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UMI
JOHN ARMSTRONG AND THE ROLE OF THE SECRETARY
OF WAR IN THE WAR OF 1812

DISSERTATION
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of
The Ohio State University

By
Carl Edward Skeen, B.S. Ed., M.A.

* * * * * * *

The Ohio State University
1966

Approved by

[Signature]
Department of History
VITA

July 28, 1937    Born - Williams Mountain, West Virginia

1959    B.S. Ed., Ohio University, Athens, Ohio

1960    M.A., The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1963-1966    Graduate Assistant, Teaching Assistant, Department of History, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: History

Colonial History. Dr. Harry L. Coles
Early National History. Dr. Harry L. Coles
Latin American History. Dr. John J. TePaske
Middle Eastern History. Dr. Sydney N. Fisher
Modern English History. Dr. Philip P. Poirier
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INTRODUCTION

The public career of John Armstrong (1758-1843) spanned the critical years from the Revolutionary War through the War of 1812. In the Revolutionary War he rose to the rank of major, served as an aide-de-camp to General Gates, and participated in the victory over General Burgoyne at Saratoga. Near the end of the war, while the army was in camp at Newburgh, New York, Armstrong wrote two anonymous letters which for a time threatened to disrupt the orderly transition of the soldiers back to civilian life. He called upon them not to disband until paid, and only through the intervention of General Washington was the issue resolved without incident. The Newburgh letters gained for their author the reputation of an intriguer, and Armstrong continued throughout his life to exercise his caustic pen to attack political enemies and engage in polemical diatribes against those who raised his ire. Although widely mistrusted he became in turn a representative to the Congress under the Articles of Confederation, United States Senator from New York, minister to France during the exciting years of Napoleon's glory (1804-1810), and finally Secretary of War during the War of 1812. Because of the burning of Washington by the British in 1814, for which Armstrong was blamed, and because of other failures during the war, he was forced to resign shortly before the war ended. He never again held a public office although he lived until 1843.
This study devotes the primary emphasis to Armstrong's role as Secretary of War. This was his most important service, but it has been a rather neglected aspect in the studies of the War of 1812. As Secretary of War, Armstrong not only had the vast and important task of organizing the armies and providing their supplies, he also devised the plans of campaign, transmitted them to the commanders, and in one case went to the front to superintend the execution of his plans. His conduct, of course, had a tremendous bearing on the manner in which the war was waged as well as upon its outcome.

Historians writing on the War of 1812 in recent years have emphasized causes, and military histories of the war have, quite naturally, focused their attention on the more dramatic events on the battlefield. Except for the general administrative study of Leonard D. White, which has a few chapters devoted to the War Department during the years 1801-1829, no recent study has been made of the administration of the office. There is no specific study which deals with the development of the War Department during this war -- the first fought under the Constitution. This study, however, will cover only the administration of John Armstrong whose tenure was from February, 1813, to September, 1814. This period, although preceded by Hull's surrender of Detroit, and followed by Jackson's victory at New Orleans, nevertheless, encompasses nearly all of the important events of the war.

Armstrong's performance as Secretary of War, as noted above, has never been thoroughly studied. The most extensive coverage of
his activities is in the multi-volume work of Henry Adams on the administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. His treatment of Armstrong is generally sympathetic, in part, one suspects, because of his bias against the Virginia Presidents, and Armstrong was at odds with the Virginians most of his career. Although they appointed him to positions of trust and responsibility, his relations with them were strained at best, and at worst, amounted to open hostility, usually with the initiative being on Armstrong's part.

Madison's most recent biographer, Irving Brant, on the other hand, largely condemns Armstrong's conduct of the office. Brant displays, however, an obvious bias in favor of his subject, and makes little attempt to assess objectively Armstrong's role. Other historians likewise have followed generally one of these two views of Armstrong, with the majority adhering to an unfavorable view of his conduct. He remains today, what he was in his own lifetime, a very controversial figure. There is, therefore, a need for a balanced appraisal of Armstrong, as well as further study of his administration as Secretary of War. It is hoped this study will contribute to fulfilling this need.

Armstrong is today an obscure figure, but he was by no means an obscure personage in his own day. Not only did he occupy important positions in the Government, he was counted by some, particularly by his chief rival, James Monroe, as a potential presidential candidate for 1816. He was from the important state of New York, and had his experience in the War Department been more fortunate,
he might have become the focal point of anti-Virginia sentiment which characterized an important segment of the Republican party.

Armstrong's experience was not fortunate, however, and thus he can, at best, be counted as only an important minor figure of his era. There is no study dealing specifically with the career of John Armstrong. In part this may be attributed to the lack of a collection of private letters, which presumably were destroyed by fire, and the private letters which remain are widely scattered and relatively rare. This study consequently is based chiefly on the official correspondence of the War Department, which is quite voluminous, and is deposited in the National Archives. This is admittedly not completely satisfactory, for the cold, formal, official documents do not often reveal the motivation nor the process by which the policy was made. The few extant private letters of Armstrong indicate that the loss of his correspondence is particularly unfortunate. Not only do they reveal a colorful, aggressive, opinionated individual, but are also quite illuminating with respect to the reasons for his policies.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate Armstrong's policies, and the events of the war will be noted only with respect to these policies. The emphasis will be placed on his concept of his role, his relations with his commanders in the field, his ideas on strategy and their implementation, as well as the effect of his particular temper or disposition on the course of events and functioning of the War Department, and finally his administrative ability and impact on
the office of Secretary of War. It is believed that by placing the focus upon Armstrong and his policies and conduct of his office, another aspect of the war will be better understood and Armstrong's role in these events more fully appreciated.
NOTES FOR INTRODUCTION


CHAPTER I

ARMSTRONG'S EARLY CAREER TO HIS APPOINTMENT AS SECRETARY OF WAR

John Armstrong, Jr., was born on November 25, 1758, the youngest son of John and Rebecca Lyon Armstrong. His parents, both natives of Ireland, had emigrated to America between 1745 and 1748, and his father had helped survey and lay out the town of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where John, Jr., was born. The elder Armstrong participated in the French and Indian War, and won early fame as the "Hero of Kittanning", for leading an expedition that destroyed a particularly troublesome Delaware village on the Allegheny River in September, 1756. He later served as the senior Pennsylvania officer under General Forbes and General Washington in their campaign against Fort Duquesne, and still later served in the Pontiac War. During the American Revolution he rose to the rank of Major General, but his service was brief and undistinguished. He was also influential in state affairs in Pennsylvania, and served in the Continental Congress from 1778 to 1780, and again from 1787 to 1788.\(^1\)

Like his father, John, Jr.'s public life was to be closely linked with the military and politics; the son, however, had less military success, but greater political success. Interrupting an education that was just beginning, he left the campus of Princeton in 1775 to enter the Revolutionary War. During the war he served as

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aide-de-camp to General Mercer, and later to General Gates. He participated in the Battle of Saratoga and witnessed the surrender of General Burgoyne. At the war's end he held the rank of Major.

In March, 1783, while the army was in camp at Newburgh, New York, Armstrong, acting probably under the influence of General Gates, wrote two anonymous letters that were to create a stir in the camp for a time, and which were to have an enduring impact on the life of the author. In his letters, Armstrong attempted to capitalize on the discontent of the soldiers, many of whom had not been paid. The first letter written on March 10, addressed "To the Officers of the Army," was polished and skillfully phrased, reflecting some care in its drafting. Its contents were calculated to appeal to the emotions, and urged the officers to "change the milk-and-water style" of their memorials to Congress and assume a bolder tone. He further suggested the army not disband until the soldiers obtained full and ample justice.

Washington, while deploring the anonymous call, consented to a meeting to discuss the situation. The next day, on March 12, the second letter appeared. It was more polemical in tone, exhibiting the caustic pen for which Armstrong became noted. "Ye well know," he wrote, "that it spoke a language, which till now, had been heard only in whispers...." He intimated that Washington's call for a meeting was intended for approval of the general aims.

Washington, it soon became evident, had called the meeting to head off what he feared might become a serious threat to the country.
At the meeting on March 15, with General Gates presiding, Washington denounced the anonymous author as "an insidious foe...sowing seeds of discord and separation between the civil and military powers of the continent." Washington won his purpose, and by a unanimous vote the meeting likewise denounced the "infamous propositions contained in the late anonymous address."  

Armstrong's authorship of the Newburgh letters soon became commonly known, and it appears he made no effort to suppress this information. According to a friend of Armstrong's, after Washington had denounced the letters, Armstrong wrote Washington "a severe and contemptuous letter to which he affixed his name, and the next morning waited on him and resigned his commission." Washington reportedly said to the young officer, "I am happy sir that you have no further occasion to exercise your talents."

Washington, in 1797, apparently at the behest of Armstrong who was already feeling the sting of public disapproval, withdrew his earlier harsh opinion of the anonymous letters. He stated that he was aware his opinion of the anonymous letters delivered at that time might "be turned to some personal and malignant purpose," and added:

I do hereby declare, that I did not, at the time of writing my address, regard you as the author of the said letters; and further, that I have since had sufficient reason for believing, that the object of the author was just, honorable, and friendly to the country, though the means suggested by him were certainly liable to much misunderstanding and abuse.

For some unexplained reason Armstrong did not release this letter for twenty-five years. Certainly his authorship of the letters
was prejudicial to his career, a fact he obviously recognized. In 1813 he confided his feelings to General Joseph Swift. "The general," Swift wrote, "said that had he been one year older, he would not have written them; that they had been a mill-stone hung about his neck through his life." Many public men of the time were ever ready to attribute sinister designs to Armstrong's actions, in part because of their knowledge of his authorship of the Newburgh letters. John Quincy Adams, for example, reported that he believed Armstrong to be "one of the ablest writers and most unprincipled men that this country had ever produced." Armstrong's appointments to positions of great public trust, Adams believed, was because many prominent men "had indulgently overlooked the depravity of the Newburgh letters, or attributed them to a youthful excess of an ambitious spirit afterwards chastised by experience into honor and honesty." A review of Armstrong's public life, however, he felt would reflect it was "but too clearly marked with the stamp of the Newburgh letters."

Armstrong evinced an inclination towards intrigue throughout his life, which becomes evident upon study. This inclination, however, was based more on disposition than on ambition. From accounts of his contemporaries, the term most frequently used to describe him was "indolent." Testimony is just as abundant referring to his ill-tempered disposition, or as Martin Van Buren stated about Armstrong, "His disposition was eminently pugnacious." These particular character traits of indolence and his passion for intrigue, combined
with a facile pen, at once account for Armstrong's weakness and his strength. Thus he often lacked the will to sustain his best laid plans.

Armstrong revealed these traits, perhaps unconsciously, as a young man in a letter to his father. Shortly before he wrote the Newburgh letters, he was contemplating his future and whether to enter actively into the political life of Pennsylvania:

Party spirit rising high--interest pointing one way, inclination perhaps leading another. But was it necessary that I should mingle in the strife at all—that the second important step of my life should like the first, be made into the fire? Certainly no. As it now stands, I know not how to turn myself. The more I look forward into life the more I am embarrass'd in any choice. Law has its promise, but not without extreme labor--drudgery. In this profession, assiduity itself will not do—to succeed you must be a Student for life. For trade I feel myself entirely disqualified. I want ye love of wealth that warms the merchant's breast, & interests him in ye acquisition of it. I want that kind of industry that can pry into corners and draw lines, almost invisible, between good & a bad bargain. If I have anything speculative about me, it exerts itself in another way & upon other subjects. What then am I to do? I believe after all I could accept your proposal and go into the envied quiet of a farmer's life. I may have industry eno' to raise hogs & horses.11

But Armstrong followed his interests and quickly entered into the political life of Pennsylvania. On March 25, 1783, Armstrong was appointed secretary of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania. In the summer of 1784, probably because of his military experience, he was given the rank of Colonel and placed in charge of a force of approximately 400 militia to take necessary
actions to establish peace in the Wyoming valley of Pennsylvania. The so-called Pennamite War had broken out there between a group of Connecticut settlers of the Susquehanna Company and Pennsylvanians. Armstrong persuaded the Connecticut settlers to lay down their arms, and when they did, promptly had them arrested. When Armstrong left the valley the furious Connecticut settlers again renewed the war. Armstrong was again put in charge, and simultaneously promoted to the office of Adjutant General of Pennsylvania. Rising opposition, however, to the Pennsylvania expedition and sympathy for the Connecticut settlers soon led to the recall of General Armstrong (thereafter Armstrong preferred to be addressed by that title).

Armstrong was allied with the faction in Pennsylvania headed by John Dickinson and Benjamin Franklin. In March, 1787, Armstrong was elected to the national Congress, then reelected and served in it until it expired. By a close vote he missed selection as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention. For a time he was under consideration for Senator from Pennsylvania to the new Congress, but because of his youth and lack of political experience his name was withdrawn.

In 1789 Armstrong married Alida Livingston, sister of Chancellor Robert R. Livingston of New York. He then moved to New York and settled on the Hudson near Red Hook. For the next eleven years he devoted his life to agriculture. The fact that Armstrong gave up a promising political career in Pennsylvania and took up the life of a farmer points up the basic lack of ambition for political power, though it can be argued that marriage into the politically influential
Livingston family may have been a calculated design. Nevertheless, the attraction of politics to Armstrong was not so much a lust for power as political controversy. A man of strong feelings, opinionated, and aggressive, he sought controversy by heaping abuse on many public characters, always anonymously but clear to all whose pen it came from, and left a trail of bitter enemies through his life. Such a taciturn, morose individual could instill fear, but hardly trust.

Albert Gallatin, in 1801, assessed Armstrong's personality very perceptively: "there is something which will forever prevent him having any direct influence with the people." With such a temperament, he could not continue to remain aloof from politics, and although nominally a Federalist, he reentered politics in 1800 when the Livingstons and Clintons carried New York for the Republicans. Armstrong's contribution to the campaign was a very effective anonymous petition for the repeal of the Alien and Sedition Acts. His share of the spoils was an election to the United States Senate in which he served until 1802, and then resigned. However, in 1804 he was again elected to the Senate and was serving in this position when he was appointed minister to France. Chancellor Livingston, whom Armstrong was replacing, was probably responsible for his appointment, although one author suggests that Jefferson may also have wanted to rid himself of a too independent Senator. Certainly Armstrong had few technical qualifications for the post, but his venomous pen and his penchant for intrigue would serve him well at the court of the emperor at Paris.
During his long mission to France, Armstrong had to face many disadvantages in his duty of representing American interests. He suffered humiliation and neglect at the hands of Napoleon who was often contemptuous of American policy. Armstrong's instructions often unduly restricted his conduct in his negotiations with France, and sometimes there was a lack of instructions. He objected to the subservient attitude of the administration and frequently suggested stronger measures, but with one notable exception, he carried out his instructions. His advice was often ignored. One explanation, perhaps, is indicated by Jefferson's statement to his Secretary of State James Madison that Armstrong was so influenced by the intrigue about him that he could not "give a naked fact in an intelligible form." Armstrong apparently considered correspondence with the French ministers to be unproductive, and it was this lack of communicativeness that so infuriated Napoleon.

Shortly after his arrival in Paris, Armstrong was introduced to the intrigue of the Emperor's court. The West Florida negotiations, he was told, could be brought to a successful conclusion "if certain persons could be gratified." He reported to Madison that he had rejected such dishonorable proposals. 18 His solution for the West Florida negotiations was much more simple and direct:

Simply to take a strong and prompt possession of the northern bank of the Rio Bravo, leaving the eastern limit in statu quo. A stroke of this kind would at once bring Spain to reason and France to her rescue, and without giving either room to quarrel. You might then negotiate, and shape the bargain pretty much as you pleased.19
Jefferson, however, decided to follow a more temperate course, and nothing came of the minister's suggestions.

In September, 1805, Armstrong was informed Napoleon might use his influence to induce Spain to relinquish Florida. Jefferson as a consequence pushed through Congress the Two-Million Act and nominated a mission to Spain. Armstrong and James Bowdoin were named, and Bowdoin was confirmed easily. Armstrong was approved on March 17, 1806, only after Vice-President Clinton broke a fifteen to fifteen tie. John Quincy Adams, who opposed the appointment because of the Newburgh letters wrote, "I consider it as one of the most disgraceful acts of Mr. Jefferson's administration."  

The opposition to Armstrong was led by Senator Samuel Smith of Maryland who objected to Armstrong's handling of American claims against the French on a sum that had been set aside under the provisions of the Louisiana purchase. Livingston had been criticised earlier for his handling of the claims, and now it was being charged that his brother-in-law was using his position to further the Livingston interests. Smith, in particular, questioned Armstrong's opposition to the payment of one of the largest claims on the ship New Jersey, on the grounds that the real beneficiary was an insurance company. He alleged that Armstrong was building up the value of the Livingston claims, and trying to exclude the huge New Jersey claims to insure there would be enough to make the payments. The potential embarrassment to the Administration was alleviated by the disclosure
that Madison had already sent a letter of disapproval, and that Armstrong had withdrawn his objection.

The Armstrong-Bowdoin mission ended in failure. When Armstrong presented Madison's instructions on May 1, 1806, the situation had changed. Napoleon had replenished his depleted treasury with his brilliant victories at Ulm and Austerlitz, and Armstrong was now informed that the King of Spain would under no circumstances consent to the alienation of the Floridas. Armstrong, nevertheless, typically proceeded to absolve himself of all blame and shift it all to Bowdoin. He reported to Madison that Bowdoin had informed Manuel de Godoy, the Spanish Minister, of the confidential propositions made by the French in 1805: "You may readily imagine my confusion and astonishment at this discovery." 23

On November 21, 1806, Napoleon proclaimed his Berlin Decree which declared the British Isles blockaded, and restricted the rights of neutrals. Armstrong's task of defending American rights became more difficult. The case of the American ship Horizon was typical of his problems. The ship, containing in part English goods, had wrecked off the French coast in October, 1807. The salvaged cargo was seized and sold. 24 Armstrong protested vigorously and at length, but was answered contemptuously by the French. 25

The Jefferson Administration was shortly to enact the Embargo Act in reply to the actions of the two belligerents. Armstrong's protest in the Horizon case was used in a rather oblique way, as a
partial defense of the Administration policy. The Federalists attacked
the Embargo as a pro-French measure, and called for Armstrong's corres-
pondence with the French. When the letters were made public they did
much to dispel charges of pro-French influence, particularly Arm-
strong's protest in the Horizon case. The savage cynicism of his pro-
test did much to disprove the Federalist allegations of concealed sub-
servience.

The Milan Decree issued by Napoleon on December 17, 1807, which
declared that any ship which submitted to the British Orders in
Council was denationalized and subject to seizure further increased
Armstrong's difficulties. His protests to the French were ignored or
brushed off with insinuations that the United States should first
defend its honor and integrity from the humiliating British measures.

At the same time Napoleon again dangled the hope of gaining
Florida before the Jefferson Administration should they join him.
Armstrong understood quite clearly the game Napoleon was playing, and
urged that the United States act alone in taking the Floridas. To
the French he wrote that while he admitted outrages committed by
England against American neutral rights, France was also violating
these same rights. He also noted sarcastically, "between the two we
cannot fail to remark a conspicuous difference." With Great Britain
the United States could invoke no particular treaty, while a treaty
with France did exist "sanctioned with the name and guaranteed by
the promise of the Emperor that all its obligations should be
inviolably preserved."
Armstrong, quite disgusted, wrote to Madison on February 15, 1808: "With one hand they offer us the blessings of equal alliance against Great Britain; with the other they menace us with war if we do not accept this kindness; and with both they pick our pockets with all the imaginable diligence, dexterity, and impudence." His advice to the Government was to select an enemy, either France or England, but "in either case do not suspend a moment the seizure of the Floridas."  

The Administration had, however, already embarked on the experiment of the Embargo which played into Napoleon's hands. On April 17, 1808, he issued the Bayonne Decree which directed the confiscation of all American ships then in French ports or which should arrive. Armstrong protested in vain. He reported to his government, "the reply was made that under the embargo policy no American vessels could be on the ocean; those which pretended to be American were in reality British." Armstrong's disgust with his position was growing, and perceiving that he could do nothing, he lapsed into a period of inactivity. He received a mild rebuke from Jefferson in May, 1808, who advised him to "be more frequent and full in your communications." Armstrong was obviously merely going through the motions in carrying out his duties. His attitude was evident when he informed Madison that he had promptly complied with the President's wishes to make a formal protest against the Berlin and Milan Decrees. He implied that
the gesture was useless, and that he had no expectation of receiving
any answer, "having written at least twenty notes on the different
cases which have arisen under them."  

Armstrong soon became even more firmly convinced of the hopeless
efforts to deal with the French. In June, 1808, he again had occasion
to bring up the prospect of the United States making a precautionary
occupation of the Floridas as Napoleon had once suggested. But the
situation had changed and Joseph Bonaparte was now on the Spanish
throne. Napoleon denied he had ever made the suggestion, and further
that America being at peace with Spain, could not occupy the Floridas
without the consent of the King of Spain. Armstrong, feeling his
advice was being ignored at home, and disgusted with the duplicity of
Napoleon, was convinced that further efforts on his part would be
worthless, so he left Paris to go to the baths and nurse his
rheumatism.

While taking his treatments, Armstrong received instructions
from Madison to present the case of some burned American vessels
"in terms which may awaken the French government to the nature of the
injury and the demands of justice." Armstrong would not be stirred,
and refused to comply. He informed Madison that it would be "useless
and probably injurious."

Two days later, on August 30, 1808, in a confidential letter,
Armstrong bluntly explained the situation to Madison:

We have somewhat overrated our means of coercing the
two great belligerents to a course of justice. The Embargo
is a measure calculated, above any other, to keep us whole and keep us in peace; but beyond this, you must not count upon it. Here it is not felt, and in England (in the midst of the more recent and interesting events of the day) it is forgotten.

He advised the United States to raise the Embargo and rely instead upon "armed commerce" or some other measure. "It is believed here," he concluded, "that we cannot do much, and even that we will not do what we have the power of doing." 35

The repeal of the Embargo Act on March 1, 1809, and the passage of the Non-Intercourse Act, coupled with news that David Erskine, the British minister to the United States, had settled the commercial disputes between England and the United States, prompted Napoleon to consider withdrawing the Milan Decree. 36 News of Canning's disavowal of Erskine, however, caused Napoleon to reconsider, and instead he determined to punish the United States. The result was his secret Decree of Vienna of August, 1809, which sequestered every American ship arriving at ports within the military control of Napoleon. The prospect of multiplying vain protests prompted Armstrong to consider, for a time, returning to the United States. 37

In the meanwhile, Armstrong's relations with the Court were worsening. In part this was due to his bluntness, and in part to his seeming indifference to the affairs between the two countries. For example, in January, 1810, Armstrong was consulted by the French and requested to draft a memorandum expressing the demands of the United States. His answer was a short note which contained two basic
points: the restoration of sequestered property, and free commerce with the exception of any ship that had paid tribute to a foreign power.

