Conciliatory Resolution

The Conciliatory Resolution was a resolution passed by the British Parliament in an attempt to reach a peaceful settlement with the Thirteen Colonies immediately prior to the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War.

In January 1775, Parliament considered petitions from the colonies in relation to the Coercive Acts, including a petition to the king from the First Continental Congress, and discussed ways to resolve the crisis with the Thirteen Colonies. A proposal by William Pitt to recognize colonial self-government was rejected by the House of Lords. Pitt then moved for the withdrawal of troops from Boston, but that motion was defeated. In February, Pitt presented a plan of conciliation based upon mutual concessions, but this was also rejected. On February 2, despite fierce opposition from some members of Parliament, Massachusetts was declared to be in rebellion. Lord North took the unexpected (for him, that is) role of conciliator for the drafting of a conciliatory resolution which was proposed on February 20, 1775 and dated on February 27.

The resolution, in full below, was addressed and sent to the individual colonies, and intentionally ignored the extralegal Continental Congress. By doing this, Lord North hoped to divide the colonists amongst themselves and thus weaken any movement towards revolution or independence. The resolution proved to be "too little, too late," and the American Revolutionary War began at Lexington on April 19, 1775.

February 27, 1775

Resolved, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that when the Governour, Council, and Assembly, or General Court, of any of his Majesty's Provinces or Colonies in America, shall propose to make provision, according to the condition, circumstances, and situation of such Province or Colony, for contributing their proportion to the common defence, (such proportion to be raised under the authority of the General Court, or General Assembly of such Province or Colony, and disposable by Parliament,) and shall engage to make provision also for the support of the Civil Government, and the Administration of Justice, in such Province or Colony, it will be proper if such proposal shall be approved by his Majesty and the two Houses of Parliament, and for so long as such provision shall be made accordingly, to forbear, in respect of such Province or Colony, to levy any Duty, Tax, or Assessment, or to impose any farther Duty, Tax, or Assessment, except only such Duties as it may be expedient to continue to levy or to impose for the regulation of commerce; the nett produce of the duties last mentioned to be carried to the account of such Province or Colony respectively.