**Articles of Confederation (AC):**

**Strengths and Weaknesses**

**Legacy**—often we don’t give the AC the credit they are due…we just say they were scrapped for the Constitution, when in fact, there are **many elements from AC found in Constitution**

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| **FOUR Key Weaknesses**  **--States maintained sovereignty (power to govern themselves)**  **--Voting requirements**  **--No Judicial Branch or Executive**  **--Power to ask for taxes, but not to compel (force) collection of those taxes**  **KEY “STICKING POINT” Questions…**  **Why were AC Weak?**  **How does AC connect to DI?**  **What are the enduring features of the AC?**  **What are the Key Differences between AC and Constitution?**  **(see also: Comparison chart handout)** | * Article II—unclear where authority is--State v. Fed govt? * Similar to current UN (also a confederation)—same problems as AC * **“Collective action” problems**—some don’t contribute $, troops, etc. unless they see benefit to themselves * No unified cooperation among colonies (then)/nations (now) * High % of vote req’d to pass/ make changes or laws * Req’d unan vote to amend AC, 2/3 vote to pass laws * Very hard to address weaknesses * necessity to separate powers into three branches not clear * **uni**cameral gov’t with ONLY a Congress (legislative branch) * weakness, but did not “doom” AC to failure * Impossible to raise enough $$ for Rev. War * GW: not enough $$ to wage effective war—“dooms” AC * w/o sufficient $, *very* difficult to defend nation * GW: w/o ability raise $, nation doomed to split into 13 heads again * Structure of representation? * How are taxes apportioned? (what are they based on: land or people?) * Would AC control Western Lands? (or would states?) * Taxes based on white population? What about slaves? * Radical delegates won--only 2 of orig delegates left at end ( incl Sam Adams) * Belief that repub could *only* function w/small pop over short distances * Fear of strong central govt (too much like GB/King George III) * Assume that “good faith” would enable states to cont war w/o force of central authority * Both value equality as central elem of govt * Equal representation in Congress * DI provides evid of a tyrannical govt; AC prevents this * Authority rests w/the people—states closer to “people” * Much of AC content verbatim in Constitution * Large/Small state debate🡪Bicameral compromise (Congress = 2 houses—Senate/House of Reps) * Higher req’ment for amendments—27 changes to Const; require maj vote to pass; 2/3 to override * Sep of Powers: power **divided** between central and state govts in Constitution * tyrannical govt **less likely** to rule over states * Radical influence decreased prior to Const Convention * Conservatives’ influence increased at time of Convention |