The curtness of the reply, as well as the unsatisfactory terms, infuriated Napoleon. To his Foreign Secretary, the Duc de Cadore, he wrote, "You must see the American minister. It is quite too ridiculous that he should write things that no one can comprehend." Napoleon commented on Armstrong's poor French, and urged Cadore to tell Armstrong to write fully and in English. It was absurd that "in affairs so important he should content himself with writing letters of four lines." He directed Cadore to inform the United States it was not represented properly "that its minister does not know French; is a morose man with whom one cannot treat." Finally Cadore was to write in detail that "all obstacles would be raised if they had here an envoy to be talked with." Napoleon's intentions then were revealed. He hoped to discredit Armstrong and have him replaced with a more amenable minister. It is unlikely that Jefferson and Madison seriously believed that Armstrong's removal would remove "all obstacles". At any rate nothing came of the matter.

For a time Napoleon apparently considered sending a special negotiator to Washington, but changed his mind. Though he no longer applied the Vienna Decree, he continued to confiscate American ships under the old Bayonne Decree, and his newly published (May 14, 1810) Rambouillet Decree. Armstrong, for his part, advised his
government to expect nothing from a policy that had no foundation other than force or fraud. He also renewed his protests against French practices, using much stronger language.  

On May 1, 1810, Congress passed Macon's Bill #2, which repealed the Non-Intercourse Act with the proviso that if either belligerent withdrew its obnoxious legislation the United States would revive non-intercourse against the other. Armstrong apparently never received the instructions as to the terms of the arrangement expected, for in early July he transmitted the May 1 Act to the French Government in the form of a newspaper. On July 5, Napoleon modified his economic policy by providing that American ship captains would be granted licenses or permits to bring in certain enumerated American products. He interpreted this as a concession to the Americans, and was anxious to discover the extent of the American demands with respect to the conditions of the repeal of non-intercourse. Armstrong, left without instructions and convinced of the futility of his efforts, could see only the weakness and not the potential strength of his position. He decided to "resort to patience the only remedy for incurable cases."  

The inactivity of the American minister was incomprehensible to Napoleon who was in the awkward position of trying to save face and backstep as little as possible. Finally, his patience exhausted, he ordered Cadore on July 19, to write the French minister in St. Petersburg to give a message to the American minister at that court. He
was told to inform Mr. Adams, "we have here an American minister who says nothing; that we need an active man whom one can comprehend, and by whose means we could come to an understanding with the Americans." Adams was fully informed, perhaps too fully, for he was able to cast the situation in a light that was not too far from the truth. On September 13, 1810, he wrote in his diary, "I now see the whole front of Armstrong's offence is omitting to go to Court, and presenting notes too full of truth and energy for the taste of the Emperor Napoleon." Armstrong had meanwhile determined to resign and return to America. Circumstances coincided so as to make it appear he was leaving on a note of triumph. On July 25, 1810, rumors reached Paris that America had declared war on France in retaliation for the Rambouillet Decree. Armstrong was sounded out on the credibility of the rumor, and he, perhaps hopefully, argued it could well be true. Napoleon at any rate, whether because of this rumor or for other reasons, decided to act. On August 5, 1810, a letter written by Cadore was delivered to Armstrong declaring the Berlin and Milan Decrees were revoked as of November 1, 1810. The letter also contained the conditional clause that the English revoke their Orders in Council, or the United States cause its rights to be respected in conformity with their recent act.

Much has been written about the Cadore letter. It has often been asserted that it was one of the prime causes of the War of 1812,
and that Madison was hoodwinked through Napoleonic duplicity. Arm­
strong's role has also been criticized by lending himself readily to
the silence that was necessary for the success of Napoleon's plan.

Henry Adams asserted that Armstrong:

refrained in his dispatches from saying more than was
necessary for the record...he expressed no opinion as
to the faith of the Emperor's promise, made no further
protest against the actual reprisals, and required no
indemnity for past spoilations....Too happy in the good
fortune that threw an apparent triumph into his hands
at the moment when he was ending his diplomatic career
in disgust, he felt anxious only to escape before another
turn of the wheel should destroy his success.

Armstrong was at this time preparing for his return to America,
and perhaps did not wish to involve himself again in another round of
seeking clarification and debating points of legality with Napoleon
and his ministers. Cadore reported to Napoleon that Armstrong,
"before his departure wishes to open none of those difficult questions
which he foresees must rise between the two governments, in order to
arrive in America without having seen the fading of the glory he
attaches to having obtained the Note of August 5."50 Armstrong did,
however, understand the implications of the Cadore letter. His last
official act was to write William Pinkney the American minister in
London and inform him that the conditions imposed by Napoleon on the
repeal of the decrees were "not precedent, as has been supposed, but
subsequent."51

The responsibility for the consequences of the Cadore letter,
if blame needs to be fixed, rests with Madison. He chose to assume
the decrees were revoked, despite evidence to the contrary, and on
November 2, 1810, the United States resumed non-intercourse against
Great Britain. Armstrong's silence may have, in fact, aided Madison.
One historian has argued that the Cadore letter offered Madison "an
opportunity to rescue the nation from this ruinous and degrading
submission to British power." If the pressures failed to produce
concessions from Great Britain, at least there would no longer be the
alternatives of war with both belligerents.

Armstrong's contribution to the diplomacy during the years
before the War of 1812 was slight. His suspicious and unfriendly
attitude did not help to improve relations with France, but under the
circumstances it is doubtful that Napoleon's actions would have been
modified much by a more adroit and friendly minister from the United
States. His contribution to his government's policy was small
because his advice was, for the most part, ignored. His vigorous
protests on behalf of his countrymen carried little weight at the
Emperor's Court, but were read approvingly in the United States.
These protests were helpful to the Administration to counter charges
of a pro-French bias. Armstrong in later years charged that Jefferson
and Madison had undercut his influence at the Court by assuring
Napoleon of the friendship of the United States despite Armstrong's
attitude. That assertion was made privately, and was never stated
publicly, indicating perhaps a lack of proof for his charges.

Armstrong returned to the United States with a growing con­
tempt for the Virginians, and though he returned to the life of a
farmer, his views and low esteem for the Virginians soon became generally known. Armstrong was particularly angered when Madison reinstated David Warden as Consul to France early in 1811. Warden had been appointed originally in 1808, but had soon clashed with Armstrong, who had him removed, denouncing him as an adventurer and intriguer. Madison, unable to confirm any of the allegations brought against Warden, had reinstated him. Armstrong was offended and publicly denounced the action of Madison. At a later date Armstrong's evaluation of Warden's character was confirmed.

When the war with Great Britain was declared, Armstrong, who at least made pretensions of great military knowledge, was recommended by Governor Daniel Tompkins of New York to the Administration as a suitable person to command the district around New York City. Tompkins intimated, however, that Armstrong would accept only if his command was an independent one making him answerable only and directly to the President and the Secretary of War. The President, perhaps surprised that Armstrong was offering his services and needing the support, accepted Armstrong's terms. On July 7, 1812, the Secretary of War informed Armstrong of his appointment as Brigadier General in the Regular Army of the United States, and on July 20, he was charged with the defense of New York harbor.

Armstrong had made his decision to support the war in part because of his conviction that the country must be supported in time
of war. His acceptance of a commission disappointed the anti-Administration faction headed by DeWitt Clinton. Armstrong, it was charged, had been "bought off".

The depth of Armstrong's conviction was shown when he wrote William Duane, editor of the Philadelphia Aurora, advising him to support the Administration. Duane had been particularly severe in his criticism of Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin, and in March, 1812, had threatened to support Clinton if Gallatin was not dropped from the Treasury. Armstrong stated he had always felt friendship and confidence for Duane but warned that he must not become an agent for the policies of the Federalists and Clinton faction. "I neither did nor could hesitate," he wrote, "I rejected their overtures, and have once more taken the field in support of principles, which are, I hope, common to us both." Armstrong concluded: "there will be a fair expression of the republican sentiment at the next session of the Legislature, and that this will be decidedly against any man or any measure, whose policy identifies itself with that of federalists and federalism." Armstrong and his close personal friend and political ally, Judge Ambrose Spencer, led the opposition to Clinton in New York, but to no avail as that state was carried by Clinton in the election.

Armstrong's conduct of the defense of New York harbor displayed a certain amount of vigor and his recruitment policies soon brought anguished cries from the Treasury Department. Gallatin wrote to the
acting Secretary of War James Monroe early in December, 1812, that Armstrong "certainly should be admonished without delay." Armstrong's plan for 5000 Volunteers for the defense of New York to be in constant pay was, he argued, unnecessary and all out of proportion to other objects. Further Armstrong's plan of raising Volunteers for local service would destroy the general recruiting service. "Who will enlist for this," he argued, "if he gets equal terms for local service, remaining probably one half of his time at home?" Gallatin also wrote to Madison and complained that the force Armstrong was raising was "much larger than...we can spare & support." Armstrong would secure the force that he wished but only at enormous expense, "every other consideration, of economy, uniformity, and even of the recruiting service, is sacrificed to that sole object." Armstrong's lavish hand was stayed, and he was soon to learn first hand the difficulties of allocating money for defenses.

Armstrong's activities at least showed some vigor and did not escape notice. With the reverses suffered in the fall of 1812, his name was prominently mentioned to command in place of General Henry Dearborn on the northern front. When William Eustis resigned as Secretary of War on December 3, 1812, Armstrong was also mentioned for that post. His background of political enmity for the Virginians as well as his well known ill-tempered disposition, however, did not at first appear to give him even a remote chance of selection. In the end, however, it fell to him almost by default.
Eustis had resigned in the face of mounting congressional pressure. Gallatin wrote to Jefferson that Eustis' "incapacity and the total want of confidence in him were felt through every ramification of the public service." Gallatin further confided: "to find a successor qualified, popular, and willing to accept is extremely difficult." William Crawford and Henry Dearborn declined. James Monroe had been assigned the post temporarily, but with his plans to seek a command he declined to take it permanently. Monroe had envisioned himself as a man of great military talents, and had offered to take command of the army in the West when news of the defeat of Hull arrived. Madison approved, according to Monroe, and Monroe was on the point of setting out when word arrived that General William Henry Harrison had been given command of the Kentucky militia. The apparent popularity of Harrison in the West dissuaded Monroe from going to the West. Monroe had then proposed that he go to the northern front and replace General Dearborn, the inactive and infirm commander there. Dearborn had shown no military talents and affairs on the northern frontier were languishing. It was at this point that Eustis resigned, and Monroe took that position temporarily while he and Madison decided whether he should go to the front or take over the War Department.

Such a maneuver of placing Monroe in a military position or in the War Department had been considered earlier, and Gallatin had warned that "it would not satisfy public opinion and would be more
liable to criticism than almost any other course that would be adopted." Nevertheless, Monroe's activities while acting as Secretary of War, raised the suspicion that he did indeed intend to take charge of the army on the northern front. Among the recommendations he made were plans to raise a force of 20,000 twelve month Volunteers for the next campaign, in addition to the 35,000 authorized; a proposal for raising the bounty for recruiting; and finally a detailed plan of campaign to conquer Canada was sent to the Committee on Military Affairs of the House of Representatives.

It was widely suspected that Monroe's activity was not intended to lay merely the groundwork for some unknown successor, and that the command of the large force contemplated was to be given to him. If such were the intentions of Monroe they were brought to light and aired fully in a slashing speech delivered by Josiah Quincy, a leading Massachusetts Federalist, on the floor of the House of Representatives on January 5, 1813. Whether Quincy's premature disclosure nipped such a project in the bud is conjectural, but significantly Madison offered the appointment of Secretary of War to Armstrong barely more than a week later on January 14, 1813.

It seems apparent that the project of appointing Monroe to an active command might have seriously jeopardized support for the Administration. Monroe, on the other hand, was unwilling to take the War Department with its uncertain prospects, and relinquish the post of Secretary of State which was safer politically. He denied later,
falsely, to Jefferson that the post of Secretary of War had ever been offered to him. "Had the question been with me," he wrote, "would I take the dept. of War, the President & other friends wishing it, I would not have hesitated a moment in complying. But it never assumed that form."\textsuperscript{71} That Monroe refused the post is indicated by the notes passing to the President from Gallatin. Monroe, he asserted, shrank from the War Department "with all its horrors and perils."\textsuperscript{72}

Governor Tompkins of New York was next considered for the post, but objections were raised to his lack of military knowledge. Gallatin offered to take the post himself rather than give it to Tompkins. Reluctantly Madison was forced to consider Armstrong. Armstrong possessed the qualifications of military experience, and made pretensions of great military knowledge. There were many objections to his appointment to the Cabinet, among them Armstrong's well-known low esteem for the Virginians. Monroe objected to Armstrong's appointment, but promised to "harmonize with him to support the Administration."\textsuperscript{74} Gallatin thought Armstrong far better qualified than Tompkins, and indicated himself willing to work with Armstrong.\textsuperscript{75}

Other factors affecting the appointment of Armstrong was the general high esteem that many public figures held of his military talents. Richard Rush wrote to Madison that he was satisfied "that General A. is, as things stand, our very best man for the war office....All agree he has genius and energy."\textsuperscript{76} Armstrong's strategic
ideas of concentration of effort were known to the Administration and generally accepted, and he had displayed a certain amount of vigor in his command of the defense of New York harbor.

Madison in later years explained his reasons for appointing Armstrong:

several eminent citizens to whom the station had been offered...successively declined it. It was not un

known at the time that objections existed to the person finally appointed, as appeared when his nomination went to the Senate, where it received the reluctant sanction of a scant majority. Nor was the President unaware or unwarned of the temper and turn of mind ascribed to him which might be uncongenial with the official relations in which he was to stand. But these considerations were sacrificed to recommendations from esteemed friends; a belief that he possessed, with known talents, a degree of military information which might be useful; and a hope that a proper mixture of conciliating confidence and interposing control would render objectionable peculiarities less in practice than in prospect.

Armstrong wrote to Madison on January 17, 1813 accepting the appointment. It was, however, only with difficulty that he was confirmed by the Senate with a narrow margin of 18 to 15. He was attacked not on grounds of competency, but rather on old charges of favoritism in settling American claims against France.

Armstrong's reasons for accepting the post are somewhat obscure. He certainly realized the position would be difficult, and that he would place himself in a Cabinet filled with men who personally detested him. These considerations apparently had little effect for he accepted the position without hesitation. It is conceivable that Armstrong failed to realize the magnitude of the task that confronted
him, and the obstacles that had to be surmounted. To a man who possessed unbounded confidence in his abilities, the great difficulties that awaited the new Secretary of War may have given him little concern. As to the problems of working with such men as Madison, Monroe, and Gallatin, Armstrong may have welcomed the opportunity of matching his talents against theirs.

Armstrong, though not an overly ambitious man, recognized that his new position offered great opportunity to him. If he successfully marshalled the forces of the United States, and his armies were victorious, the prospect of the Presidency was not unthinkable. Beyond Armstrong's personal ambitions, however, lay his personal convictions. "I came into office," he wrote later, "with objects exclusively public."

The appointments of Armstrong and William Jones, who was appointed Secretary of the Navy, were greeted with general approval. The *Niles Register* commented: "Perhaps no two persons could be selected to bring into the executive more decision and strength, than these gentlemen." The public, like Armstrong, had every expectation of success in the war. Armstrong, soon to undertake the task of running the war effort, was beginning the most important and most interesting phase of his career.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER I


16. D.A.B., I, 356. Armstrong had opposed Republican actions to impeach Justice Chase. The author of the article was Julius Pratt.


55. Madison to Jefferson, October 23, 1814, Madison MSS, Library of Congress. Madison reported that Warden had turned out to be quite a scoundrel, "His apparent modesty & suavity cover ambition, vanity, avidity (from poverty at least) & intrigue."


57. Secretary of War Eustis to Armstrong, July 7, July 20, 1812, War Department, Secretary's Office, Letters Sent, Military Affairs, National Archives, Book 6, p. 12, (hereafter cited WD/LS).


61. Niles Weekly Register, III, October 31, 1812, 131-132; Alexander, History of New York, I, 204; Brant, Madison, Commander-in-Chief, p. 111.


63. Gallatin to Madison, December, 1812, Madison MSS, L.C.; Adams, Gallatin Writings, I, 530. See also Armstrong's justification of his need for 5000 troops and his efforts to acquire a deputy Quartermaster for his staff. Armstrong to Eustis, January 7, 1813, War Department, Secretary's Office, Letters Received, National Archives, (hereafter cited WD/LR).

64. See, for example, Thomas Leiper to Madison, December 27, 1812, Madison MSS, L.C. Leiper was a prominent politician from Philadelphia.

65. Gallatin to Jefferson, December 18, 1812, Adams, Gallatin Writings, I, 531.


67. Ibid., pp. 227-235. See also Monroe's notes on the idea of a plan of campaign for 1813, pp. 237-241.

68. Ibid.


70. Madison to Armstrong, January 14, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.


79. Armstrong to Madison, January 17, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.


It was no easy task that Armstrong faced when he took office on February 5, 1813. The War Department was still in a state of flux despite the fact that the war was now in its eighth month. Much of the lack of organization in the War Department has been attributed to Armstrong's predecessor, William Eustis, but in fact he was as much a victim of his circumstances as his lack of organizational abilities. Not until the spring of 1812 did Congress finally begin to provide the country and the War Department with the means of carrying out the war.

Until March 28, 1812, Congress failed to provide for the systematic organization of the departments of supply. A Quartermaster Department was created, consisting of one Quartermaster and four deputy quartermasters. An office of Commissary General of Purchases was also created, with the President authorized to appoint as many deputy commissaries as the public service required. An Ordnance Department was not created until May 14, 1812. Even after this the Secretary of War continued to be burdened with trivial matters pertaining to supply because of the necessity of training the officers and reforming supply organization, most of which had to be done under the conditions of war. At the same time he was vested with a
variety of other responsibilities and lacked sufficient personnel to execute all of his duties. 2

Unfortunately, Secretary Eustis lacked the administrative ability to cope with the situation. William Crawford characterized the Secretary of War as a man who "instead of forming general and comprehensive arrangements, for the organization of his troops and for the successful prosecution of the campaign, consumes his time in reading advertisements of petty retailing merchants to find where he may purchase one hundred shoes or two hundred hats." 3

Eustis clearly needed military advisors and agencies permanently located in Washington to assist him in managing the army. He stood practically alone discharging the increasingly complex task with only the assistance of a small number of clerks. Madison had urged Congress to create two assistant secretaries in April, 1812, to relieve the Secretary of some of the details of the office, but Congress defeated the plan arguing that it was too expensive, that it tended to vest too much power in that department, and hinted that Madison was merely seeking to create sinecures. 4

Congress in creating the Quartermaster and Commissary-General Departments authorized the two departments to duplicate the work of the other, and each being independent, left the Secretary of War in a position which required him to arbitrate between potential rivals. Even then it was some time before they began functioning. Eustis was obliged to perform the functions of both when the war broke out.
A Commissary General of Purchases could not be found until the eighth of August. Nor could Eustis exercise any close surveillance over his subordinates. At the outbreak of war the only sections of the War Department in Washington to assist him were the Paymaster and Accountant Offices. The Quartermaster General was assigned to the principal army, as were the Adjutant and Inspector Generals. The Commissary General of Purchases was located in Philadelphia throughout the war.

In his Fourth Annual Message to Congress, on November 4, 1812, Madison again made a plea for Congress to improve the organization of the War Department, "to render more distinct and definite the relations and responsibilities of its several departments." When James Monroe became acting Secretary of War in December, 1812, he presented to the Military Committee of the Senate a project for the Army General Staff. Apparently drawn up by Colonel William Winder, it was much improved by the suggestions of Albert Gallatin, the Secretary of Treasury. The General Staff bill was finally passed on March 3, 1813, nearly a month after Armstrong came into office. There is no indication that he attempted to influence any changes, though he was consulted in the final stages of the bill.

The Act created an Adjutant and Inspector General with the rank of Brigadier General (to be assigned to the principal army), and specified the number of deputies and assistant Adjutants and Inspectors authorized in the Army. The Act also authorized an increase
in the number of deputy commissaries of Ordnance, and increased the number of deputy and assistant Quartermasters. A Hospital Department was authorized, to be headed by a Physician and Surgeon General, and to include an Apothecary General. The Secretary of War was given the responsibility of preparing general regulations to define and prescribe the respective duties of the various departments.

Congress also authorized in another Act on March 3, 1813, the creation of the office of Superintendent General of Military Supplies to perform the much needed task of keeping centralized accounts of all military supplies. He was to reside in Washington, and be responsible to the Secretary of War. Also, to assist him in performing his duties, Armstrong added to his staff in Washington an Inspector General and an Assistant Adjutant General, on March 18, 1813, and an Assistant Topographical Engineer on April 12. These offices, in addition to those already at the disposal of the Secretary of War in Washington (Accountant, Paymaster, and Ordnance), at least offered Armstrong a fairer prospect of success than the unfortunate Eustis.

The "Rules and Regulations of the Army of the United States" were issued by the War Department on May 1, 1813. This work compiled under Armstrong's direction has to be counted as one of the important contributions he made while Secretary of War. The "Rules and Regulations" laid down the rank of regiments and officers, rules with regard to promotions, the duties of different staff departments,
clarifying their responsibilities in minute detail, and many other matters with regard to army business, including technique and etiquette. One historian has said of these regulations: "The War Office has seldom performed a more valuable practical service to the army than in the publication of these "Rules and Regulations" of 1813, which may be described as a fair epitome of the present elaborate work known as the Army Regulations." 

Congress also passed a resolution on March 3, 1813, calling for the War Department to prepare a "military system of discipline for the infantry and militia of the United States." In this case Armstrong had already been contacted by Congressman D. R. Williams of the Military Affairs Committee, to give an opinion on William Duane's *Handbook for Infantry*. Armstrong apparently gave his sanction, because Duane upon passage of the resolution in Congress informed Armstrong he had the letter press ready for printing. Duane also indicated he had plates engraved for a cavalry system. Both the cavalry and the infantry system had been adapted from the French system published in 1804, with some additions from the system of Austria issued in 1806. The *Handbook*, however, did not work well in the American Army, as Armstrong indicated to Duane in the spring of 1814. He had received numerous complaints from various officers, and had then consulted a group of officers for comment. Many of the officers indicated a preference for the older system established by Von Steuben, and at any rate most of the officers felt the system
should be discarded or altered.\textsuperscript{18} Nothing was accomplished, however, until the war was over. General Winfield Scott headed a board soon after the war which completely revised the \textit{Handbook for Infantry.}\textsuperscript{19}

The biggest task immediately confronting Armstrong when he took office was the service of supply and the organization of the various supply departments. Provisions were supplied in three ways: food was provided by civilian contractors; the Purchasing Department in Philadelphia supplied arms, ammunition, clothing, and accouterments; and the Quartermaster Department was authorized to buy riding horses, pack horses, teams, wagons, and forage. Any article, however, in case of emergency, could be purchased by the Quartermaster or deputies at the order of the Commanding Officer. Transportation of supplies was the chief business of the Quartermaster.\textsuperscript{20}

This system, however, had functioned very poorly in the campaign of 1812, and Armstrong, even before coming to Washington had consulted on this point with both General Dearborn and the Quartermaster General Morgan Lewis. Both had agreed that the problem of supply had to be solved before a successful campaign could be carried out. The supply agencies that were organized in 1812, had to be expanded and refined in 1813, both in the field and at Philadelphia.

