; George Washington and the American Political Tradition*, ed. Gary L. Gregg II and Matthew Spalding (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 1999), 107.

<sup>12</sup> Schroeder, 12.

<sup>13</sup> McCullough, 47.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

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

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>18</sup> Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1984), 52.

<sup>19</sup> McCullough, 87.

<sup>20</sup> “Commission”.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Russel F. Weigley, *The American Way of War; A History of the United States Military Strategy and Policy* (New York, NY: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1973), 5.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>24</sup> Mackubin Owens, “General Washington and the Military Strategy of the Revolution,” in *Patriot Sage; George Washington and the American Political Tradition*, ed. Gary L. Gregg II and Matthew Spalding (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 1999), 98.

<sup>25</sup> Bruce Chadwick, *George Washington’s War; The Forging of a Revolutionary Leader and the American Presidency* (Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, Inc., 2004), 448

<sup>26</sup> Owens, 94.

<sup>27</sup> Gore Vidal, *Inventing a Nation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 3.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 4

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Stanley Weintraub, *General Washington's Christmas Farewell* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2003), 163.

<sup>32</sup> Forrest McDonald, "Today's Indispensable Man," in *Patriot Sage: George Washington and the American Political Tradition*, ed. Gary L. Gregg II and Matthew Spalding (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 1999), 24.

<sup>33</sup> Chadwick, 466.

<sup>34</sup> Owens, 95.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Millett and Maslowski, 49.

<sup>40</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 89.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., xi. The first English translation of *On War* was published in 1874, long after the battles of the American Revolution had concluded, and so Washington could not have read the book.