**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
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