The War Department continued to rely on the contract system to subsist the troops, chiefly because it was believed to be most
economical. Bids were received for furnishing rations to the troops within a designated area, and the price was fixed in the agreement. This method, however, had many drawbacks. The most serious defect was the fact that the contractors were civilians, and neither the War Department nor the officers of the Army had any special jurisdiction over them. There were provisions that in case the contractor failed to provide the rations, the officer in command was authorized to appoint special commissaries to feed the troops.22

Many abuses resulted from this system. For example, contractors who felt they might lose money by meeting the terms of their contracts would often shift the responsibility for feeding the army to the commissaries. The rations thus purchased were usually much more expensive than those furnished by the contractor. Along the northern frontier the commissaries were often competing with the British Army's Commissariat Department for food. Sir George Prevost, writing to his superiors in England in August, 1814, admitted that "two thirds of the Army in Canada are, at this moment, eating Beef provided by American Contractors, drawn principally from the States of Vermont and New York."23 On a few occasions, commanding officers purposely used commissaries to punish contractors by simply not calling upon the contractors for rations.24 Contractors who failed to meet a requisition were theoretically responsible for whatever amount it cost the government to procure the food to make up the deficiency, but actually they never were held to this clause of the agreement.25
Armstrong had expressed in a letter to Eustis in 1812 his belief that the contract system was more economical and preferrable to the commissariat system. He apparently did not change his opinion, for he made no attempt to alter the system. Nevertheless, the contractors were widely criticised by many officers, and the system never proved very satisfactory. The contractors were businessmen, interested in profits, and unfortunately often furnished goods of inferior or unsatisfactory quality. All too often they took advantage of every possible loophole. General Edmund Gaines expressed to Armstrong what was probably the prevailing opinion of most officers: "they have often appeared to me to act more from a persuasion that armies are made to promote their speculations, than that they are merely the agents for supplying certain articles allowed by Law for the use of armies & the benefit of the service."  

The procurement and distribution of all other supplies of the Army (except for the few items to be purchased by the Quartermaster Department) were centralized in Philadelphia under the Commissary General of Purchases. The Secretary of War actually worked much closer with him than with the Quartermaster General (after March 21, 1813, Robert Swartwout). This was due to the nature of their functions and the limited scope of the duties of the Quartermaster General. Secretary Eustis had restricted the superintendence of the Quartermaster General to the armies north of the Potomac, while he had taken under his immediate charge those of the South and Northwest.
The Act of March 3, 1813, specified that the Quartermaster General be attached to the principal army, and Armstrong therefore continued the practice initiated by Eustis.

Callender Irvine, the Commissary General of Purchases was responsible for the business of buying clothes, equipment, military stores, arms, ammunition, medicine and hospital supplies. He was given power to instruct the Quartermasters concerning the transportation of such articles, and in July, 1813, Armstrong informed him that thereafter his department would be responsible for the safekeeping and distribution of the goods purchased. The change was brought about because of complaints of waste and misapplication of government property. Irvine had complained about the lack of accountability, and recommended a better organization of the Quartermaster Department. Six Issuing Commissaries were established with instructions to receive goods from the Commissary General of Purchases or his deputies and distribute these items to the Regimental Quartermasters. This method, it was hoped, would reduce waste and bring some order out of the rather haphazard way in which troops were supplied. It was particularly hoped that the abuses in issuing clothing would be curtailed.

Accountability, however, does not appear to have been regularized much by these efforts. The difficulties of obtaining supplies forced many officers to obtain articles where they could without reporting the matter further. Demands made by commanding officers
for supplies were irregular and the receipt and accountability pro-
cedures were infrequently followed. If the rules could have been
enforced, much money would have been saved, but enforcement was not
very effective. The Purchasing Department had to go on buying to
make up for the unnecessary waste, whether or not the money was
forthcoming to meet the cost. Armstrong’s efforts to bring about
better distribution and accountability, while based on sound con-
cepts of management, nevertheless failed due to the stresses of
attempting to introduce these practices in wartime.

The organization of the Quartermaster Department defeated, in
many respects, Armstrong’s desire to improve the efficiency of the
supply of troops. The Act of March 3, 1813, provided for an in-
crease in the number of Quartermasters, and also deputy and
assistant Quartermasters. Armstrong was thus able, with the re-
organization in the spring of 1813, to place a Quartermaster staff
in each of the nine military districts, complete with deputies and
assistants. Each Quartermaster in his district was virtually
autonomous. He was authorized to add to his staff, forage, wagon,
and barracks masters, and also as many artificers, mechanics,
and laborers as necessary. The Quartermaster General, Robert Swartwout,
gave all his attention to his own district, and there was virtually
no coordination at all, except as the Secretary of War might occas-
onally direct.
The details of the organization and function of the various supply departments, as outlined above, indicate the lack of centralization that is so vital for efficient supply. The waste and inefficiency in supplying the armies in the War of 1812 was a prime reason for many of the failures of American arms. The chief responsibility for the supply failures must be laid to the inadequate and tardy legislation of Congress. Many of the departments were organized hastily on the eve of war, and did not begin functioning until war had actually broken out. Even as Armstrong came into office Congress and the War Department were still fumbling around trying to improve the system. Armstrong, shackled with an inefficient system, only tried to make it more efficient. His efforts did not get at the root of the problem of decentralization, and consequently supply problems plagued him throughout his service as Secretary of War.

The many failures of supply would not have been as glaring had there been sufficient funds available. Many failures to supply troops can be traced directly to the want of funds. Even as Armstrong was coming into office the Secretary of Treasury, Albert Gallatin, was attempting to raise a loan of sixteen million to finance the war. Gallatin was far from confident of success even though this was a smaller sum than the twenty-four million originally proposed. In a letter to Monroe on January 4, 1813, Gallatin stated plainly his opposition to Monroe's proposal to raise a large force of twelve month volunteers. It was, he believed, "altogether
impracticable to raise even for this year the money necessary to
defray the expense as now contemplated. I am confident that I cannot
do it, and I doubt whether even a federalist having the confidence
of money lenders would succeed." Gallatin further warned that undue
extravagance would destroy confidence and public credit, and would
also "most probably break us altogether and defeat the very object
which it is intended to accomplish."34

Gallatin, as mentioned, managed to scale the amount of the
loan down to sixteen million, but even this was four times the
amount that had been raised in 1812.35 On March 5, 1813, nearly a
month after Armstrong took office, Gallatin wrote to Madison warning
of the depleted state of the Treasury: "We have hardly money
enough to last till the end of the month." He suggested "cutting by
the root militia expenses, and of reducing Western expenditures to
what is necessary for defensive operations, relying exclusively on
the possession of the Lakes for anything of an offensive nature."36
In view of Armstrong's later actions this letter appears to have
had considerable influence.

The books were opened on March 12, and the response was less
than four million. Gallatin, however, through an old friend, A. J.
Dallas of Philadelphia, managed to arrange with David Parish,
Stephen Girard, and John Jacob Astor to complete the sixteen million
loan.37 Gallatin then proceeded to allocate the available funds to
the War and Navy Departments. The War Department was assigned
$13,320,000 with expenditures not to exceed $1,480,000 per month.38
The limitation on expenditures acted as a brake upon the military operations, and seriously hampered the War Department in its planning and conduct of the 1813 campaign. Congress authorized twenty-five million for the military establishment in 1814, but by September when Armstrong left office only ten million had been raised by loan. This amount had been subscribed at the rate of 88 percent, and even on these terms there had been failures of payment by the contractors to the extent of two millions. The truth was that the country was verging on bankruptcy. Congress was chiefly responsible for this situation, a point made by William Jones, the Secretary of Navy who had acted as Secretary of Treasury since Gallatin's mission to Europe in 1813. Jones expressed his view to a friend when Congress convened in September 1814:

Congress have met in a bad temper, grumbling at everything in order to avert the responsibility which they have incurred in refusing to provide the solid foundations for revenue and relying upon loans. They have suffered the specie to go out of the country, adopted a halfway system of taxation, refused or omitted to establish in due time a national bank, and yet expect the war to be carried on with energy. Armstrong accepted the limitations on his expenditures, and throughout his administration of the War Department he gave the most careful attention to his financial limitations. In fact he was so careful with the expenditures that one wonders whether he did not sometimes lose sight of the objects to be gained for concern over their cost. A notable example of this was his attitude towards
coastal defense fortifications. His views were expressed in a letter to William Duane in March of 1813:

The whole coast is in a state of alarm, and demanding defence, at a hundred different points. In this state of things we can but do, (what is necessary in the defence of all frontiers of great length) select prominent points and arm them with our best means, leaving others to the resources of their own courage and skill.42

It soon became apparent that Armstrong intended to place only scant amounts into the building of fortifications because of his belief that the money could be spent more judiciously on other things.43 As might be imagined, this was an unpopular decision, but he continued to maintain that their value was dubious and they were too expensive. Writing to General Dearborn in April, 1814, he said, "If the present rage for fortifications was yielded to, there would be no end to them. The truth is that one generally begets a supposed necessity for another." He concluded by expressing his view that "Engineers are by profession, fortifiers--& like other tradesmen, are not likely to undervalue their own calling." Armstrong's assumptions that the money for fortifications could be spent more wisely elsewhere was correct in view of the small amount of funds at his disposal. It should be noted, however, that in some instances he failed to take even reasonable precautions, and his dismissal from the War Department was due in part to his failure to provide fortifications for Washington.
One source of heavy expenditure in 1812 was the outlay to pay, equip, and provide for the large number of militia called out. Armstrong was always particularly concerned about unnecessary calls for militia, lest the expenditures drain away funds from more critical areas. It had already been determined before he entered office that state militia called out solely under the orders of the state governments, and serving under state authority alone would not be fed, clothed, nor paid by the Nation. Soon after he entered office Armstrong indicated he did not intend to deviate from that position. One example was when Governor Barbour of Virginia had called out the state militia when enemy ships had appeared off the coast of Norfolk early in 1813. Later, before disbanding the force, Barbour attempted to get pay for the militia by having it accepted as being in federal service. He explained to Armstrong that he had no choice but to make the call. Armstrong refused to pay the militia, claiming that none of the provisions required by law, e.g., either prior authorization of the federal government or inspection and mustering of the militia by a regular officer had been met. Barbour protested angrily. He argued that it was necessary to consider the consequences of a policy "which taxes the generosity of its Friends, and protests their just claims for retribution." In the future, he warned, the states might merely content themselves with coldly complying with the letter of their duty. Instead of "generous and unsuspecting confidence" in furthering the wishes of
the government, it would beget "the close suspicion of the miser, who before he acts demands solid and unquestionable pledges." 47

Armstrong continued, nevertheless, to be adamant in opposition to what he considered to be unnecessary militia calls by states. Throughout his tenure of office he restricted in many instances the authority of his commanders to issue calls for militia. 48 Again he was undoubtedly correct in the position he took that unnecessary calls of militia would deplete his resources and funds vital to carry out the war. In areas where invasion was threatened, the reluctance of the War Department to sanction calls for militia was incomprehensible, and just as unpopular as the failure to provide funds for fortifications. In at least one very important instance, the burning of Washington, this reluctance was disastrous.

As a consequence of such tight-fisted policies, Armstrong has seldom been given any recognition for his creditable management and allocation of the meager sums allotted to the War Department. Beset by demands on all sides for more funds, most of them well justified, he was forced on many occasions to choose between two equally critical needs. 49 Occasionally he was forced to shift funds from one area to meet the expenses in another. 50 He also, according to his views on the relative importance of the armies, had to insure sufficient money to carry out their objects.

Armstrong's strategy for 1813 called for an invasion of Canada with the concentration of forces on Lake Ontario and along the
St. Lawrence River. The Northwestern Army was to act merely to alarm
the British for the safety of Fort Malden, and await until control of
Lake Erie was gained before undertaking an expedition. In the
southern department no offensive measures were planned, and thus
expenditures were to be reduced to a minimum. Immediately upon taking
office Armstrong dismissed General Andrew Jackson's force of
Tennessee Volunteers, which was marching towards New Orleans, as
unnecessary. Shortly thereafter he drastically reduced the ex-
penditures for the Northwestern Army.

Armstrong consequently applied the largest portion of War
Department funds to the Northern Army. This suited his views, and he
felt, best served the interests of the country. He was appalled at
what he considered the waste and extravagance of the Western people
under the guise of false alarms. In a letter to William Duane in
March, 1813, while discussing the alarms along the Atlantic seaboard,
he noted the alarms of the South and West and explained the position
he had taken:

In the Southern country and in the West, the same game is
playing--and what in my business, will be the most diffi-
cult task will be to break up the villainous system of
alarm, which would set every man like a leech to fasten
himself on the public and to drain the resources of the
nation to the very last drop, and for nothing. I have
been compelled to take a stand. It is a bold one, and
will bring down many heavy curses upon me, but from it I
will not recede. I have sent back all the militia accounts
of the West and have limited Mr. Harrison's drawers of
bills to a very small sum per month. Had I let them go
on, as I found them (with every man's hand among them in
the public coffers) the game would have been up for want
of means, before a single stroke had been made, useful
or creditable to our arms.
Even the amounts rendered to the Northern Army brought complaints from that quarter of insufficient funds. The Quartermaster Department of the Northern Army was in a state of great confusion in the early months of 1813. The new Quartermaster General Robert Swartwout did not take his post until April 18, 1813. Upon assuming his duties he reported to Armstrong that drafts amounting to $100,000 were presented to him for payment. He asked that at least $200,000 be placed immediately at his disposal. On April 27, he wrote that General Dearborn had ordered him to report to Sackett Harbor by May 15, with ample funds for the coming campaign.

Armstrong expressed surprise that the old accounts had not been settled by General Lewis, the outgoing Quartermaster General, as he had provided him with $170,000 and General Dearborn had been provided with an additional $100,000. He then asked, "Why are there no funds & so many drafts unpaid?" Armstrong obviously knew the answer for he related that the law provided for quarterly settlements of accounts but no accounts had been presented in a satisfactory form to the Accountant. "Until these gentlemen close their business with the Accountant," he wrote, "no more money will be paid on account of expenditures made by them." He further advised Swartwout that $100,000 would be placed at his disposal, and to "pay debts only of your own contracting."

A few days later in response to Swartwout's letter referring to General Dearborn's demands, Armstrong wrote that the General
had "altogether lost sight of the State & usages of the Treasury." He related that he had only $1,400,000 per month with which to "sub­sist, pay, equip, cloathe, & move five or six Armies of Regulars & Militia." He assured Swartwout that he would be supplied from time to time as means were available, but cautioned that "economy must be your alpha & omega as well as mine."  

Expenditures for the Northern Army were heavy, particularly in the late summer and fall of 1813, preceding the abortive invasion of Canada. Armstrong went to the front himself in a vain attempt to coordinate the campaign. In order to insure success he asked Madison for increased funds so that "nothing would be permitted to check the impulse given to the campaign in the last stage of it." Madison complied, writing to the Secretary of Treasury, "no other expenditure, not essential to the life or what is next to it, the credit of the Government, can be equally urgent." The funds were supplied, but success, at least in this case, was not commensurate with the amount expended. The campaign was an expensive failure militarily as well as financially. Armstrong at the beginning of 1814 was faced with the prospect of pouring more money into the Northern department, which had nothing to show in advantage gained for the large sums already expended.

In 1814 the major portion of the War Department funds were again expended in the Northern department. The objectives of the war did not change as a result of the 1813 campaign, nor did the other
theaters of operations appear as important. In the Southern department, the Creek War called for increased expenditures, but the success of the Northwestern Army released funds from that department. In short the enemy was on the Northern frontier, and that was where the money was needed. Congress allotted the military establishment twenty-five million for 1814, but only ten million had been subscribed by August. Nevertheless, the want of funds hampered operations and although American arms gave a better account of themselves, there were no decisive, tangible gains made. Armstrong again had to carefully hoard the money and use it selectively. Unfortunately the inefficiency, waste, and lack of supply accountability often frustrated the efforts at economy. As Armstrong indicated to General Jacob Brown in the summer of 1814, great quantities of arms, tents, and camp equipage had been placed in the hands of militia and never returned. "Out of these," he wrote, "this new Corps might have been equipped if proper pains had been taken to look them up—but economy is not the order of the day." 62

While Armstrong was channeling funds into the Northern department, the Northwestern Army's expenditures, as has been noted, were sharply curtailed. The limit Armstrong established was $20,000 per month. 63 The troops, according to Armstrong's plan were to be stationed at posts, and once the control of Lake Erie was gained, were to be embarked and carried to the British post of Fort Malden. As a consequence some of the outlays of money for the Western
department was made for boats to provide transportation for the army across Lake Erie. Captain Thomas S. Jesup of the 7th Infantry was temporarily detailed as deputy Quartermaster General charged with the construction of boats at Cleveland. Eventually over ninety boats were delivered for use in transporting the troops.  

The successful conclusion of the western campaign in 1813 released funds for expenditure elsewhere. However, when Armstrong left office in the fall of 1814, the militia force of over 5000 men from Kentucky, which had been so important in bringing about that success, had not yet been paid. Ostensibly the reason was lack of funds, but in reality the delay was also due to Armstrong's objection to the excessive cost of the force. Comparison with a regular force showed that the militia had cost about $30,000 more, because it had been top-heavy with officers. It had presented the skeleton of twelve regiments, but in reality had shown less bayonets than four regiments of regulars. To Armstrong who had pressed so hard for a regular force in the West, only to see his efforts fail, the cost of the militia force was difficult to accept.

In comparison to the Northern, and even the Western department, the Southern department suffered neglect from the War Department. No offensive operations were planned in the South and little attention was felt to be necessary in the spring of 1813. It was believed the Southern department would be fairly self-sufficient, but experience proved these calculations to be wrong. No build-up of supplies for
their support was directed other than instructing the contractors of the area to furnish provisions. Great want of supplies arose, however, and there was considerable confusion in the supply departments when the Creek War broke out in the fall of 1813.

Callender Irvine, the Commissary General of Purchases, wrote a private letter to Armstrong late in November explaining the reasons for the failures in supplying the armies in the South. The first reason was the "assurance of southern gentlemen, that the southern states produced many of the numerous articles required for the army, but after considerable time elapsed...it was unfortunately discovered...that the opinion first formed was erroneous." The truth was, Irvine asserted, the amount of purchases by the Southern Deputy Commissary "are not worth mentioning and are charged enormously high." No regular returns for supplies, he revealed, had been received by his department.

Irvine attributed the other reason for the failure to the contractors and Quartermaster officers. "Between ourselves," he wrote, "had there been no deputies south of Washington there would have been fewer causes of complaint." General Jackson bitterly complained of the failures of the contractors to supply his troops. Only by his own perseverance and untiring efforts did he keep them from starving. He repeatedly asserted that the Creek War could have been terminated in a few weeks if the contractors had not failed to provide provisions.
At New Orleans Armstrong limited expenditures to $5,000 per month. The commander of that district, Brigadier General Thomas Flournoy, protested that the amount was insufficient and would stop completely the building of projected fortifications. Armstrong in defense of his measures argued there was no reason to believe the enemy would attack in that area of the country, and that Flournoy should resist the artificial alarms. Armstrong stated that in estimating defense measures the money should be apportioned as equally as possible to give each important point a competent protection and no more. However, New Orleans because of its remoteness, needed funds less than other areas "which may be essential to vigorous prosecution of the war, at points to which the national policy principally directs it, and where it can be made to reach the Enemy." It appears that Armstrong followed at least a consistent policy in the allocation of War Department funds, based on his concept of national goals. The strategy of war called for the reduction of Canada, and this naturally led him to concentrate the meager resources at his disposal in that effort. As a result, serious hardships were felt by troops in the other sections of the country, and practically the entire coast lay open and unprotected from incursions of the enemy due to a lack of fortifications. Armstrong may be criticised for occasional rigidity, and even for error in failing to provide funds for critical items, but it seems equally clear that Congress,
by failing to provide adequate funds for the war effort, must bear the major responsibility for the ill-fed, poorly clothed, inadequately equipped condition of the troops.

The problems of raising and organizing the Army were nearly as difficult as keeping one. On January 11, 1812, Congress had authorized the increase of the regular force by ten regiments, and with the previous laws of 1802 and 1808 the regular force authorized at the outbreak of the war numbered in the aggregate, 35,603. A law of June 26, 1812, standardized the infantry regiments. There were to be ten Companies to a Regiment, and the number of Regiments was established at twenty-five. In addition there were to be four Artillery Regiments, two of Dragoons, one of Riflemen, and completing the force were Engineers and Artificiers. The total number authorized became 36,700 on paper. The actual strength in July, 1812, however, was only 6,686.

On July 6, 1812, the President was authorized to appoint all company, field, and general officers of a 30,000 man force of Volunteers previously authorized for a period of twelve months active service. The Volunteer force, which in effect was a second regular army except for its length of service, had the serious effect of deterring enlistments for the five years service in the regular army. Enlistments were so slow that the aggregate strength of the regular army in February, 1813, when Armstrong took office, was only 18,945, scarcely half the authorized strength, excluding the recently enacted twelve month force.
The new twelve month force had been created at the recommendation of the acting Secretary of War, James Monroe. He had previously indicated in his December, 1812, report to the Military Committee of the Senate that enlistments in the regular army were too slow to depend on that force, and therefore had proposed raising a 20,000 man force for twelve months to supply the deficiencies of the regular establishment. On January 29, 1813, Congress authorized the President to increase the regular infantry by twenty Regiments, to be enlisted for one year, thereby increasing the aggregate number now authorized to 57,351. Even reducing the term of the enlistment to one year did not raise the anticipated numbers. The number of regulars did rise, however, to 27,609 in June and to 34,325 in December. The situation, nevertheless, was worse than the figures indicate, for Armstrong admitted to the Chairman of the Military Committee of the House on January 2, 1814 that the actual effective force for the entire northern frontier was only 8012.

Congressional provisions for short term enlistments were chiefly responsible for the failure to fill up the regular force of five year men, but the reasons for the failure of the short term enlistments to fill up the force must be placed elsewhere. Thomas Jefferson, writing to his friend Monroe in the summer of 1813, commented on the lack of response. He believed it "proceeded from the happiness of our people at home. It is more a subject of joy that we have so few
of the desperate characters which compose modern regular armies, but it proves more forcibly the necessity of obliging every citizen to be a soldier." Jefferson suggested, "we must train & classify the whole of our male citizens, and make military instruction a regular part of collegiate education. We can never be safe till this is done." Undoubtedly public apathy, and personal preference for the easier militia service were chiefly responsible for the failure to fill the ranks of the regular force.

Congressional incentives for enlistment were not at first adequate enough to appeal to many. The basic act governing recruiting bounties was the Act of December 24, 1811, which provided that any individual enlisting or reenlisting for a five year term would be paid a bounty of $16 upon entry into the service, and upon completion of his service he would receive three months pay and 160 acres of land. An Act of January 20, 1813, in addition authorized an individual to receive $24 advance pay in addition to the existing bounties. Upon entering office Armstrong was consulted by the Committee on Military Affairs of the House and asked for his views. He could suggest nothing more than modifying the provisions to allow an individual the option of taking money in lieu of land at the completion of his service.

Monroe had reorganized the recruiting procedures shortly before Armstrong took office, and the new Secretary continued the same system. Previously recruiting was the responsibility of each
Regimental commander who was directed to superintend the recruiting of his own Regiment. This rather haphazard method was replaced, and the recruiting service placed directly under the War Department. A field grade officer was placed in charge of recruiting in designated recruiting districts, and received bounty and premium money and his instructions directly from the War Department. The new system, while centralizing the recruiting service did not markedly increase the number of recruits. It is unlikely the old system would have done any better. The new system, because of its nature brought repeated protests of War Department interference from the commanding officers of the various military districts.

The failure to raise the number of recruits that had been anticipated forced the armies to rely upon calls for militia to meet their needs. The War Department gave the commanders of the various military districts discretionary power to call out the militia in aid of the regular troops within the district when in their opinion they felt such aid necessary. Armstrong found that particularly in the West there was a strong preference for using militia. He was just as determined that primary reliance should be placed on regulars, and to that end directed General Harrison in the spring of 1813, to restrict his calls for militia and that efforts should be made as rapidly as possible to recruit regulars. Harrison was to rely upon six Regiments of regulars as his main force. Harrison resented the weakening of his force in the face of the Indian menace on the
frontier, and when it became obvious that a regular force could not be raised in the numbers expected, Armstrong reluctantly agreed to allow Harrison to fight the campaign of 1813 with a force consisting largely of militia. All together, Robert Brent, the Paymaster of the United States, estimated that a total of 30,000 militia were in service during 1813.

Armstrong objected to the militia for many reasons, but chiefly because they were too expensive and could not be relied upon. After the failure of the campaign against Canada in 1813, Armstrong wrote to Madison that a major objective for 1814 should be to find ways and means of filling up the rank and file of the army. The recruiting service, he stated, had failed: "Our experiments of it hitherto have failed and left us miserably short of the legal provision. To rely on it therefore will not be wise." Armstrong's solution was direct and simple:

I would propose adopting the mode which was resorted to during the War of the revolution. Classing the militia of the U.S. and drawing from each class of 20 men, one man for the war. On this plan, this State [New York] would immediately give us 5000 men - nor would any one be oppressed by it. 5 dollars paid by each man of a class would, in addition to present inducements, draw out another and abundant description - immediately fill our ranks and enable us to finish the war (without again calling on Militia) in one Campaign. The public mind is I think prepared for vigorous measures and this should be made the foundation stone. Armstrong, of course, realized the idea of conscription would be unpopular, but he believed, as his letter indicates, that under
the circumstances it might be approved. He certainly believed it was necessary, and it is unlikely there were political motivations behind his suggestion. Nevertheless, Secretary of the Navy Jones and Secretary of State Monroe both believed it was politically dangerous, and deplored Armstrong's efforts to gain support for his idea among members of Congress. Monroe, who personally distrusted Armstrong, felt it would "ruin the Administration" and urged Madison to dismiss Armstrong.

Madison apparently believed, however, there would be no harm in allowing the Secretary of War to pursue his plan. Armstrong, therefore, was permitted to present his idea along with an alternate plan for a larger bounty to induce more enlistments. In his letter to G. M. Troup, Chairman of the House Committee on Military Affairs, Armstrong explained that the conscription plan was the most prompt and efficient, and in his opinion ought to be adopted: "It has the sanction of revolutionary wisdom and energy - it produced that army which achieved our independence." 91

Realizing, however, that conscription probably would not be adopted, he suggested raising the bounty to $100, to be paid on the expiration of service. This proposal would have been unlikely to raise the number of recruits significantly, and perhaps Armstrong had not intended the alternative plan to be very attractive. Still the proposal was in keeping with his view, expressed earlier, of the "greater convenience with which money may be paid at the end,
than at the commencement of a war." Troup's bill presented to Congress made no mention of the draft, and instead proposed a bounty of $100, which Congress raised to $124. Twenty-four dollars of the bounty was to be paid only on the soldier's discharge.

The matter of conscription was discussed, however, and violently denounced by the Federalists, but as Congress preferred to raise the bounty as the means of filling the ranks, the matter was dropped. The increase of the bounty, however, unfortunately failed to increase significantly the number of recruits. The lack of funds further hampered recruiting. Armstrong, writing to General George Izard in the summer of 1814, grumbled that Congress when they increased the bounty "thought only of getting men & not how to pay them." Although authorized 60,000 men, the strength in 1814 averaged about half that number. In January, 1814, the number was reported by Armstrong to be 33,822. In July, 1814, the number was 31,503; the effectives being 27,010. Militia calls again had to be made to assist the regular force. Most of the armies in the field in 1814 were very small. General Jacob Brown's army at Chippewa and Lundy's Lane numbered barely thirty-five hundred effectives. In September when Armstrong left office, General Izard's force amounted to only four thousand men, General Brown's army at Fort Erie numbered two thousand, and General Macomb's effectives at Plattsburg was only fifteen hundred.
the whole regular force on the northern frontier was only seventy-five hundred. Armstrong was even considering the possibilities of raising Negro Regiments when he left office. Armstrong was undoubtedly correct in his belief that hope for a victory lay in a reliance upon regulars. The events of 1814 bear out the fact that militia could not be depended upon. In the South even General Jackson placed his reliance upon the small 39th Regiment of regulars, rather than the unpredictable militia. In the North, General Brown could never induce more than a thousand militia to support him, and there were numerous examples of desertion once their names had been placed on the pay-roll. The most notorious example of the incapacity of militia was the debacle at Washington when the British burned that place in 1814. Though they were ineptly led, it nevertheless conclusively proved the utter hopelessness of attempting to fight the war with such troops. Even Monroe, who had earlier opposed conscription, now shortly after replacing Armstrong as Secretary of War in September, 1814, was brought to the necessity of recommending conscription to Congress, as a means of filling the ranks of the Army. Congress, however, pathetically divided and fearful of such a measure, merely doubled the land bounty and authorized the enlistment of minors. Had the war not ended, the country faced the prospect of entering the 1815 campaign with 30,000 regulars and six-month militia, which experience had shown was not enough.
It would be difficult to estimate what effect conscription would have had on the war's outcome. Certainly the lack of manpower, and the continued inability to fill the ranks, which led to the necessity for calls of militia, worked a serious disadvantage in carrying out any plan of strategy. Whether that strategy was worthwhile will be dealt with in another context, but it should be considered that any considerations of an offensive strategy must be based on an ample force to carry and sustain these objectives. The effective force on the northern frontier was always small. Major General Emory Upton, the noted historian of American military policy, has stated very unequivocally his conclusions on how a regular army would have affected the outcome of the war:

Had Congress, on the 11th of January, [1812] declared that all men owed their country military service, and decided to raise the Army immediately, by volunteering or by draft, to 35,000 men...it scarcely admits of a doubt that after six months' training and discipline this force could have occupied Canada and ended the war in a single campaign. 105

Undoubtedly a regular force of the size eventually authorized by law would have significantly altered the military situation, if all the other problems of money and supply could have been solved. Such, of course, was not the case.
NOCES FOR CHAPTER II


2. Prior to the organization of these supply departments, the Secretary of War performed the functions of Quartermaster General, Commissary General, Master of Ordnance, Indian Commissioner, Commissioner of Pensions, and Commissioner of Public Lands, all with the few clerks in his office. See Erna Risch, Quartermaster Support of the Army: A History of the Corps, 1775-1939, (Washington, D.C., 1962), pp. 117-133.


4. James D. Richardson, ed., A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, II, 499; Annals, 12 Cong., 1 Sess. (House), 1355-1374.


6. The War Department was also responsible for Indian Affairs, and there were two civilian agencies the Secretary supervised, the office of the Superintendent of Indian Trade, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. White, Jeffersonians, p. 234. The Ordnance Department, located in Washington, was organized when Col. Decius Wadsworth became Commissary General of Ordnance on July 15, 1812. Risch, Quartermaster Support, pp. 140-141.

7. II Stat. 819; Risch, Quartermaster Support, pp. 140-141.
8. Richardson, Messages, II, 504.

9. Brant, Madison, Commander-in-Chief, pp. 135-136. Gallatin's plan for the General Staff is found in Gallatin to Monroe, January, 1813, Monroe MSS, L.C.


11. Ibid. 816.


15. II Stat. 830.

16. Williams to Armstrong, February 9, 1813, WD/LR.

17. Duane to Armstrong, March 15, 1813, WD/LR.


21. Dearborn to Armstrong, January 28, 1813, and February 23, 1813; Lewis to Armstrong, February 8, 1813, WD/LR.


24. See, for example, the complaints of Elbert Anderson against General Hampton, September 8, 1813, and Orr and Greeley against General Harrison, January 17, 1814, WD/LR.

25. National Intelligencer, May 9, 1814.

27. Gaines to Armstrong, June 21, 1814, WD/LR. Near the end of the war Monroe consulted many officers on the best means to subsist the troops, and found a decided preference for the commissariat system. See Monroe to John C. Calhoun, December 23, 1814, War Department, Secretary's Office, Confidential and Unofficial Letters Sent, National Archives, p. 10.

28. The Rules and Regulations for the Quartermaster and Purchasing Departments are found in A.S.P., Mil. Af., I, 428-431.

29. Lewis to Armstrong, February 8, 1813, WD/LR; II Stat. 819; Risch, Quartermaster Support, p. 139.


31. Irvine to Armstrong, June 30, 1813, WD/LR.

32. Irvine to Armstrong, July 30, 1813, (two letters), WD/LR.

33. Armstrong's letters to his subordinates continually expressed his concern about accountability and his desire to improve supply procedure. See, for example, his letters to Irvine, May 20, July 25, 1813, and June 25, 1814; to Richard Cutts, Superintendent General of Military Supplies, April 13, 1813; to Dr. F. LeBaron, Apothecary General, March 25, 1813, April 11, 1814; to Robert Swartwout, Quartermaster General, April 25, May 4, 1813; and to Maj. Gen. Brown, June 9, 1814, WD/LS.

34. Gallatin to Monroe, January 4, 1813, Monroe MSS, L.C.


37. Raymond Walters, Jr., Albert Gallatin, pp. 256-258.

38. Gallatin to Secretaries of War and Navy, April 17, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.; Adams, Gallatin Writings, I, 535-538.


42. Armstrong to Duane, March 16, 1813, Historical Magazine, IV, Second Series, (August, 1858), 61.

43. Virtually all the money allocated for 1813 for fortifications were applied instead to the subsistence of the Army due to the shortages in that area. Armstrong to Madison, August 6, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.

44. Armstrong to Dearborn, April 15, 1814, WD/LS, Book 7, p. 162.

45. Barbour to Armstrong, February 7, 1813, WD/LR.

46. Armstrong to Barbour, March 22, 1813, WD/LS.

47. Barbour to Armstrong, May 29, 1813, WD/LR.

48. General Harrison especially preferred to rely upon militia. General Winder and General Flournoy were restricted. All commanders had to get specific approval for all calls made. For Armstrong's views see Armstrong to Samuel Smith, June 10, 1813, War Department, Secretary's Office, Reports to Congress from the Secretary of War, National Archives.

49. The various categories of expenditures of the War Department were broken down into pay, subsistence, forage, clothing, rations, Medical and Hospital supplies, fortifications, Quartermaster funds, Ordnance, contingencies, bounties and premiums, and the Military Academy. See Robert Brent (Paymaster of the U. S.) to Armstrong, February 17, 1813, (estimate of expenses for 1813), WD/LR.

50. In the fall of 1813 as the campaign was in preparation for an invasion of Canada he was forced to shift $600,000 from the Ordnance Department to the Clothing category and $800,000 from fortifications for subsistence of the Army.

51. Armstrong's memorandum presented to the Cabinet, February 8, 1813, A.S.P., Mil. Af., I, 439.


55. Swartwout to Armstrong, April 19, 1813, WD/LR.

56. Swartwout to Armstrong, April 27, 1813, WD/LR.

57. Armstrong to Swartwout, April 25, 1813, WD/LS, Book 6, p. 381.


59. Armstrong to Madison, September 5, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.

60. Madison to Wm. Jones, September 16, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C. The increase in funds, however, was merely an advance and was deducted in the succeeding months. See Daniel Parker (Chief Clerk of the War Department) to Callender Irvine, October 13, 1813, WD/LS, Book 7, p. 57.


64. Jessup to Armstrong, March 27, and June 5, 1813, WD/LR.

65. Governor Isaac Shelby to Armstrong, August 13, 1814, WD/LR. Shelby had personally led the force and claimed that the delays in paying the troops was "damping the ardour of our Citizens for public service."

66. Robert Brent (Paymaster of U. S.) to Armstrong, August 19, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.

67. Irvine to Armstrong, November 27, 1813, WD/LR.

68. Jackson to Armstrong, November 20, December 30, 1813, Bassett, Jackson Correspondence, I, 355-357, 423-428. Jackson to General John Floyd, December 27, 1813, WD/LR.
69. Flournoy to Armstrong, May 29, 1813, WD/LR.

70. Armstrong to Flournoy, June 24, July 4, 1813, WD/LS, Book 6, p. 479, Book 7, pp. 5-7.


73. Ibid.


75. Armstrong to Eppes (Chairman of Ways and Means Committee), February 10, 1814, Niles Register, VI, April 9, 1814, 94.

76. Hamilton, Monroe Writings, V, 227-235.


78. Niles Register, VI, April 9, 1814, 94.

79. Armstrong to G. M. Troup, January 2, 1814, WD/LR.

80. Jefferson to Monroe, June 19, 1813, Monroe MSS, L.C.


82. II Stat. 791.


84. See the comment of one officer on the relative merits of the two systems. Dearborn to Armstrong, February 14, 1813, WD/LR.

85. For example, General Thomas Pinckney to Secretary of War, January 28, May 29, 1813, March 9, 1814; General Wilkinson to Armstrong, March 2, 1813, Wilkinson complained that the War Department was concerning itself too much with small details; see also General Flournoy to Armstrong, June 15, 1814, WD/LR.

86. Armstrong to Samuel Smith, June 10, 1813, War Department, Secretary's Office, Reports to Congress, National Archives; A.S.P., Mil. Af., I, 433.

88. Brent to Armstrong, February, 1814, Niles Register, VI, April 9, 1814, 95.

89. Armstrong to Madison, December 5, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.


91. Armstrong to Troup, January 1, 1814, WD/ Reports to Congress.


93. II Stat. 94.

94. Annals, 13 Cong. 2 Sess. (Senate), 576-583.

95. Armstrong to Izard, August 11, 1814, WD/LS, Book 7, p. 279.

96. Niles Register, VI, April 9, 1814, 94.


98. Ibid., p. 38.


100. Dr. James Mease (of Philadelphia) to Armstrong, August 2, 1814; August 8, 1814; WD/LR; Armstrong to Mease, August 6, 1814, WD/LS, Book 7, p. 275; Colonel William Duane to Armstrong, July 12, 1814, WD/LR; Armstrong to Duane, July 15, 1814, Historical Magazine, Second Series, IV, (August, 1868), 63; Duane to Armstrong, July 29, 1814, WD/LR; Duane to Armstrong, August 25, 1814, (enclosing a 15pp. project), WD/LR.


102. Ibid., VIII, 218-219.


CHAPTER III

POLITICS AND ARMSTRONG'S CONCEPT OF HIS OFFICE

Before leaving his position as acting Secretary of War in 1813, Monroe had urged Congress to increase the number of general officers. Armstrong upon coming into office was consulted, and he agreed. "An increased number of general officers", he wrote, "is essential to the public service." He recommended a higher staff of eight major generals and sixteen brigadiers. Congress passed the Act on February 24, 1813, authorizing the increase. Madison and Armstrong selected six new major generals: James Wilkinson, Wade Hampton, William R. Davy, Morgan Lewis, Aaron Ogden, and William Henry Harrison. Except for Harrison, who was forty, the major generals were old men without much vigor. The seven new brigadier generals added some youth to the top commands. Appointed were: Zebulon Pike, George Izard, Duncan McArthur, Lewis Cass, Benjamin Howard, William Winder, and Thomas Parker. Except for Howard and Parker, who were Revolutionary veterans, the average age was thirty-six.

Congress failed to create a Lieutenant-General to command the armies. The ranking officer was General Dearborn who was assigned to the command of the Northern Army, and had no general control over any other force than his own. Armstrong soon indicated through his actions that he would exercise the general direction
over the armies. He divided the country into nine military districts and placed a regular military officer in command of each, complete with its own staff.\textsuperscript{5} It was clear, however, that these districts, except for those on the Northern frontier, were established primarily for providing better organization for defense.\textsuperscript{6} While these divisions resulted in fragmentation of military command, Armstrong it appears, also intended to exercise military as well as civil control over the commanding generals of the various districts, for in every respect he treated them strictly as military subordinates.

The assumed power to command the army frequently led Armstrong to disregard well-established rules governing the relations with his commanders. On many occasions he communicated directly with subordinates, without going through the normal channels. Even expeditions were sometimes set on foot within departments without official notice of this to the commanding general. These policies, as might be expected, met with loud protests from the commanders, and led to the resignations of General Harrison and General Flournoy. Armstrong was merely taking advantage of a practice that had arisen in the War Department of transmitting orders directly to posts, without delaying them by sending them through the hands of the commander. His use of it, however, made it an abuse. The commander was often sent a duplicate.\textsuperscript{7} Virtually every officer commanding a military district felt the necessity at some time to complain of Armstrong's conduct. General Dearborn, barely a week after Armstrong took office, reminded
the Secretary, "It has been usual for the commander of an Army to issue his orders through the Adjutant General of that Army, and not to receive orders from him or through him."  

General Wilkinson, before going to the northern district in the fall of 1813, took the specific precaution of getting an agreement with Armstrong that all orders would pass through the commander's hands first, and the Secretary of War would forbid all correspondence from Wilkinson's subordinates. Nevertheless, as Wilkinson complained later to Armstrong, proper channels were often ignored, and there was a lack of subordination due to the Secretary's interference. Wilkinson particularly complained that both General Hampton and General Harrison, who were in his district, felt they could act without his orders, and both left the district without even informing him. "It is in vain," he wrote, "you may expect or hope for subordination among your troops, while such outrageous acts of disrespect and un-subordination are countenanced by the Minister of War." Wilkinson then bluntly told Armstrong, "Your temporizing with Hampton, justified his disobedience of my original order to him under my Command, and may be considered the root from whence many subsequent Evils have sprung up." Wilkinson then proceeded to list other measures taken by Armstrong which he considered to be unnecessary interference by the Secretary of War. Finally he concluded, "for Gods sake and the good of the Service, send us no more orders into the District, to Contractors, Quartermasters or Apothecaries, which do not pass
through the regular, and only proper channel, agreeably to my stipula-
tion and your Engagement made before you left Washington in
August."^10

Armstrong apparently justified his actions on grounds of expediency, hoping thereby to accomplish his goals quickly, and with the least amount of trouble. It is difficult, however, to see how he, being a man of military background, could have been so callous and insensitive to the feelings of his commanders. It appears he assumed a broad view of his powers, and gave little thought to the impact of his actions on his commanders. Practically everyone, at some time or other, experienced the interference of the Secretary into the affairs of his District, or even the army he was commanding. General Jacob Brown, for example, resented the personal communications of the Secretary of War (in May, 1814) with General Winfield Scott who was under Brown's command. "I cannot suppose," Brown wrote, "that you would have said a word to weaken my hands or to diminish my authority with my part of the forces that you placed at my command."^11

As this was Brown's first experience, he could have considered himself fortunate. Brigadier General Thomas Flournoy who had commanded the Seventh Military District at New Orleans since May, 1813, resigned in June, 1814, and gave as one reason the interference from the War Department. He charged that:

The private orders, emanating from the heads of depart-
ments at the seat of the General Government, in the hands of every staff officer in the District, and in many
instances in the hands of officers of the line and in some cases to Captains of Companies - of which orders I know nothing, until they are produced to counteract some of my orders, have produced such a state of insubordination, that I can no longer command the district.  

Flournoy mentioned no specific cases. Armstrong accepted the resignation, but denied any misconduct. "Of orders given by heads of Departments to subordinate officers under your Command & contravening those given by you, nothing is known at this Department." He did admit giving orders to Colonel Piatt, Quartermaster of the Seventh District, when he had visited Washington, but these, Armstrong insisted, had been concerned merely with regulation of his conduct as Quartermaster.  

In view of the bad relations between Piatt and Flournoy, this was undoubtedly a major cause of Flournoy's discontent.

The most notable case, however, was in the West in 1814, where Armstrong's actions offended General Harrison, and as a result Harrison resigned. In February, 1814, Harrison complained to Armstrong of the Secretary's direct correspondence with Brigadier General Howard, stationed in Harrison's district. Armstrong's order counteracting Howard's march to Detroit was viewed by Harrison as a breach of "military etiquette". Harrison warned that he had no earthly inducement to remain in the army and that he would much rather retire to private life. Armstrong, who held Harrison in low esteem, and had no desire to pamper the General, answered vigorously:

As a general principle it cannot be doubted but that the Government has a right to dispose of the Officers of the
Army as they may think best for the public interest because (among other reasons) they alone can be acquainted with all the demands made upon them by that interest. The utmost therefore that either reason or economy requires of them is to advertise the officer commanding a District of the abstractions which public policy makes necessary from his command. The order in question was a notice of "this sort" and of course strictly an observance of military usage. Had it been sent through you to General Howard, the objects of Government might have been hazarded by the delay which would have necessarily attended this mode of transmission.\(^\text{16}\)

Harrison acquiesced in this instance, but it was obvious he was becoming disgusted with his position.

On April 25, 1814, Armstrong informed Harrison that he had ordered Major A. H. Holmes at Detroit to lead an infantry force against Mackinac in cooperation with a fleet commanded by Captain Arthur Sinclair.\(^\text{17}\) The order completely by-passed Colonel George Croghan, commanding at Detroit where Holmes was stationed. Croghan refused to allow Major Holmes to leave until he received orders from General Harrison. Croghan wrote Harrison:

\[
\text{I know not how to account for the secretary of war's assuming to himself, the right of designating Major Holmes for this command to Mackinaw. My ideas on the subject may not be correct, yet for the sake of the principle, were I a general commanding a district, I would be very far from suffering the secretary of war, or any other authority, to interfere with my internal police.}^{19}
\]

Harrison, even before receiving this letter had decided to submit his resignation, which he did on May 11, 1814.\(^\text{20}\) Armstrong was apparently somewhat amazed to find that such a furor had been raised.

In a comment to President Madison concerning Colonel Croghan's
protests, Armstrong wrote that Croghan's conduct was "highly improper." Croghan's doctrine of etiquette, he charged was "unfounded either in the practice of the land or sea service," and he further added, the order had been sent to General Harrison. He concluded by asking, "Are the orders &c of the War Dept. to be sent to every Col. in the army before he will consent in an expedition directed by the government?" Madison gave his sanction to the conduct of the Secretary of War. In a notation on the above letter he wrote that there was "no room to question the orders to Majr. H. ...the case forbidding delay." He also noted, however, that it might have been better to have sent the orders through Colonel Croghan.

It can be questioned whether Armstrong's conduct in regard to General Harrison may have been deliberate, and intended to drive him from service, but even excepting this case, the pattern is still evident. Armstrong did consider himself to have broad military as well as civilian authority over the commanders. As such, whenever he felt it necessary, he issued orders directly to the officer immediately concerned, with only a notification to the district commander concerned. While Congress had not created the position of Lieutenant General, Armstrong by his actions indicated he intended in some ways to make the office of Secretary of War a substitute.

Not only did Armstrong assume many of the prerogatives of a military commander, he also indicated when he took office that he did not intend to be a mere agency for communicating policy to the
various commanders. He quickly showed that he intended to make military policy as well. At the first Cabinet meeting he submitted his proposals for a plan of campaign for 1813. Previous to this the plan of campaigns had been worked out in consultations in the Cabinet, but the new Secretary's plans offered a plausible and promising strategy, and they were adopted. The plan called for a concentration of forces and materiel on the northern frontier, as previously noted, and Armstrong made every effort to provide both out of the meager means at his disposal.

While these efforts were under way Armstrong was dropping hints to reveal his intentions of going directly to the northern front to actively direct the operations of the Northern Army. Albert Gallatin reported to Madison on April 22, 1813, a conversation he had had with Armstrong who had "appeared disposed to make an excursion towards the scene of action on our northern frontier." Gallatin related he had more confidence in General Dearborn than most, and had many reasons not to see Armstrong unite the character of general to that of Secretary. Nevertheless, he added that he did think "the success of the campaign may be secured by General Armstrong's presence for a few days at the army." Gallatin explained: "His military views are generally more extensive, and for this year's operations appear to me more correct, than those of General Dearborn."

The news of Armstrong's intentions were extremely upsetting to James Monroe, who possessed a passionate dislike and strong distrust
of the Secretary of War. In a letter dated February 25, 1813, to Madison, he expressed a strong opposition to Armstrong's plan.  

From the content of the letter there is good reason to believe it was actually written some time between April and June, and further evidence to indicate it was never sent to Madison, but instead placed in his papers perhaps with the intent of leaving to posterity his views on the subject. The opening words duplicate a note actually sent to Madison on the same date. Nevertheless, the contents of the letter, regardless of the date, most certainly indicate Monroe's feelings which were undoubtedly related verbally to the President. Monroe based his objections on three grounds: whether Armstrong's going to the front would be strictly constitutional; that it might adversely affect the Administration; and whether it was good policy.  

On the grounds of constitutionality Monroe argued that if the Secretary of War left the seat of government to perform the duties of a general then the powers of the President, of the Secretary of War, and of a Lieutenant General would all be combined in one man. "It is completely absorbed in hands where it is most dangerous." On the second point he stated that if there was reason to doubt the constitutionality of the action, it might wound the credit of the Administration, especially as it might appear to be a total yielding of power to the Secretary of War. He argued that if Armstrong was the person most fit to command then he should be appointed. But he asked:
Does he possess in a prominent degree the public confidence for that trust? Do we not know the fact to be otherwise? That it was with difficulty he was appointed a Brigadier General, & still greater difficulty that he was appointed Secry. at War?

Monroe further argued that on grounds of policy it would not be wise to leave the War Department without someone to direct the general movements and supervise the supplies of every other army.

Finally Monroe argued that Armstrong knew he could not be appointed Lieutenant General, and that only as Secretary of War could he expect to exercise the functions of General. Then he related:

As soon as General Armstrong took charge of the Dept. of War I thought I saw his plan, that is, after he had held it a few days. I saw distinctly that he intended to have no grade in the army which should be competent to a general control of military operations; that he meant to keep the whole in his own hands; that each operation should be distinct and separate, with distinct and separate objects, & of course to be directed by himself, not simply in the outline, but detail. I anticipated mischief from this, because I knew that the movement could not be directed from this place--I did not then anticipate the remedy which he had in view.

Monroe was concerned because his previous actions had backfired and created a potential rival. Originally he had intended to take a military command in the West after General Hull's defeat, but Harrison's appointment by the Kentuckians had caused him to cancel those plans. Monroe had next thought to supplant General Dearborn on the northern front, but Secretary Eustis' resignation forestalled that plan for a while as he had taken the War Department pro tempore. His actions in the War Department appeared to indicate that he still
had plans to assume the military command in the North (see Chapter 1). Monroe did not want to take permanent charge of the War Department because, as he related later to Jefferson, "a man might form a plan of campaign, & write judicious letters on military operations, but still these are nothing but essays." He preferred to be with the army so that he "should have better control over operations & events." 

Consequently Monroe had refused to take the War Department permanently, apparently believing he would then be offered the command on the northern front. He had by relinquishing the position, however, brought Armstrong into it, and he did not relish the prospect of serving in a military position under the new Secretary of War. Armstrong, in a move perhaps calculated to cool Monroe's military ambitions, offered to nominate Monroe as one of the new major generals recently authorized by Congress, but with the understanding that he would serve under General Dearborn. Realizing Madison was not disposed to alter the new Secretary's views, Monroe wrote to the President on February 25, two days before the nominations were submitted to the Senate, requesting that he not be considered for a military appointment.

From that time on, until Armstrong left the Cabinet, the two ministers were antagonistic to each other, disrupting the harmony within the Administration. Madison was faced with the unpleasant alternatives of removing Armstrong and attempting to find a
replacement, or attempting to maintain harmony and arbitrate the differences. The latter alternative was adopted by Madison because, as he pointed out later, he believed "a proper mixture of conciliating confidence and interposing control would render [Armstrong's] objectionable peculiarities less in practice than in prospect."

This hope was disappointed, but even then, he related, "it was thought better to bear with them than to incur anew the difficulty of finding a successor...in the midst of war. This view of the subject continued to prevail till the departure of the Secretary took place."  

Certainly Armstrong was an objectionable member of his Cabinet, and Monroe was a close personal friend, but to his credit, Madison resisted pressures from Monroe, and at least attempted to work with his troublesome Secretary of War. Further friction in the Cabinet became evident in March, 1813, when Armstrong appointed William Duane, the editor of the *Aurora*, as Adjutant General of the Fourth Military District. This appointment was deeply insulting to Albert Gallatin, who had long been an object of attack in the pages of the *Aurora*. Gallatin confided to a friend, "Duane's last appointment has disgusted me so far as to make me desirous of not being any longer associated with those who have appointed him." Gallatin left the Cabinet, and went to Europe on a diplomatic mission in May, 1813. The Duane appointment was one reason for his leaving.
Monroe kept up an active opposition to Armstrong's plans of going to the front, and this included hints to Madison, Gallatin, and Jefferson that he would be available to become head of the Army. This is revealed in his letters, and Armstrong related to Rufus King, in June, 1813, that the project of putting Monroe at the head of the Army had been revived. Armstrong also intimated that the Cabinet had little confidence in Monroe's military knowledge, and that even Gallatin, who had once recommended Monroe, had done so hoping thereby to obtain the office of Secretary of State. Armstrong expressed his own view that Monroe "knew nothing of war & was without experience."

At the same time Monroe was expressing his concern about Armstrong's scheme to become Commander-in-Chief. He wrote to Jefferson at the end of June that Armstrong's plans would "probably take a more decisive form, when things are prepar'd for it." He went on to inform Jefferson that General Dearborn was seriously ill, and General Lewis was doing little. General Hampton was going to the northern front, but he feared to an inactive command. Monroe added that General Wilkinson was expected at the seat of government shortly but did not know to what station he would be assigned. Considering that Armstrong had ordered General Wilkinson to the northern front early in March, no better indication of the lack of communication between the two ministers can be found.
When Wilkinson arrived in Washington the last of July, Monroe took the opportunity of contacting the General, and offered him his advice on the manner of conducting operations on the northern frontier. This highly irregular conduct was done secretly as is indicated in Wilkinson's reply to Monroe. "Your ideas, offensive & defensive," Wilkinson wrote, "are in my Judgement sound." He promised to keep the communication confidential:

"Your confidence is as sound as my Honour which is all I have— I shall speak to you on the subject of your project before I go & with permission will borrow some specific ideas from it, which without permission I will not record even in memory."\textsuperscript{39}

Armstrong went to the northern front in August, 1813. Madison apparently agreed with Gallatin's view that Armstrong's presence might be beneficial, rather than subscribing to Monroe's arguments. Wilkinson reported later that Armstrong told him that he intended to take a station at Albany or Utica, or some place near enough to the army so "he could furnish with promptitude what ever might be necessary."\textsuperscript{40} Had Armstrong confined himself to such a station he might have been able to continue to exert a measure of control over the War Department with an active correspondence. He soon became involved, however, in the affairs of organizing and setting on foot the expedition against Canada, and he did not return to Washington until Christmas day, 1813.\textsuperscript{41} The responsibility of conducting the affairs of the War Department in his absence was taken by the Chief Clerk, Daniel Parker.
It appears that in Armstrong's absence, Monroe attempted to undercut the authority of the Secretary of War, and even to assume some control over the War Department. Madison went to Virginia during the summer, and Parker was instructed to consult the President and Secretary of War when it could be done. In case of emergency, when time could not be lost, Parker was told to consult with Monroe verbally. Monroe, however, soon began receiving and reviewing all the military correspondence of the War Department. When Madison returned in October, Parker informed him of Monroe's actions, and the President asked Parker to tell Monroe to call upon him the next day, presumably to explain his actions. Monroe, however, left the city the next morning, and the angry Madison went personally to the State Department and ordered the correspondence to be brought to him, which he then had sent over to the War Department. Parker described the event at a later period to John Quincy Adams, who recorded in his diary: "He was more in a passion than Parker ever saw him at any other period of his life, and gave it very distinctly to be understood that he thought that Mr. Monroe had been meddling with the affairs of the War Department more than was proper."42

Armstrong undoubtedly learned of this incident when he returned to Washington. He probably was not aware that Monroe was also carrying on a private correspondence with many of the officers in the Army, including General Hampton, who was at least partly
responsible for the fiasco on the northern frontier. After the failure of the campaign, Hampton turned to Monroe to protect his interests because, he related, "an insidious blow is aimed at my reputation."\textsuperscript{43} Hampton undoubtedly referred to Armstrong, and turned to Monroe because he, like many others, was not unaware of the enmity of the Secretary of State and the Secretary of War.

Armstrong's return late in December signalled a period of heating up of the rivalry between the two men. Armstrong was still smarting from the failure of the campaign, which he attributed to incompetent field leadership, and was more convinced than ever that he could bring victory only if the army could be strengthened and the command entrusted to him.\textsuperscript{44} Monroe heard enough in two days from various sources to cause him to write a vigorous and forceful letter to Madison recommending Armstrong's removal. Monroe cited many reasons: Armstrong had been actively seeking support from Congressmen for his plan of conscription; he had been promising promotions and preferment to many officers, teaching them to look to him and exciting resentment against the President; and he had placed many of his tools in the Quartermaster Department throughout the State of New York.\textsuperscript{45}

Monroe further related that he had been able to persuade some Congressmen to drop efforts to investigate by what authority Armstrong exercised his duties on the northern front during the last campaign, because he convinced them it would appear to be an attack upon the President. Monroe continued:
It is painful to me to make this communication to you nor should I do it if I did not most conscientiously believe that man if continued in office will ruin not you and the administration only, but the whole republican party & cause. He has already gone far to do it and it is my opinion, if he is not promptly removed, he will soon accomplish it. Without repeating other objections to him & if the above facts are true none others need be urged, he wants a head fit for his station & indolent except for improper purposes, he is incapable of that combination & activity which the times require. My advice to you therefore is to remove him at once.

Finally Monroe pointed out that there was little to fear politically from such an action. "He has as you well know few friends & some of them cling to him as I suspect either from improper motives or on a presumption that you support him." 46

Madison failed to follow the advice of his Secretary of State. He had already authorized the Secretary of War to pursue his plan of conscription, and he did not feel the other allegations were sufficiently proven to warrant Armstrong's removal. Madison was determined to bear with Armstrong as long as possible. Perhaps Armstrong did not understand Madison's conciliatory disposition toward him, and only viewed it as weakness. There is evidence to indicate that he never believed his position secure, and felt he was an interloper in the Cabinet. Monroe asserted that Armstrong had few friends, and certainly he had none in the Cabinet. 47

Armstrong was at this period engaged in conversations with the Federalists which would have been indeed sufficient grounds for his removal. Rufus King, one of the leading Federalists, reported in a memorandum that Armstrong was "on a poise whether he is to have the
Colonel Joseph Swift, on behalf of Armstrong had contacted the Federalists and held many conversations. The object, according to King, had reference to the next presidency, and that the Virginia dynasty must be broken. King wrote:

Swift said Armstrong was decided to have his just weight in the Cabinet, or to throw up his office; that an understanding with the Federalists in Congress was his wish; that he desired nothing on their part in respect to himself; that he was willing to cooperate agt. Virginia, leaving men and things to take their course when the Presidential Election comes on.  

The Federalists, it appears, were not flattered by Armstrong's advances. They had little reason to trust him, and were convinced he would soon fall from office. King, writing to his friend Gouverneur Morris, said that it was strange that Armstrong should still have ambitions when his plans had already "proved so lamentably deficient...and only to be accounted for by the good opinions he entertains of his own Powers." King felt Armstrong's "scheme for a Lieutenant Generalship" would probably only bring forth General Harrison for that position. He concluded that Armstrong "were he skilled in the Chaldean Dialect, would understand the Mene Tekal written on the Walls of the War Office. He must, I think, go down."

Armstrong also was encouraging, and eventually got a request from Congress for a presidential report on the causes of the failure of the Northern campaign. General Wilkinson reported that Senator Stephen A. Bradley, who called for the report, had been informed by
the Secretary of War that it would be favorable to Wilkinson and would expose General Hampton. The report was presented to Congress on February 2, 1814. Wilkinson later referred to the report as "partial, prejudiced, and garbled." One historian's judgement has been that Armstrong, "by skillful selection exculpated himself and threw the blame impartially on Generals Wilkinson and Hampton, letting each of them strike down the other." Undoubtedly this had been Armstrong's intention, but there is nevertheless, enough material to indicate that he meddled far too much in the affairs of both generals. The letters do show Armstrong as planning all the strategy, and offering sage advice, which he intended. They also show that Armstrong kept himself between the two bitter enemies, Wilkinson and Hampton, until the critical moment when he threw them upon each other, a situation he must have known would fail. Armstrong escaped the brunt of the criticism in Congress, the chief responsibility being placed on the commanding generals, Wilkinson and Hampton. The Federalists, while critical, were nevertheless surprisingly moderate in regard to Armstrong's conduct, perhaps because they hoped to encourage a rift between Armstrong and the Administration. One Federalist stated after reading the report, "whose fault this was seems not to be determined," but, he continued, it proved "how badly every operation was contrived, how wretchedly executed, and the jealousies, feuds, and insubordination of the officers."
Monroe's congressional followers made their move in January to prepare the way for his appointment to the command of the Army. Representative William H. Murfree (N. Car.) introduced a resolution directing the Committee on Military Affairs to inquire into the expediency of empowering the President to appoint "one Lieutenant General". The last campaign, he argued, had been disappointing, and it was a fact that the Secretary of War had been absent for some months from Washington "giving effect to the operations of the campaign." He had assumed the role of commander-in-chief, Murfree claimed, when it was impossible for him "to perform both duties." Murfree did not mention Monroe. Nothing came from the resolution, however, and the motion was tabled.

The idea of a commander-in-chief was not given up. Representative Zebulon R. Shipherd (N.Y.), a Federalist, speaking on the Army bill in February, hinted that the large force was to be "placed at the control, to obey the nod of a single leader. Who that leader will be is not known." Shipherd was confident he would not be "a Washington, a Greene, or a Hamilton." He charged that so far the military operations had been placed in hands of men "who have given you pitiful security of future glory." He warned of the danger of placing an "ambitious and unprincipled" man at the head of the Army. It became obvious he was referring to Armstrong when he continued:

Sir, the man who could wantonly and wickedly attempt to promote sedition among the American troops in the last
war, with the same black and diabolical heart, grown more hard by a repetition of vile intrigue and occult villainy, would not hesitate to seduce from their allegiance the American Army now; and that man still exists in our country, and, much to the disgrace of those who appointed him, in high and responsible office.  

Nothing ever materialized from the intrigues of the two ministers to command.

In the meantime Armstrong was taking action to promote and place in command of the armies, younger men who had proven themselves in the 1813 campaign. He was a good judge of military ability, and his recommendations advanced many young men of unquestioned ability who were to have distinguished careers in the army. One of the main problems of the Army in 1813 was the lack of vigorous leadership in the top commands. At one time or another during the campaign Major Generals Dearborn, Lewis, and Wilkinson had suffered serious illness, and control over the troops in these periods had languished. Armstrong had removed General Dearborn in July after a period of illness, and eventually placed him in a district where active service was unnecessary. Both Generals Wilkinson and Lewis were ill during the descent down the St. Lawrence in November, 1813, and Armstrong wrote to Madison on December 5, that both were too sick to continue in command. Wilkinson subsequently regained his health, but in the spring of 1814, he was relieved from active duty and recommended for a court martial by Armstrong. General Hampton, rather than face a court martial, was allowed to resign. General Lewis was given
command of a quiet district. Thus, somewhat tardily, the old major generals were out of the way, or where vigorous leadership was not a requirement.

On January 21 and February 21, the President sent to the Senate the names of two new major generals and six brigadiers. Appointed as major generals were George Izard and Jacob Brown. The new brigadiers were Alexander Macomb, T. A. Smith, Daniel Bissel, Edmund P. Gaines, Winfield Scott, and Eleazer W. Ripley. These men represented a new generation of military leaders. The average age of the brigadiers, for example, was only thirty-three years. Adding General Jackson, who was appointed in May, the average age of the nine new appointees in the spring of 1814, was thirty-six.

The appointment of many of these younger men over officers senior to them in rank reflected Armstrong’s view that the best men should be advanced without regard to seniority. He stated his philosophy in a letter to Madison: “the service is too important to be trammelled with rules of precedence. Efficient men must be placed without regard to their relative rank.” There were invariably charges that Armstrong was advancing men who were his personal favorites, and was intriguing to build a force which would be under his sway. Wilkinson, for example, charged that Armstrong was promoting his enemies “after he had determined on my ruin.” Among these Wilkinson included Colonel Winfield Scott who had proven himself
to be a very outstanding officer, and whose promotion was well merited. Scott was, in fact, a favorite of President Madison. The Secretary of War, realizing the animosity between Wilkinson and Scott, perhaps recognized that Scott might be used to discredit Wilkinson. But undoubtedly his reason for recommending Scott for promotion was based on his recognized military ability. Another officer, General John Boyd, complained about being passed over, and gained the support of former Secretary of War Eustis and Vice President Elbridge Gerry, who placed pressure on Madison for a predated brevet, but Madison resisted this and other political pressure. In this respect Armstrong was fortunate, and Madison must be given some of the credit for recognizing the merit of these men and for backing his Secretary.

Armstrong, it appears, thought first of building the service, rather than intriguing to fill the Army with his favorites. The caliber of men recommended by him has been generally recognized as very high. Further, it must be remembered that both President Madison and his jealous Secretary of State would have been watchful of such a practice, and further the Senate, no friend of Armstrong, would also have noted any conduct along these lines. Armstrong did attempt to make it appear, occasionally, to the officers promoted that he was the source of their favor, and indeed he was often most responsible for their advancement.
Some uncertainty surrounds the most daring and successful appointment, that of General Jacob Brown to Major General. Henry Adams credits Armstrong with "boldness and judgment" in the appointment of "an officer so inexperienced to the most important command on the frontier." Madison's biographer, however, asserts that Madison was responsible and credits him with making "one of the vital decisions of the war." It is true that Armstrong did in his letter to Madison on December 5, 1813, recommend Generals Izard and Flournoy for the major general positions. The names of Brown and Izard, however, were not sent to the Senate until January 21, more than a month after Armstrong returned to Washington. Madison accepted every other recommendation made by Armstrong for other positions, but it cannot be determined in this case whether Armstrong changed his mind or whether Madison overrode this particular recommendation. Even excepting Brown, the other appointments made in 1814 at Armstrong's recommendation clearly brought into the top commands men of genuine ability, who gave a far better account of American arms. Nor does it alter the judgment made by Henry Adams at least in regard to military leadership that "The energy thus infused by Armstrong into the regular army lasted for half a century."

It became obvious in the spring of 1814, that the President was losing confidence in his Secretary of War. Madison was chiefly responsible for the wide liberties taken by Armstrong, a situation he now sought to correct. Until now Armstrong had been given virtually
a free hand in the conduct of the Department of War. Normally Armstrong submitted his measures for Presidential sanction, but occasionally issued strategic and other operational directives without prior consultation, leaving Madison to learn of them in the newspapers.

Now, however, the forebearing President began to take an active interest in the War Department affairs. The first indications of this change of mood is reflected in his refusal to accept Armstrong's proposals for the campaign of 1814. He insisted on a Cabinet meeting which met on June 7, with the avowed purpose "to decide on the plan of campaign," though the plan adopted was essentially the same as Armstrong had proposed. 72

The reasons for Madison's change of attitude are obscure. He was recovering his health after a series of illnesses, and perhaps this was responsible for his more vigorous mood. It may have been disenchantment with the abilities of the Secretary of War as a result of the failures of the 1813 campaign, or it may have been the result of an accumulation of grievances over the high-handed methods of his Secretary of War. The effect of his renewed health and his resolve must have been exhilarating. Until now many people had believed Madison either too timid to control his secretary or too easily manipulated by him. General Wilkinson stated: "I had long known that the poor President was a nose of wax in his fingers." He also reported, "I am indeed shocked when I take a retrospect of the evidence of the terror in which that minister kept more than one great man at Washington." 73
By May, 1814, Madison was learning just how far Armstrong had
gone in arrogating authority to himself. On May 25, he read in the
*National Intelligencer* that the War Department had published a
register of officers retained when four regiments were consolidated
into two. Writing to Armstrong, he said, "You must have inferred
more from my communications than I could have meant to convey by any-
thing in them on the subject." He pointed out that the power had
been delegated by Congress to the Chief Executive, and Presidential
responsibility could not be satisfied without "weighing well the
whole proceeding."  

At the same time correspondence was passing between the two men
relative to the resignation of General Harrison and the appointment
of General Jackson as a Major General in the regular Army. On May 14,
Armstrong wrote to Madison: "Something ought to be done for Gen.
Jackson," who had performed so well against the Creeks. He suggested
that as the vacancy created by Hampton's resignation could not be
filled until Congress convened, the best course would be to make him
a brigadier and give him a brevet of Major General. Jackson, he
indicated, would be assigned command of the Seventh Military District.
Madison agreed to the proposal on May 17. On May 20, Armstrong wrote
that Harrison had resigned, but failed to enclose the letter or give
any reason for the resignation. On May 24, Madison suggested to Arm-
strong that Harrison's resignation would enable them to send a major
general's commission directly to Jackson. He closed by saying, "I
suspend a final decision, however, till I see you, which will be in 
two or three days after the arrival of this."  

When Madison arrived in Washington on May 30, he found that Armstrong had written to Harrison that his resignation was accepted, and to Jackson that he was appointed to a major general's position. It was becoming obvious to the President that the Secretary of War was going beyond the bounds of propriety, and he decided to conduct an investigation of Armstrong's conduct of the War Department. Shortly after the June 7 Cabinet meeting, he directed Armstrong to send him all correspondence of recent months with Generals Harrison and Jackson, and all since May 1 with Generals Izard, Brown, and Gaines. From these Madison learned perhaps more than he expected. He learned that two days after Armstrong had notified him of Harrison's resignation, the Secretary of War had written to Jackson that no vacancy existed in that rank. On May 28, however, Armstrong wrote to Jackson that since the date of his last letter "Major General Harrison has resigned his commission in the Army; and thus is created a vacancy of that grade, which I hasten to fill with your name." If Armstrong had intended that it appear to Jackson that he was the source of the appointment, Madison noted that Jackson had not construed it as such. His answer acknowledged the appointment "made by the President." 

Similarly, Madison noted some discrepancies in Armstrong's correspondence with Harrison. On May 24, Armstrong notified Harrison
of the receipt of his letter of resignation, and informed him his resignation had been sent to the President, (which was not done). Four days later Armstrong wrote to Harrison, "Your resignation is accepted." The only sanction the President had given was the letter of May 24, which had suspended a final decision until he arrived back in Washington. Armstrong, it appears, was anxious to relieve Harrison, and take the credit for Jackson's appointment before the arrival of the President.

Madison extended the inquiry into August and broadened the scope by asking for the correspondence of the northern generals. At the same time his surveillance of the War Department is indicated by the increased number of directives to the Secretary of War. Some were concerned with such minute details that they might be termed "meddling". Some of his suggestions were sound. On July 27, he wrote to Armstrong that it did not appear that General Izard, the senior officer of the northern district, had been acquainted with the plan of operations under General Brown. In fact, he noted, there did not appear that any correspondence existed between those officers. Madison had touched on one of the problems of the northern front, that is, a lack of concerted operations and cooperation among the separate armies on the front. "It wd. certainly be advantageous," he wrote, "that each shd. be apprized of the instructions and views of the other; as well as of the forces and movements of the Enemy." He further pointed out, "A mutual understanding between commanders on
Lake Champlain & at the head of Lake Ontario thro Washington alone would often lose its effect from delay." A method of sending confidential messages could be worked out, and he suggested using a cypher.

Armstrong replied that Generals Izard and Gaines were fully informed of General Brown's movements; Izard by his letter of June 10, which had been left out of the letter book. Madison noted on Armstrong's letter: "It remains that no instruction to correspond among themselves, appears to have been given or presumed." Further review of the correspondence with Generals Izard, Brown, and Gaines only increased Madison's convictions. Armstrong had ordered General Izard to leave 2000 men at Ogdensburg on the St. Lawrence, and to take 2000 with him to Sackett's Harbor. Izard and his force were to be carried by the navy to the Niagara River and from there they were to march to Buffalo where Izard would assume command on the Niagara peninsula. Madison questioned whether Izard's force at Ogdensburg would not be misapplied because they would be too late to stop the movement of the enemy force and supplies from Montreal. He also wondered if communications with the Navy Department and Sackett's Harbor should not be made to insure coordination. Finally with a note of exasperation he commented:

It becomes more and more evident that without a direct and constant correspondence and understanding, of which no proof is seen, between Izard, Brown and the commanding officer at Sackett's Harbor, (as well as between
them and the naval commander) no system of operations can take place....Plans and movements on the lines must depend on the varying strength and movements of the enemy, which will be known there before they reach Washington; and as the instructions may become inapplicable before they arrive.\textsuperscript{83}

In the meantime Madison found it necessary to rebuke Armstrong for another disturbing practice. After the battle of Lundy's Lane, a number of deserving officers were listed by General Brown for promotion by brevet. The list was released by Armstrong before Madison had signed them. Madison wrote to Armstrong: "The Secretary of War will not in future permit commissions to be filled up in the office until it be ascertained that the appointments are approved." The brevets to General Scott and the other officers, he indicated, were well merited, and no harm was done, but when appointments were not approved there should be no needless disclosure of the fact.\textsuperscript{84}

The accumulation of data gathered by Madison was now quite enough for him to prove conclusively that the Secretary of War had indeed, in many instances, infringed upon the presidential powers in discharging his duties. On August 13, Madison presented a letter of reprimand to Armstrong. He began:

On viewing the course which the proceedings of the War Department have not unfrequently taken, I find that I owe it to my own responsibility, as well as to other considerations, to make some remarks on the relations in which the Head of the Department stands to the President, and to lay down some rules for conducting the business of the Department, which are dictated by the nature of those relations.
Madison pointed out that in cases of high character and importance, in view of the just responsibility of the President, the acts of the War Department should either be prescribed by him or preceded by his sanction. He did not feel this concept had been kept sufficiently in view. He listed a series of violations: regiments had been consolidated without the knowledge or sanction of the President; rules and regulations for the Hospital and Medical Department had been issued without his knowledge, and which the law expressly required the approval of the President; the Secretary had issued a general order prohibiting duels and challenges on pain of dismissal from the Army, a power given only to the Executive, and without his approval; the Secretary had issued important instructions regarding plans and operations, without previous or even subsequent communication with the President; and letters expressly intended for the President had been received and acted on without being previously communicated.

Madison asserted there were many other violations, but he would add only the circumstances of the letter of resignation from General Harrison, the letter of the President to the Secretary of War of May 24, concerning a major general's commission for General Jackson, and Armstrong's conduct in that connection. Madison then laid down ten rules as the course Armstrong would observe in the future. He must submit in advance to the President all orders, commissions, dismissals, consolidations, resignations, instructions to officers
commanding military districts, transfers of General officers from one
district or command to another district or command, and other matters
falling within the area of presidential responsibility.

It was obvious that Armstrong's conduct of his office would be
greatly restricted in the future. Although Armstrong's resignation
had not been called for, it probably would have been accepted if
tendered. Yet he did not offer his resignation, but instead attempted
to adjust himself as best he could to the new circumstances.

Apparently he wanted to hold on to the office, because he was reluctant
to slip back into obscurity. Madison, reluctant to go in search for
another Secretary of War, was too timid to demand Armstrong's resig-
nation.

The "mene tekal" was already written on the walls of the War
Department, however, and within three weeks the train of events
(which will be discussed in another context) was to force Armstrong
out of office. His exit was marked by a fanfare of controversy which
was a fitting climax to such a controversial career.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER III

1. D. R. Williams (House Military Affairs Committee) to Armstrong, February 5, 1813, WD/LR; A.S.P., Mil. Af., I, 330.

2. II Stat. 801.

3. Ogden and Davy declined their appointments.


5. A.S.P., Mil. Af. I, 432. The military districts were established as follows: Massachusetts and New Hampshire, district number one; Rhode Island and Connecticut, number two; New York to the highlands and the section of New Jersey which did not furnish the first division of militia, number three; the rest of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, number four; Maryland and Virginia, number five; the two Carolinas and Georgia, number six; Louisiana, the Mississippi Territory, and Tennessee, number seven; Kentucky and Ohio, and the territories of Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and Missouri, number eight; New York, north of the highlands, and Vermont, number nine.

6. This was the gist of his letter to Eustis, January 2, 1812, when he recommended the establishment of districts for defense. Armstrong, Notices, I, 236-237.

7. Upton, Military Policy, p. 132.

8. Dearborn to Armstrong, February 14, 1813, WD/LR.


10. Wilkinson to Armstrong, December 26, 1813, WD/LR.


12. Flournoy to Armstrong, June 15, 1814, WD/LR.

14. Flournoy had complained bitterly to Armstrong of Piatt's conduct, referring to the Quartermaster as "insolent, presumptuous & disobedient." See Flournoy to Armstrong, April 11, 1814, (with enclosures), WD/LR.


19. Croghan to Harrison, [no date], cited in McAfee, *Late War*, p. 452.


21. Armstrong to Madison, June 18, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.

22. Madison's note on the Secretary of War's letter of June 18, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.


25. Monroe to Madison, February 25, [?1813], Monroe MSS, L.C.


30. Ibid.


34. Gallatin to Nicholson, May 5, 1813, Adams, Gallatin Writings, I, 482.

35. Brant, Madison, Commander-in-Chief, pp. 158-163.

36. Monroe to Madison, February 25, [?] 1813; Monroe to Jefferson June 7, 1813, Hamilton, Monroe Writings, V, 244-250, 263.

37. Rufus King Memorandum, June 27, 1813, King, Correspondence, V, 320.


39. Wilkinson to Monroe, August 8, 1813, Monroe MSS, L.C.


42. Adams, J.Q.A. Memoirs, VI, 3-6. When Monroe took over the War Department in September, 1814, Parker offered to give up his position, and when the offer was accepted, Madison appointed him as the Adjutant and Inspector General, with the rank of Brigadier General. See Parker to Madison, October 29, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.


44. Armstrong had written a letter under the pseudonym of "An Officer of the Army" in the Albany Argus before returning to
Washington, suggesting the creation of a Lieutenant General and hinting that the Secretary of War might be the best qualified. See Brant, Madison, Commander-in-Chief, p. 266.

45. Monroe to Madison, December 27, 1813, Monroe MSS, L.C.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid. Monroe intimated that Secretary of Navy, William Jones, held the same view towards Armstrong.

48. Rufus King Memorandum, January, 1814, King, King Correspondence, V, 370-371.

49. Ibid.


54. Brant, Madison, Commander-in-Chief, 233.


56. Ibid., p. 1521.

57. Ibid., pp. 856-858.

58. Ibid., pp. 1519-1520.

59. Armstrong to Madison, December 5, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.


61. Lewis to Armstrong, June 15, 1814, WD/LR.


64. Armstrong to Madison, December 5, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.


67. Eustis to Gerry, February 14, 1814; Boyd to Gerry, February 22, 1814; Gerry to Madison, March 5, June 11, 1814; Madison MSS, L.C. Boyd did not give up easily, for he convinced Armstrong's brother-in-law General Lewis to recommend him for a brevet major general; see Lewis to Armstrong, July 28, 1814, WD/LR.


70. Armstrong to Madison, December 5, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.


72. Armstrong to Madison, May 1, 1814, War Department, Secretary's Office, Letters to the President from the Secretary of War, National Archives; Madison to Armstrong, May 4, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.; Madison to the Heads of Departments, June 3, 1814, Cong. Ed., *Madison Letters*, III, 403; Cabinet memorandum, June 7, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.


74. Madison to Armstrong, May 25, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.


76. Madison to Armstrong, June 15, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.


78. Ibid., pp. 375-378.

79. Madison to Armstrong, August 10, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.

80. For example, Madison to Armstrong, June 18, June 21, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.

81. Madison to Armstrong, July 27, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.
82. Armstrong to Madison, July 27, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.


84. Madison to Armstrong, August 4, 1814, Ibid., p. 415.

85. Madison to Armstrong, August 13, 1814, Ibid., pp. 417-419.

86. For example, see Armstrong's report, two days after the reprimand, on the consolidation of eight regiments into four. The tone is one of correctness and dignity, Armstrong to Madison, August 15, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.
In a letter to the Secretary of War, William Eustis, on January 2, 1812, John Armstrong gave his views and suggestions on military strategy relative to the Northwest. Armstrong, like nearly everyone else recognized the strategic importance of the lakes, and recommended that no time should be lost in gaining the ascendancy over them. He also recommended employing western men in that area, and mounting them on horseback for the type of warfare in that quarter of the country. These men, he pointed out, should be placed in a good position, within striking distance of the British and Indian settlements. Detroit he felt would be the best position. "Recollect, however," he wrote, "that this position, far from being good, would be positively bad unless your naval means have an ascendancy on Lake Erie." This was because Buffalo, Erie, or Cleveland, or some other place on the lake would have to serve Detroit as its base of supply.  

Armstrong's advice was ignored, however, when the war broke out. General William Hull's expedition to Detroit and his operations from there proved to be untenable, in part because no effort had been made to secure control over Lake Erie. Without that control, as Armstrong
had warned, Hull was too far separated from his source of supply and was forced to surrender.

The failure of the Hull expedition and the fall of Detroit, suddenly made the Americans aware that Canada, far from falling easily as had been confidently expected, would have to be won only after a great effort. The leadership of the effort to regain Detroit and to carry the war into Canada, was entrusted to William Henry Harrison, the Governor of the Indiana Territory and the hero of the Battle of Tippecanoe. Harrison, although not a citizen of Kentucky, was placed in charge of the Kentucky Volunteers in August. This display of confidence by the West prompted President Madison and the Secretary of War Eustis to give Harrison the commission of Brigadier-General, and command of the Northwestern Army.

The humiliation felt after Hull's surrender caused the West to press immediately for another expedition to retake Detroit. The Administration also was anxious to recover some of its lost prestige, and placed almost unlimited means and an army to be composed of ten thousand men at Harrison's disposal. General Harrison, despite some apparent misgivings, undertook to organize a campaign against the British at Detroit. Heavy rains in the autumn, however, precluded the movement of guns, materiel, and provisions towards a staging area at the Maumee Rapids. Confusion, lack of organization of the supply departments, and disease added to the physical difficulties. By the first of December not a troop or a supply wagon had reached the
rapids, despite the carte blanche given Harrison. The expenditure of
government funds mounted.  

Harrison, to his credit, recognized that a successful expedition
was nearly impossible in the winter months, and even if he accomplished
his objective it could hardly be maintained without control of Lake
Erie. To his discredit he refused to give up the expedition, or at
least take the responsibility of recommending that it be terminated
for the winter. Harrison attempted to shift that decision to the
Government. On December 12, 1812, he wrote the Secretary of War:
"I fear that the Expenses of this Army will greatly exceed the cal-
culation of the Government." He informed the Secretary that if the
strait to Canada froze then the object of the campaign could still be
accomplished. If it did not freeze then boats would have to be con-
structed, and the recovery of Detroit could not be accomplished until
late February or perhaps the middle of March. "The Government will
determine," he continued, "whether that object is of sufficient im-
portance to induce them to bear the Expense which will attend the
prosecution of the Campaign at this Season." Harrison went on to
point out that if it were not for some important political reasons
urging the recovery of Detroit, it was his opinion that if a small
portion of the available sums were devoted to obtaining the command
of Lake Erie the wishes of the Government could be accomplished
without difficulty in April and May.
Harrison proceeded to explain the difficulty of maintaining Detroit if it should be taken. Perhaps anticipating possible censure, he stated, "altho' I was always sensible that there were great difficulties to be encountered in the accomplishment of the wishes of the President in relation to the recovery of Detroit...I did not make sufficient allowance for the imbecility and incompetence of the public agents and the Villainy of the Contractors." Harrison made it clear that what he said was not to be construed that he wanted to call off the campaign, though that was undoubtedly his intention. He wrote, "I am still however very far from believing that the original Object is impracticable. I believe on the contrary it can be effected." Harrison indicated that the decision to terminate the campaign should rest with the Administration: "If it would be the determination to disregard expense and to push on the operation of the Army in the manner they have been commenced the President may rely upon the Exertions of the Troops." He added that if the expedition was called off he would place 1500 men at the rapids and distribute an additional 1000 at various posts along the frontier, and with Dragoons and mounted infantry make desultory expeditions against the Indians.

James Monroe, then occupying the War Department temporarily, answered Harrison, and without making a decision, proceeded to shift the responsibility back to Harrison. He admitted the President was
much concerned about the expense, but still considered Detroit and Malden objects of highest importance. They were sensible of the ill consequences that might attend a perserverance of the effort, but from an imperfect knowledge of the situation felt Harrison could best determine if the objects should be reduced.

Harrison answered Monroe on January 4, 1813, and restated his position. He indicated that the wishes of the Government to recover the ground lost had been expressed in such strong terms, and the funds placed at his disposal amounted to a carte blanche, that he had not considered himself authorized to adopt the alternative of delay. He had made allusions to the monstrous expense, but the silence of the Secretary had indicated that the object was considered so important that expense was to be disregarded. The object of his letter of December 12, had been to reach an understanding on the subject. He had explained his objections to making any attempts on Detroit, and he asked the Secretary: "[I] must request you to determine whether it would be proper to advance to Detroit if the openness of the Winter and other causes should in my opinion render an attempt upon Malden improper?" He indicated that at any rate he would continue to forward supplies to the rapids for deposit to support any enterprise that may be undertaken in the spring. "Should our offensive operations be suspended untill that time," he continued, "it is my decided opinion that the most effectual and cheapest
plan will be to obtain the command of the lake. This being once
effected every difficulty will be removed."

Two days later he revealed to Monroe that the weather appeared
"extremely unfavorable". He added: "however reluctant I may be to
abandon hopes...I will submit to the hard necessity and direct my
thoughts towards an economical disposition of the troops for the
winter and an arrangement of supplies calculated for early and vigor­
ous operations in the spring." Harrison gave further hints that the
campaign should be abandoned. He confided to the Government the
fact that, "A suspension of the operations of this army for the
winter without having accomplished the principal object for which it
was embarked is an event which has been looked for by most of the
well informed men who know the character of the country." 

It was obvious that Harrison was willing to end the expedition,
and if his statements are taken as an accurate reflection of his
views, it appears equally obvious that he had little confidence from
the beginning of success. Although he was aware, and even concerned
according to his letters, of the tremendous waste of government funds,
he refused to offer the advice he was in the best position to give,
namely that the expedition should be halted until spring or until
control over the lake was secured. He merely dropped hints, and
attempted to shift the responsibility to the Government.

The Government, it appears, recognized the not obscure hints
as an attempt to shift responsibility, and likewise refused to
terminate the campaign, but hinted that Harrison could if he wished. Monroe's answer to Harrison's letter of January 4, stated: "The President wishes you to attempt nothing in vain or at least without the fairest prospect of success." Thus the issue was still open to Harrison's interpretation. Monroe did point out that a few months delay would be better than the failure of another expedition. He promised that vigorous exertions would be made in the spring to win control of Lake Erie. A few days later Monroe apparently shifted the burden of responsibility to General Harrison. He wrote that he had information of the strait being frozen and that it might provide an opportunity for attack. He added:

It is hoped that the posture of affairs under your Command, is such as to admit of it, and of successful operations also against Detroit. By this however you will not infer it to be the wish of the President that you should undertake any rash enterprize. He reposes entire confidence in your judgment and information with respect to the course most proper to be pursued, and which it is so much more difficult to decide on at this distance.

Harrison found himself in this situation in part because of his own promises. He realized he had to at least make a demonstration for the sake of his own reputation. He also realized that a rash move might also totally destroy his fame. He continued the movement of men and supplies towards the rapids, and perhaps hoped that good fortune might extricate him from his difficulties. He wrote to the Government in the middle of January that circumstances were improving: "I have the most flattering prospects of being able
to advance from the Rapids against the enemy in the first week of February." Harrison probably had in mind a quick thrust against either Detroit or Malden then a rapid march back to the rapids.

The impasse that had been reached between Harrison and the Government as to the objects of the winter campaign, which had been mutually scaled down but not concluded was finally resolved by a blunder of one of Harrison's subordinates which relieved both of the necessity of taking responsibility of terminating the campaign. Brigadier General James Winchester, in violation of orders from Harrison, had sent a detachment from the rapids against a small force of British at Frenchtown on the Raisin River, approximately thirty-five miles northeast of the rapids and only eighteen miles southwest of Malden. Winchester engaged approximately 950 men. They occupied the town, but were surprised by Colonel Procter on January 21, leading a force of from 1200 to 1400 British and Indians which overwhelmed Winchester and his men. Over four hundred Americans lost their lives.

Harrison made it clear that he was not responsible for the disaster. Yet for some reason he kept up the pretense that he still had hopes for obtaining the objects of the campaign. Finally on February 11, 1813, Harrison, blaming bad weather and the disaster at the River Raisin, called off the winter campaign. He added: "until this day I never abandoned the hope of being able to
execute the plan which I had formed." He indicated that he feared he would be censured for having cherished his hopes too long, "that I have sacrificed the public interest in a vain pursuit." In his defense he noted that until a few days before "my calculations of succeeding were supported by the opinion of every General and Field officer in the Army." Harrison thus contradicted his earlier statements and absolved himself of the responsibility for the failure of a fruitless campaign which had wasted millions of dollars.

This was the situation when Armstrong took office. Undoubtedly he was relatively unfamiliar with the situation in the West, and in addition his first task was to give priority to the affairs on the northern frontier. Consequently it was a month after he assumed office until he turned his attention to the Northwestern Army. In that month he was able to read the correspondence that had passed between the War Department and the West. In addition, after the end of the campaign in the West he was plied with information and advice from General Harrison, Governor Isaac Shelby of Kentucky, Governor Return Meigs of Ohio, and Senator Thomas Worthington of Ohio.

General Harrison offered two modes of operation: either an attack around the western end of Lake Erie as early as possible, or to wait the construction of a naval force capable of winning control of the Lake and transporting the troops against Malden. Governor Shelby related his opinion that advancing around the western end of
Lake Erie would not be possible for some time due to the "extensive swamps". He recommended securing command of the Lake. Governor Meigs and Senator Worthington were both concerned about defense along the frontier, and the latter recommended four Companies of Rangers to patrol the frontier.

Finally on March 5, Armstrong wrote to Harrison outlining the General's future conduct and laid down some new rules for him to follow. Armstrong approved ending the campaign, but stated that demonstrations against Malden should not cease because it would keep up the enemy's alarm. The reason, he added, was because "we shall very soon be in motion on the Niagara and the St. Lawrence." Armstrong indicated that Harrison should engage in no offensive measures. "What remains for us to do," he wrote, "is to keep our present ground till the Lake opens, and then to approach our object by water, and under convoy of the Vessels of War building at Presque Isle." He indicated these would be ready to operate by the middle of May, and in the meantime he was having boats built at Cleveland for the transportation of the troops. Armstrong also indicated that the policy on the use of militia was changed. He intimated that so long as the object was the maintenance of the present position, additional calls for militia would be "a very useless expenditure of both public spirit and public money." He informed Harrison that three of the twenty new Regiments recently authorized by Congress would be
assigned to Harrison's force. Two would be raised in Ohio and another in Kentucky.  

Armstrong then proceeded to lay down general rules that Harrison would follow relative to the use of militia. The reason for them, Armstrong stated, was because of the enormous expense previously incurred. Among the rules were: that militia requisitions had to be made by some regular officer; that the method of calling for regiments or brigades be discontinued and instead the numbers and kinds required would be specified; and when enough for a company had been raised they would be mustered. As he later explained the former system ended up with a "superabundance of officers." Armstrong two days later requested Harrison to use his best efforts to promote the filling up of vacant positions in the regular regiments. Also, perhaps anticipating complaints from Harrison, he indicated that there should be no need to make any new drafts from the militia, and if there was a want of force to maintain his position then he should "retire to the frontier settlements and interpose the wilderness between you and the enemy."  

Armstrong had not bothered to explain that the funds at the disposal of the Government were nearly gone. Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin had written the President on March 5, with the information, "We have hardly money enough to last till the end of the month." Gallatin recommended "cutting by the root militia
expenses...[and] reducing the Western expenditure to what is necessary for defensive operations," until control of Lake Erie was gained. Armstrong, on March 7, limited Harrison's agents to twenty thousand dollars per month. He was appalled at the amount of waste that had occurred in the West, and had determined to stop it, or at least bring the waste under control. He wrote to his friend William Duane that he had taken a stand which would bring down upon him many heavy curses. He had limited "Mr. Harrison's" agents to a very small sum per month, and he pointed out that had it been allowed to continue with every man's hand in the public coffers "the game would have been up for want of means, before a single stroke had been made, useful or creditable to our arms." The protests from the West were not long in coming. Harrison wrote on March 17, asserting that the force Armstrong contemplated was too small. He pointed out that even if the regular force could be raised (which he doubted) they would be raw recruits and very little superior to militia by the time they were raised: "My opinion is that not only the regular troops designated in your Letter, but a large auxiliary corps of Militia should be employed." He added: "Amongst the reasons which makes it necessary to employ a large force, I am sorry to mention the dismay and disinclination to the service which appears to prevail in the western country." He concluded by asking, "Why with such a population as the western country
affords should we not have a force that will leave nothing to chance?"  

Governor Shelby wrote the Secretary of War that in his opinion a force of twelve to fifteen thousand was necessary. Shelby also wrote to Harrison that he hoped their pressure would induce the President to authorize a competent force for the campaign. Harrison wrote back to Shelby, "My sentiments upon the subject of the force necessary for the prosecution of the war are precisely similar to yours." He added that the Secretary of War had disapproved a call for militia he had made on Governor Meigs. Harrison expressed concern that he would not have enough troops to garrison the posts along the frontier where he pointed out there was more than half a million dollars of government property.

Harrison's concern over the lack of troops to garrison the posts had been expressed earlier to the Secretary of War, and he now repeated that concern more urgently to the Secretary. He argued that without a strong force all the small forts would fall. "I must confess," he wrote, "that the Idea never occurred to me that the Government would be unwilling to keep in the field at least the semblance of an army of Militia until the regular troops could be raised." He pointed out that the post at the rapids could not be abandoned without sacrificing the artillery and valuable stores there, and therefore he had made a call for fifteen hundred militia from
Kentucky to replace the militia being discharged. He added that he wished he could call for as many more men to cover the posts of Fort Wayne and other posts in that direction.

On March 28, Harrison wrote a private letter to Armstrong expressing his views more fully and frankly. He asserted the western country was much concerned that the Government was planning to employ too small a force. He indicated that he too had little use for militia, and much preferred regulars, but he did not think the numbers contemplated could be raised. He believed that authority to employ volunteer corps of every description ought to be given. "It is decidedly my opinion," he wrote, "that the employment of a large force would not only be most certain, but in the end most economical." He asked again for authority to call out another fifteen hundred men from Kentucky for the protection of Fort Wayne and other western posts. Finally he concluded by warning Armstrong: "I will only add that if any disaster happens to any of the posts for the want of troops to protect them, the popularity of the administration in the western country will receive a shock [from] which it will never recover." 30

Other Western correspondents expressed essentially the same view as expressed by Harrison. All urged the authorization of a large temporary force to protect the western posts and to allay western fears. 31 Armstrong probably expected such an outcry against
his measures, and at any rate did not appear much concerned by what he felt were "artificial alarms." He wrote to Samuel Huntington of Ohio that recruits were being raised, and if successful then there would soon be a regular force "competent to the whole service of offence or defence in your quarter." What was to be most desired, according to Armstrong, was to be "in condition to leave to their civil pursuits the Militia of the Country." 32

Harrison was, nevertheless, deeply concerned and repeated on March 30, his suggestion that the rest of the Kentucky militia be called out for defense. He pointed out that the Virginia and Pennsylvania militia terms would soon expire and they were ready to leave. He feared that in its weakened position the post at the rapids would be attacked. Such were Harrison's fears that he decided finally to act on his own accord. On April 9, he sent a request to Governor Shelby to send him fifteen hundred men as reinforcements. He indicated to the Governor that without the additional force it would be impossible to defend the extensive line of weak posts on the frontier. He asserted that he expected an attack and "not knowing on which of our numerous and vulnerable points the storm is to fall it is necessary upon every military principle that our force should be treble theirs; at present it is inferior." 33 A week later he wrote to Armstrong to explain and defend his actions. "I was sure that my doing so would meet your
approbation," he wrote, "when you should be informed of all the cir-
cumstances that produced such disobedience."\textsuperscript{35}

As Harrison was writing, a letter from Armstrong was on its way to him. Armstrong discounted the probability of an attack. An extract of British forces in that quarter had been received in Wash-
ington and showed that "Col. Proctor is not in condition to carry on any distant or formidable expedition." From the best advice he could receive, it appeared Prevost was willing to hazard the western posts and use Kingston as his line of defense. He concluded by stating:
"My own opinion is that so long as Malden is menaced,...the enemy will be confined to its defence."\textsuperscript{36} A week later, however, Armstrong altered his views based on further reports. He now accepted Harrison's contention that Procter might attack him at Fort Meigs, but he dis-
counted the danger: "He can neither bring into the field nor keep in it more than two thousand effectives."\textsuperscript{37} In a letter to General Lewis Cass on April 28, Armstrong expressed more fully his belief that there was little danger that an attack would be successful. He argued such an attack would be for the purpose of investment and not for an assault. "They will hope to carry the place by intercepting Supplies & reinforcements, & starving out the Garrison." The plan would necessarily fail because Fort Meigs had a strong force for its defense and was abundantly supplied with artillery, ammunition, and articles of subsistence. He further pointed out that the enemy would
have difficulty finding food for themselves. "In this view of the subject," he stated, "I have no fears with regard to Fort Meigs."

Armstrong concluded, somewhat sarcastically, "I cannot but believe that under any circumstance you will be competent to your own defence, & that the spirit and patriotism of the West are not so far exhausted, as to permit two thousand enemies of any kind or color to disturb you either long or materially." 38

On the very day Armstrong wrote Cass, Procter was advancing towards Fort Meigs. On April 30, he began the siege with a force of approximately 2400 regulars, militia, and Indians. Harrison had taken precautions and was prepared to withstand an assault of considerable duration. On May 5, he received reinforcements from General Green Clay leading a force of 1200 Kentucky militia. A stiff battle occurred that day and the American reinforcements, somewhat overeager, walked into a trap. About six hundred men were either killed or captured. The fighting that day, however, was not decisive, and Procter on May 9, seeing no advantage to continuing the siege, returned to Canada. 39

Fortunately for the Americans, Procter's attack came too late to be successful. Had it occurred earlier in April with the post practically without defenders, he would undoubtedly have been successful. Armstrong was correct in his assumptions on the safety of Fort Meigs, but perhaps he did not understand that had it not
been for the exertions of General Harrison another disaster might have befallen the Northwest, and it would have been chiefly Armstrong's responsibility.

In the meantime Armstrong reiterated to Harrison the type of force he meant to give the Northwestern Army. He disagreed with Harrison's contentions that he needed a larger force than contemplated. He pointed out that the enemy had never put in the field more than two thousand men for the defense of Malden. There was therefore no need to have more than the seven thousand authorized, particularly in view of the state of the Treasury. Until the regular force was collected, however, "or at least till time be given for the experiment," Harrison was authorized to call only so many militia as were needed for the defense of the posts on the Miami, and the provisions on Lake Erie. Armstrong apparently was not willing to accept the statements that a regular force could not be raised, and was determined to force Harrison and the West to at least make the effort rather than rely on the easier way of calling out the militia. As for a force adequate for the campaign Armstrong added: "should the recruiting service go on less fortunately in the patriotic states of Kentucky and Ohio than in other parts of the Union, you are in that case, and in that case only, authorized to call out as many militia drafts, as will make good the deficiency." Armstrong concluded his letter by requesting that Harrison provide the War Department with the weekly
and monthly reports as required: "You will readily perceive the necessity for giving this order, when I state that no return of any description from your Division of the Army has ever been received at the Adjutant General's Office."  

The display of petulance by Armstrong was indicative of the low opinion he had of Harrison, and which by now must have been apparent to Harrison. Armstrong had recommended Harrison for promotion to major general, but had done so unwillingly, as he indicated to his friend Duane: "Harrison is an artificial General - but the West and South, were only to be satisfied by his appointment, and our's is, you know, a Government of opinion." Harrison did not personally approve of Armstrong's measures, but he had to accept them. He did nothing to foster them, such as attempting to encourage the recruiting service. His attitude was indicated by his tone of resignation in a letter to Armstrong on April 21, 1813. He acknowledged that Armstrong's plan for future operations was "no doubt the best that could have been devised in the event of the promised naval success and a prosperous issue to the Recruiting business." He added: "My measures will therefore be entirely directed to the prosecution of the campaign in that way." Armstrong was not through limiting the authority of General Harrison. On April 27, he addressed Harrison on the subject of
limiting his funds. He noted that a review of the correspondence between Harrison and the War Department had revealed that after Hull's surrender the Government had given Harrison a carte blanche on the resources of the country, both as to men and money. The state of the Treasury made it inexpedient to continue that authority in its original latitude. Armstrong proceeded to lay down additional rules which would govern the drawing of bills upon the War Department. Generally the rules called for evidence of services rendered and restricted the latitude, as well as to who might draw bills. 43

Two days after this letter to Harrison, Armstrong wrote an amazing letter to William Duane which displays his intolerance of the West and his conceit and self-assurance of the correctness of his policies. It also stated concisely his policies. He began by mentioning the waste of funds generally and then added:

Above all, the people of the West and particularly of Ken­tucky and the territories have systematized this. 1st. Every man is to be on pay. 2d. Their surplus produce is to be pur­chased at three times the peace price. To affect the first, recruiting is to be put down. Harrison has accordingly swept off all the recruiting officers and resorted again to large militia drafts. To accomplish the latter, contractors are to be set aside, and field purveyors appointed to give any price that may be asked. To have finished the campaign in twelve months could not therefore, have been prudent. The war is a good thing, and is to be nursed. I have determined to break down this system—to give Mr. Harrison not an Army, but a Division—to cut short his expenditures, by embarking him at the foot of the rapids, and carrying him directly to Malden. At this the men of the West—the best blood of Kentucky begins to kick. They have so long governed the Governor, that they now think they have that authority jure divino. Governor Shelby says fifteen
thousand men are little eno' for the campaign, and that they must be mounted like Asiatics, and to do what? To take a work defended on three sides by pickets! To fight an enemy, not more than two thousand, of all colors and kinds! The Aurora ought to open its batteries upon these abuses. The best form would be, letters from the West.44

Armstrong alluded to the fact that Harrison had interfered with the raising of recruits. He had reference to an order from Harrison early in April to Brigadier General Duncan McArthur to report to Fort Meigs to assist in its defense. McArthur along with Brigadier General Lewis Cass had been assigned recruiting duty in Ohio and charged with the task of raising two of the new regiments which were assigned to the Northwestern Army (the Twenty-Sixth and Twenty-Seventh). A third regiment (the Twenty-Eighth) was to be raised in Kentucky, and Colonel Thomas D. Owings was assigned the recruiting duty. The recruiting service was slow to be organized and enlistments were lagging when Harrison gave his order to McArthur. Protests were quickly made to Armstrong, not only from McArthur and Cass, but also from Governor Meigs and Senator Worthington. All agreed that the order would deal a blow to the recruiting service. Armstrong quickly delivered a reprimand to Harrison. He noted that Harrison had twice detached officers from duties they had been specifically assigned by the War Department. General McArthur's business had been entirely suspended and his funds deposited in a bank. Henceforth, Armstrong added, no General Officer commanding a District could take an officer from duties assigned him by the War
Department. Harrison in reply stated that considering the circumstances which prompted him to give the orders he did not feel the rebuke merited. Enlistments did not meet Armstrong's expectations, and lagged considerably. Colonel Owings in Kentucky noted that he was hurt by the efforts of Colonel Richard M. Johnson who had been authorized to raise a regiment of mounted volunteers by Armstrong. Colonel Owings noted that Kentuckians were partial to the cavalry service. General Cass was more optimistic. He wrote in the middle of April that "There is every probability, that the Regiments assigned to this state will be enabled to raise the greater part of their number within a short period." He did admit that the lack of arms, ammunition, and camp equipage hurt recruiting somewhat. Owings wrote early in May that recruiting was going a little better, but also noted that a lack of clothing, arms, and equipment was hampering his recruiting.

Some progress was made, however, as Cass noted to Armstrong early in May: "I think without overrating our success that by the beginning of June two thirds of the force allotted to this state will be ready to move." Harrison notified Armstrong late in May that over 700 men had enlisted in Colonel Owings' Regiment. On June 16, 1813, Cass reported that 700 men had been raised for his Regiment. On June 30, McArthur wrote that his force amounted to only 300 men, and he was convinced that not more than 500 could be
raised. Adding these recruits to the number of regulars of the Seventeenth and Nineteenth Regiments already with Harrison, but vastly understrength, and those of the Twenty-Fourth Regiment marching from Illinois, Harrison by the middle of July could count on no more than 3000 regulars. This was considerably less than the 7000 authorized. It was obvious that Armstrong's "experiment" to rely upon regulars rather than militia had failed. Armstrong now had to accept Harrison's suggestions for militia calls. He undoubtedly attributed the failure to fill up the ranks to ill-will and the lack of effort on the part of Harrison and the other Westerners, but in truth Harrison had already pointed out the chief reason, namely a disinclination for infantry service in the regular Army by Westerners.

One interesting group, which was authorized to assist the 7000 regulars, was a regiment of mounted Volunteers to be led by Congressman Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky. On February 26, 1813, Armstrong wrote to Johnson authorizing him to organize and hold his Regiment in readiness. They were to serve for four months upon being called into service and six months if required for service by the United States. Armstrong apparently viewed the force as a means to provide defense along the frontier, but Johnson was not happy with such a function and advocated use of the force only for offensive measures. That was the intent of his letter to the Secretary of War on April 13, and he also indicated that he had informed General Harrison of his views on the subject. He added that his troops would
be ready to take the field by May 10. Governor Shelby questioned the legality of such a position for Johnson, and noted to Harrison that the state constitution of Kentucky forbade the appointment of Congressmen to positions of trust or profit, and the Federal Constitution was equally cautious. Nothing further, however, was said on the subject.

Armstrong persisted in his idea to use Johnson's troops for frontier defense. As a result of the appeals from Governor Ninian Edwards of the Illinois Territory, Armstrong suggested to him that perhaps Colonel Johnson's Regiment might be used if General Harrison could dispense with their services on his own line of forts. Armstrong then wrote to Johnson explaining that his force probably would not be needed for offensive measures, but he would authorize Harrison to employ the force for defense of the Territorial Governments if he thought it necessary. Harrison was duly informed. Armstrong noted that the frontier settlements of the Territories were in a state of great excitement, and asked if Harrison thought there would be sufficient reason to send Colonel Johnson's Regiment for their defense. He gave as his opinion that he did not believe the enemy would undertake any actions in that direction.

Harrison agreed with Armstrong that there was little danger of major attacks in that area. Later that same day, May 18, he wrote that he had learned Colonel Johnson's Regiment had been called
out, apparently because of news of the attack on Fort Meigs. He indicated that he had sent word to Governor Shelby to dismiss them. Johnson in the meantime had written to inform Armstrong of his actions. The call of public danger, the strong impression of public sentiment, and the advice of Governor Shelby had led him to call out his troops. He asked for Armstrong's approval. Johnson and his troops met the person bearing Harrison's letter of their dismissal at Cincinnati. After consultation they decided not to disband, for they felt if they did they "could never again be brought into the field." Harrison decided to accept them into service, and wrote Armstrong he was sending them to the frontier for defense. He suggested that he might use them a little later to attack Detroit or Brownstown.

Johnson and his troops made one expedition of approximately 180 miles in six days towards the mouth of the St. Joseph River on Lake Michigan. Few Indians were encountered. In the meantime he and Harrison were contemplating using the force for a quick thrust towards Detroit and Brownstown. Harrison asked Armstrong if the Government would permit such an expedition, and then he gave Johnson tentative approval for the project. Before Armstrong received notice of this project, however, he reacted to the continued urging of Governor Edwards and General Howard, and directed Harrison to order Johnson's Regiment to Kaskaskia and report to General Howard.
This letter for some unknown reason, but perhaps because of Harrison's frequent movements, was delayed over a month in reaching its destination. In that period General Green Clay, fearing an attack on Fort Meigs, had ordered Johnson's Regiment there. Johnson began making plans to join Harrison on his expedition to Canada. He wrote to Harrison, "To be ready to move with you, to Detroit and Canada, against the enemies of our country, is the first wish of our hearts." It was at this juncture that Armstrong's delayed letter reached Harrison, who immediately dispatched an express to Colonel Johnson ordering him to the frontier. Johnson objected to the order and pointed out to Harrison that it would take at least ten days to prepare for the move, and by the time he arrived at Kaskaskia his term of service would be nearly over. He felt the Regiment should remain with Harrison, and that it might be useful in the campaign against Detroit. Harrison, nevertheless, insisted that Johnson begin his march. Armstrong, upon learning of the situation, quickly replied to Harrison, "I regret that the Letter ordering Col. Johnson Westward ever reached you." He added that he had since been informed the alarms were without foundation. He asked if it was too late to call back Johnson's force. If not they could be employed by Harrison in making demonstrations by land while he went by water. Thus a very important force, which was to be a key factor in Harrison's Army, was added to his invasion force.
In preparing for the movement Harrison learned that he had overestimated the amount of rations available, and in August he demanded that the two contractors, Benjamin Orr and Aaron Greeley have ready at Cleveland 200,000 rations of pork. Orr and Greeley had been appointed the contractors by Armstrong for the period of June 1, 1813, to May 31, 1814, but from the very beginning Harrison had ignored them, and refused to allow them to issue at any post where there were already public provisions. He also used special commissaries to purchase whatever component parts of rations were lacking. When Greeley made the deposits on the lake as Harrison ordered, the General decided that they should be furnished at Detroit. The contractor refused to transport them across the lake without extra compensation. Harrison, who had experienced difficulties with other contractors earlier, decided to do without them and again relied heavily on special commissaries for rations. He was apparently convinced that it was cheaper and quicker to rely upon them. During the year Orr and Greeley were the contractors, special commissaries acting under Harrison's orders spent $182,954.26 for food for the Army. Thus the supply of rations was hardly a problem for Harrison, and his troubles with these two contractors appear to have been largely his own making. One authority on supply in the War of 1812, in fact attributed the problems to "the obstinacy and stupidity of one officer, William Henry Harrison." Harrison's conduct was later
the subject of inquiry by the House of Representatives, and the finding as announced by Congressman Richard M. Johnson was that he did not improperly interfere with the rights of the contractors.77

The strategy for the coming campaign had been based on the assumption that control over Lake Erie would be gained, and the expedition would be made by water. The other alternative of a land march around the head of the lake, as Harrison pointed out, would take more men but would have accomplished the object sooner. Armstrong had vetoed the idea of a land march, and directed that Harrison hold his ground while control over the lake was won.78 Harrison, while he did not disagree with Armstrong's plan, did offer two sensible objections. First he objected to using Cleveland as the point of rendezvous for the troops and the principal depot. He argued that Fort Meigs would be a much more satisfactory point. The second objection was that if control over the lake was not won it would be difficult "to get again upon the proper track for making the attack round the Head of the Lake."79 He repeated his fear, in a private letter a little later, that control of the lake might not be obtained. "What will be our situation," he asked Armstrong, "unless we are prepared to take the other course?"

Armstrong interpreted Harrison's concern as a ruse to get more troops assigned to his command. He wrote a private letter to Governor Meigs of Ohio asking the assistance of the Governor to counter the
views Harrison was expressing in favor of a land march. He presented his objections to the land march: it would be very expensive; require a very large force; allow the enemy to choose the time and place for battle; and a six week march through forests would work to the advantage of the Indians. The sea route, however, would carry them directly to the object "unimpaired by battle, hunger, or fatigue," and neutralize the Indian danger. He closed: "Your Excellency will best know how, and to whom to communicate these views." He answered Harrison at length on April 3. He began, "I hasten to repeat to you the views of the President in relation to the next campaign." As to control of the lakes he stated, "we have the fullest assurance that by the 1st day of June it will be accomplished." That being assured there could be no doubt which route was best: "The former [by water] will be easy, safe, and economical, the latter difficult, dangerous, and enormously expensive." If command of the lake was not gained then the question would arise whether the campaign would take an offensive or defensive character, but at any rate there was no necessity of having more than the seven thousand authorized. The enemy force had never amounted to more than two thousand men.

Harrison indicated that if naval success was assured then Armstrong's plan of campaign was "no doubt the best that could have been devised." He continued by again stating his objection to using
Cleveland as the main depot and embarkation point. The rapids or Sandusky, he argued, would be "ininitely preferable". He concluded, "I will thank you to inform me whether any alteration will be made, in this respect as soon as convenient, as it will govern me in the orders to be given for the march of the 24th Regt.." Armstrong apparently had been misunderstood by Harrison. In his letter to Duane Armstrong had mentioned embarking Harrison "at the foot of the rapids, and carrying him directly to Malden." He now hastened to explain to Harrison:

I never meant that you or your Artillery or stores for the campaign now collected at Fort Meigs should be brought back to Cleveland for the embarkation. My intention was that the Boats built there should move along the coast in the wake of the fleet to Sandusky or to the very foot of the Rapids, if that were practicable and expedient, taking in on the route what was wanted.

Armstrong further indicated that the boats then being built in Cleveland under the direction of Major Thomas S. Jessup were strong and high sided and very competent for the navigation of Lake Erie, particularly between the chain of islands and the west shore. Shortly thereafter, in answer to Harrison, he indicated that Harrison could give any rendezvous point he wished to the Twenty-Fourth Regiment. He added that Harrison could assemble the other regiments where he thought most advisable, but the arrangement adopted should attempt to mask the real design and lead the enemy to believe the march would be by land.
All of Armstrong's assumptions for the plan of campaign for the Northwestern Army appear to have been predicated on the belief that winning command of Lake Erie would be a simple task. He likewise must have viewed it as his task to cut back on the heavy expenditure of the West and reduce the Army to only what was necessary to carry the object. Thus he could make such an extraordinary statement as he did to Lewis Cass late in April: "If by the 1st of June you are not ready to embark, we must endeavour to supply the defect by sending another Division of the Army from the town of Erie to reduce Malden." With such views it is not difficult to understand why he could restrict militia calls and ignore the concern of many Westerners over the small force. He simply did not feel they were necessary. Nevertheless, had control over the lake not been won, (and contrary to Armstrong's assumptions it was by no means assured), public opinion would have demanded a land expedition. This would have necessitated the organization and raising of men and supplies on a large and expensive scale such as had occurred the preceding fall. Harrison was undoubtedly correct in his view that such a contingency should have been considered. Fortunately such a contingency did not occur.

Work on the ships that would become the American navy on Lake Erie had begun after Hull's surrender. In March, 1813, Lieutenant Oliver H. Perry arrived to take command at Presque Isle (Erie, Pennsylvania), where the ships were being constructed. With great exertion and some luck, he managed to get his four ships built at Presque Isle,
and the five vessels from Black Rock on the Niagara River, joined early in August without British interference. Perry had his fleet, but he had a serious shortage of seamen. Armstrong had apprised Harrison of this fact in the middle of July. Harrison had little knowledge of the status of Perry's preparations, but he urged a "speedy issue" for a contest for naval superiority on the lake.

The failure to raise the expected number of regulars, as previously noted, had forced Armstrong to modify his position towards the use of militia for the Canadian expedition. Harrison was informed the deficiency in the regular troops was to be made up in militia. On July 20, Harrison wrote Governor Shelby and called for up to two thousand men. He also suggested that Shelby, if he desired, might lead them and "be the guiding Head and I the hand." Procter and the British again laid siege to Fort Meigs beginning on July 21, but as Harrison reported to Armstrong, Fort Meigs was "in every respect in a better situation for defence than it was when besieged before." The siege was ineffective and was lifted on July 28. Procter and his force then proceeded toward Lower Sandusky. Harrison informed Armstrong he considered the position untenable, but there was nothing of value there and he had ordered the post to be abandoned. The post, Fort Stephenson, was not abandoned. Instead Major George Croghan persuaded Harrison to allow him to stay, and on August 2, Croghan and his force of about 200 men
withstood the assault from the British and Indians. Procter then gave up his offensive and returned to Fort Malden.  

Governor Shelby meanwhile was busily engaged in raising a force for the expedition. He informed Harrison he would personally lead them. Harrison also made a call upon Governor Meigs for two regiments of militia and repeated the same offer made to Governor Shelby that he might also take the field to lead the Ohio militia. Harrison informed Secretary Armstrong that it would require at least 4000 militia to make up the compliment of 7000 intended for the expedition into Canada. He also indicated a concern over reports that Perry had only about half the proper number of good seamen.

Armstrong, it appears, loosened the controls over Harrison, probably because of his involvement in preparation for going to the northern frontier. His concerns apparently were oriented towards that quarter, and his interest in western events lapsed considerably in this period. He wrote Harrison only one letter in August, and it was not marked with much evidence of serious thought. In essence he viewed the second attack on Fort Meigs as an attempt by Procter to save Fort Malden. He asserted Harrison's "true policy" would then be to "Go directly to Malden, and leave Mr. Procter to amuse himself with Fort Meigs."

For the next six weeks Armstrong manifested no interest in the events in the Northwest. Harrison was left on his own in the conduct
of the expedition. To meet the shortage of seamen Harrison provided Perry some of his own men, and with their assistance Perry met the enemy on September 10, 1813, and won a complete victory, thus opening the way for the enterprise against Canada.\textsuperscript{97}

With the arrival of General Cass' recruits and Governor Shelby's force Harrison was now ready to move against Fort Malden. Before leaving, Harrison wrote to Armstrong who was at Sackett's Harbor, and informed him of his plans. After driving the enemy from Malden and Detroit, he indicated he would send a detachment to reduce Mackinac and St. Joseph's. After clearing the upper provinces of the enemy, he and his army could cooperate with Wilkinson and his army. Armstrong responded and directed Harrison after reducing Malden to carry his main force down the lake, and approach the British force under DeRottenberg from the rear. This would compel the British to retire from their position before Fort George. He added that this movement would be much more important than pursuing the Indians into their "woody and distant recesses."

On September 27, 1813, Perry's ships and the open boats constructed at Cleveland carried a force of approximately 4500 men to a point about three miles below the town of Amherstburg. The British had already abandoned the town and Fort Malden. Harrison informed Armstrong of the landing and promised to pursue the enemy, but added "there is no probability of overtaking him as he has upwards of 1000
horses and we have not one in the army."^®^ Colonel Johnson's
mounted Regiment, which had gone around by land, however, arrived in
Detroit on September 30. They joined Harrison, and the pursuit began
in earnest on October 2. On October 5, they caught the British, and
at the Battle of the Thames, fought mostly by Johnson's Regiment, the
Americans won a complete victory.

Harrison returned to Detroit on October 9. The Kentucky militia
left for home on October 13. Harrison was still determined to make
an expedition against Mackinac, and reported that even without the
militia he would have a sufficient force of about 2500 regulars. Bad
weather and the lack of supplies, however, forced him to cancel his
plans. He had apparently never received Armstrong's letter of
September 22, which had directed his movement to Fort George, for he
wrote, "I have received no instructions from the war office for
several months and I am at a loss to know what is expected from
me."^102

On October 20, Armstrong advised Harrison the enemy had given
up their positions before Fort George, and had marched to Burlington
Bay. Harrison had in the meantime decided to move part of his force
to Buffalo. With about 1300 men he and General McArthur arrived at
Buffalo on October 24. Armstrong acknowledged the movement and
urged Harrison to attack the British at Burlington Bay if possible.
"The capture of this," he added, "would be a glorious finale to your
campaign."^103
On November 3, however, Armstrong directed Harrison to send the regulars to Sackett's Harbor for the defense of that post. He added that he would write Commodore Chauncey about transporting McArthur's troops. He closed by stating, "It is not intended by these instructions to prevent either you or General McArthur from visiting your families or from going directly to them, if you so desire, from Fort George." Armstrong thus was ordering the removal of the regulars which would have the effect of making Harrison rely upon the recently raised New York militia for an attack upon the British. He also hinted that Harrison could terminate the campaign and return to his district. Harrison, even before receiving Armstrong's letter was doubtful that he could make a successful attack even with his regulars. After receiving the letter Harrison protested that the removal of the regulars would leave Fort George practically defenseless, and suggested the order might be countermanded. He also indicated he would like to return to the Eighth Military District as soon as possible.

When no order came countermanding McArthur's move, Harrison, calling the British position "one of the strongest in America," cancelled any plans for offensive operations. On that same day, November 14, Armstrong was writing to Madison that Harrison was preparing an attack on the British. He added: "The Gen. cannot be charged with underrating the force of his enemy. He makes it to amount to 2000 men. It may be half that number, including militia
Probably Armstrong did not expect Harrison to make any attack, in fact his removal of the regulars indicated he was more concerned with the defense of Sackett's Harbor than allowing Harrison to engage in any offensive operations. The letter to Madison undoubtedly was intended to shift the burden of terminating offensive operations in that quarter upon Harrison. Armstrong probably recognized there was little likelihood any successful attack could have been made anyhow.

Thus the campaign of 1813 terminated. The close of the campaign was marked by some of the features which had distinguished the relations between the two men throughout the year. Harrison was somewhat overcautious, and Armstrong, who was disdainful of Harrison's abilities, interpreted his caution as confirmation of lack of ability. Armstrong believed that Harrison's insistence on a large force was entirely unnecessary and wasteful. Harrison on the other hand viewed the Secretary's interference and restrictions as potentially dangerous. Neither were entirely wrong. Armstrong, because of his preconceptions, was most at fault for the misunderstandings that arose.

Harrison, perhaps hoping to clear up some of the misunderstandings, asked for an interview with Armstrong before he returned to the West. They met for the first time at Albany, but the interview was unproductive of any mutual understanding.
his way to Washington took an opportunity to make an oblique criticism of Armstrong's scheme of conscription. At a public dinner held in his honor in Philadelphia, he volunteered a toast. He began by stating: "a sentiment is gaining ground unfriendly to republicanism and injurious to the nation, and knowing from my own experience, that the sentiment is not well founded," and then offered a toast to the militia of the United States. Such a statement is evidence of the growing animosity between the two men.

Before leaving for the West, Harrison inquired about the policies which the War Department wished to follow in regard to his district. He recommended the Indians be placed at ease with regard to their boundaries. He added that titles could be extinguished after the war very easily. Armstrong had travelled back to Washington in the company of Colonel Joseph G. Swift, head of the Army Engineer Corps, who revealed in his diary that the Secretary expressed "strong views of the future operations on the frontier." These "strong views" were expressed in his answer to Harrison's letter on December 29, 1813. He began by stating his belief that the enemy would attempt to reestablish himself in the West. He expected the British to use the settlements along the Thames to reestablish their communications and control over the Indians. To preclude the use of these settlements as their base, the cheapest and surest method would be to convert them into a desert. Armstrong agreed the Indians
should be conciliated and assured of their boundaries, and with their friendship they should be let loose against the British frontier. The example of the enemy justified this mode of warfare. "All the horrors brought to our firesides," he wrote, "ought to be carried to theirs." 111

Various individuals in the West, including Generals McArthur and Cass, had recommended using Indians and even destroying disaffected settlements, but Armstrong's policy was considerably harsher. 112 Armstrong possibly was influenced by Governor Tompkins who recommended such a measure with prior "notice to the inhabitants." Three days after his letter, however, he wrote Harrison that the President thought the measure too harsh. Instead he was to make prisoners of male British settlers who might be disposed to do harm. 114

The mutual animosity between Harrison and Armstrong grew. Armstrong virtually ignored Harrison who resented the Secretary's correspondence with his subordinates. Harrison for some reason was never informed of the understanding between Armstrong and General Howard that the latter was to receive his orders direct from the War Department. When Harrison objected to Armstrong's countermanding of an order given by him, the Secretary brushed off the objection by stating the Government had the right to dispose of the officers of the Army as they thought best. When Armstrong again bypassed him by delivering an order directly to a subordinate, Major
A. H. Holmes, Harrison for this and an accumulation of reasons, submitted his resignation on May 11, 1814. 

Possibly Harrison intended that his letter of resignation might not be accepted by the President, and instead might bring about a readjustment in the authority of the Secretary of War over his military district. The letter of resignation mentioned that malicious insinuations had been made against him in Washington. Madison did not see this letter nor another dated the same day addressed to the President until after Armstrong had accepted Harrison's resignation. Armstrong had not bothered to forward them to the President in Virginia. 

Harrison's letter to the President indicated that he did not feel he could, under the circumstances, render the government any further important service in his position. Undoubtedly, from the tone of the letters, a friendly letter from the President might have kept the General in the Army. Also received too late to affect the situation was a letter from Governor Shelby which in addition to recommending Harrison for command of the army in the North, stated that if "any arrangement should take place in the war department, which may produce the resignation of general Harrison, it will be a misfortune which our country will have cause to lament." It can hardly be doubted that Armstrong considered it his good fortune to have the opportunity to act upon Harrison's resignation without the necessity of attempting to placate the General, which might have been
the case had Madison been available to read these letters. Once the action was taken, however, Madison did not attempt to alter what had occurred.

The West did not figure prominently in Armstrong's plans for the campaign of 1814. He changed his opinion that the British would attempt to reestablish themselves on the Thames and regain control over the Indians. He expressed this view in his letter of April 30, to the President outlining his plans for the campaign. He questioned the order given by the Navy Department to engage part of the flotilla to scour the upper Lakes, and the project to capture St. Joseph on Lake Michigan and recapture Michilimackinac on Lake Huron. He believed the fleet might be better employed in transporting troops eastward, and he stated, "take Mackinaw, and what is gained but Mackinaw itself?" Madison answered that Michilimackinac might still remain a source of British influence and intrigue, and perhaps sufficient naval means could be found to transport troops eastward without interfering with the Huron expedition. Armstrong eventually accepted the plan for the expedition. The remainder of the fleet was to carry General Duncan McArthur, who replaced Harrison as commander of the Eighth Military District, and two thousand men to Buffalo to cooperate with General Brown. The Huron expedition was to have been commanded by Major Holmes, but Harrison and Lieutenant Colonel Croghan objected to the manner of
the order from the Secretary of War. Eventually Armstrong authorized Croghan to assemble a larger force and command the expedition. The assault against Fort Michilimackinac late in July failed, and Croghan eventually led his force back to Detroit. 120

McArthur in the meantime was having a difficult time organizing his expedition. Much of the information given to Harrison before his resignation had not been passed on to McArthur. He wrote to Armstrong in the middle of June that he was "almost entirely destitute of information and instructions relative to the affairs of the district." He indicated that if he knew the views of the Government he might promote them. 121 The problems arising in his new position and the "deranged state of my private business and indisposition of my family", prompted him to offer his resignation, but Armstrong persuaded him to delay until the campaign was over. 122 Finally McArthur got his force ready to move late in July. By this time, however, the situation had changed considerably. The battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane had been fought, and Brown's force had recrossed the Niagara back to the American side.

McArthur was concerned that his movement to join Brown was too late, and that in the meantime the British might cross over to Detroit while Croghan and the fleet were away and reestablish their control. Before leaving to join Brown he informed Armstrong he had called for
1000 men from Kentucky and 500 from Ohio to march to Detroit immediately.\textsuperscript{123} On August 8, 1814, after joining Brown, McArthur wrote Armstrong that Brown agreed Detroit should be reinforced. McArthur added that he would do his best to strengthen and maintain Detroit.\textsuperscript{124} The fears eventually proved groundless. Armstrong, though not much concerned about a major attack on Detroit, was concerned about the continual unrest on the frontier. He wrote that the only efficient way of keeping the frontier quiet was to sweep the British settlements along the Thames with five thousand mounted men and Indians. If the war continued, he argued, that measure must be adopted. "It was my plan for the present Campaign", he added, "but was thought a policy of too much severity."\textsuperscript{125} That was Armstrong's last official letter dealing with western affairs.

It is perhaps fortunate that the West did not have to engage in a major campaign in their area in 1814. That section which had so staunchly urged war had, nevertheless, showed a marked disinclination for service in the regular Army. Instead the people of the West preferred the temporary duty of the militia, and the only laudable characteristic of this group was their zeal. Armstrong's insistence that a regular army be created in the West, ran counter to an ingrained prejudice against such service, and thus large militia calls were resorted to in order to fight the 1813 campaign. McArthur was barely able to raise a thousand regulars in 1814.
Undoubtedly had a major attack been launched in the West in 1814 there would have been difficulty even in raising sufficient militia. McArthur's call for militia in July, 1814, met with unenthusiastic response, and a proposed expedition of a thousand men to raid along the frontier was called off because of a lack of men. In part this was due to the fact that the War Department had failed to pay many of the militia who had served in the 1813 campaign. 126

Much of the dissatisfaction of the West was of course directly related to Armstrong's actions. Throughout the 1813 campaign he had manifested no admiration for the West or their leader, William Henry Harrison. Most westerners believed the force Armstrong contemplated for the expedition to Canada was too small. His restrictions on Harrison, and Harrison's discontent with such regulations became widely known. Harrison's resignation, at a later period, was widely resented in the West and added to their dissatisfaction with the way the Administration was running the war. Lewis Cass probably expressed the prevailing view of the westerners in a letter to James Monroe congratulating him for taking over the War Department. He wrote, "Had such an arrangement taken place at an earlier period and been continued till this I am confident the progress of the war would have been fortunate and its termination glorious." 127
NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV


2. Adams, History, VII, Chapter 4; Harry L. Coles, The War of 1812, (Chicago, 1965), Chapter 4; Alec R. Gilpin, The War of 1812 in the Old Northwest, Chapter 7; Robert B. McAfee, History of the Late War in the Western Country, (Bowling Green, Ohio, 1919), Chapter 3.

3. Harrison to Secretary of War, December 12, 1812, Logan Esarey, ed., Messages and Letters of William Henry Harrison, II, 240-244.

4. Ibid.

5. Monroe to Harrison, December 26, 1812, Ibid., pp. 265-269.


8. Monroe to Harrison, January 17, 1813, Ibid., pp. 312-313.


16. Shelby to Armstrong, February 21, 1813, WD/LR.
17. Governor Meigs to Armstrong, February 22, 1813; Senator Worthington to Armstrong, February 22, 1813, WD/LR.

18. Armstrong to Harrison, March 5, 1813, Esarey, II, 379-380. See also Armstrong to Captain Thomas S. Jessup, March 9, 1813, relative to building boats at Cleveland for transporting troops, WD/LS, Book 6, p. 310.

19. Ibid.; Armstrong to Harrison, May 4, 1813, Ibid., pp. 430-431. Part of the reason for the new rules was undoubtedly the advice on the heavy militia disbursements from the Accountant, William Simmons, February 25, 1813, WD/LR.


21. Gallatin to Madison, March 5, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.

22. Armstrong to Harrison, March 17, 1813, Esarey, II, 386.


25. Shelby to Armstrong, March 20, 1813, WD/LR.


27. Harrison to Shelby, March, [?] 1813, Ibid., pp. 341-342.


29. Harrison to Armstrong, March 27, 1813, Ibid., pp. 400-404.


31. Richard M. Johnson to Armstrong, March 31, 1813; Duncan McArthur to Armstrong, March 30, 1813; Thomas Worthington to Armstrong, March 31, 1813, WD/LR.

32. Armstrong to Huntington, April 1, 1813, WD/LS, Book 6, pp. 343-344.

33. Harrison to Armstrong, March 30, 1813, Esarey, II, 408-409. Governor Shelby wrote Harrison on April 4, that hardly a man
from Kentucky would volunteer to meet the enemy if there were not sufficient numbers to insure success, *Ibid.*, p. 415.


36. Armstrong to Harrison, April 11, 1813, WD/LS.

37. Armstrong to Harrison, April 18, 1813, Esarey, II, 421.

38. Armstrong to Cass, April 28, 1813, WD/LS.


42. Harrison to Armstrong, April 21, 1813, Esarey, II, 424-425.


45. McArthur to Armstrong, April 3, 1813, WD/LR.

46. A joint letter from Cass and McArthur, March 31, 1813, indicates some of the recruiting problems. See also Worthington to Armstrong, April 10, 1813; Meigs to Armstrong, April 11, 1813, WD/LR. Cass and McArthur were not actually given their appointments until April 7, 1813.

47. Armstrong to Harrison, April 11, 1813, WD/LR.


49. Owings to Armstrong, April 17, 1813, WD/LR.

50. Cass to Armstrong, April 18, 1813, WD/LR.

51. Owings to Armstrong, May 2, 1813, WD/LR.
52. Cass to Armstrong, May 8, 1813, WD/LR.
53. Harrison to Armstrong, May 26, 1813, WD/LR.
54. Cass to Armstrong, June 16, 1813, WD/LR.
55. McArthur to Armstrong, June 30, 1813, WD/LR.
57. Armstrong to Johnson, February 26, 1813, Esarey, II, 375.
58. Johnson to Armstrong, April 13, 1813, WD/LR.
59. Shelby to Harrison, April 18, 1813, Esarey, II, 420-421.
60. Armstrong to Edwards, May 4, 1813, WD/LS.
61. Armstrong to Johnson, May 5, 1813, WD/LS.
63. Harrison to Armstrong, May 18, 1813, (2 letters), Ibid., 450, 451-452.
64. Johnson to Armstrong, May 23, 1813, WD/LR.
66. Johnson to Harrison, June 14, 1813, WD/LR.
67. Johnson to Armstrong, June 4, 1813, WD/LR.
68. Harrison to Armstrong, June 8, 1813, June 11, 1813, Esarey, II, 466-467, 470-471; Harrison to Johnson, June 11, 1813, Ibid., pp. 468-469.
69. Armstrong to Harrison, June 9, 1813, Ibid., p. 468.
70. General Clay to Harrison, June 20, 1813, Ibid., pp. 474-475; Johnson to Armstrong, June 23, 1813, WD/LR.
71. Harrison to Armstrong, July 2, 1813, Esarey, II, 480-482.
72. Johnson to Harrison, July 4, 1813, Ibid., p. 482.
73. Harrison to Armstrong, July 9, 1813, Ibid., p. 485.

75. Armstrong to Harrison, July 14, 1813, *Ibid.*, pp. 491-492. Johnson's Regiment got as far as Urbana, Ohio, before being recalled; Johnson to Armstrong, August 9, 1813, WD/LR.


82. Armstrong to Harrison, April 3, 1813, Esarey, II, 412-414.


86. Armstrong to Cass, April 28, 1813, WD/LS.


88. Armstrong to Harrison, July 14, 1813, WD/LS; Harrison to Armstrong, July 6, 1813, Esarey, II, 484.


98. Harrison to Armstrong, September 15, 1813, Esarey, II, 541.


103. Armstrong to Harrison, October 20, 1813; Harrison to Armstrong, October 22, October 24, 1813, *Ibid.*, pp. 588, 589, 589-590; Armstrong to Harrison, October 30, 1813, WD/LS.

104. Armstrong to Harrison, November 3, 1813, Esarey, II, 595-596.


107. Harrison to Armstrong, November 11, 1813, Esarey, II, 600-601; Cleaves, *Old Tippecanoe*, p. 211.


111. Armstrong to Harrison, December 29, 1813, Esarey, II, 613-615.

112. McArthur to Armstrong, October 6, 1813; Cass to Armstrong, December 17, 1813, WD/LR.

113. Tompkins to Armstrong, December 24, 1813, WD/LR.

114. Armstrong to Harrison, January 1, 1814, Esarey, II, 615-616.


118. Armstrong to Madison, April 30, 1814, War Department, Secretary's Office, Letters Sent to the President, National Archives; Madison to Armstrong, May 4, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.


121. McArthur to Armstrong, June 15, 1814, WD/LR.


123. McArthur to Armstrong, July 31, 1814, WD/LR.

124. McArthur to Armstrong, August 8, 1814, WD/LR. Part of McArthur's concern were reports from Lewis Cass who was now the Governor of
the Michigan Territory. At this time he was particularly concerned. See Cass to Armstrong, August 13, 1814, WD/LR.


126. Governor Shelby to Armstrong, August 13, 1814; Governor Worthington to Armstrong, August 11, 1814, WD/LR. Both Governors complained of McArthur's call and indicated a disinclination of their people to continue to meet militia calls.

127. Cass to Monroe, September 20, 1814, Monroe MSS, L.C.
Military affairs on the northern frontier went very badly in 1812. On the Niagara peninsula the two commanders, General Stephen Van Rensselaer and General Alexander Smyth, proved to be incompetent. Troops under General Van Rensselaer made an ill conceived and unsuccessful attack upon Queenston Heights. The attack might have been successful had Van Rensselaer been able to persuade the militia to cross the Niagara River to assist the regulars. Instead, they watched on the bank of the river as the British reinforcements overwhelmed their comrades. General Van Rensselaer asked to be relieved, and was replaced by General Smyth, who wrote ringing pronouncements about what he was going to do, but he did nothing and the plans for invasion were given up. General Dearborn in the northeast did almost nothing. He made one feeble thrust towards Montreal, but his troops stopped at the New York border, and the army went into winter quarters.

It was obvious that before Canada could be successfully invaded armies had to be raised, trained, supplied, and provided with adequate leadership. A sound strategy also had to be developed. 

James Monroe, while occupying the office of Secretary of War
temporarily, made an effort in December 1812, to devise a plan for the 1813 campaign. He rejected an attack upon Montreal either by the Lake Champlain route or down the St. Lawrence, because the weather did not allow an attack by the former and the latter would require naval control of Lake Ontario which the United States did not have. Monroe believed the alternative of attacking the British forces on the Niagara peninsula offered the best chance of success. From there troops could march along the north shore and attack Kingston. Monroe, though relatively a novice in military matters, realized the dangers inherent in his plan which, without control of the lake, would have faced a serious problem of supply. Monroe never formally presented his plans to the Cabinet, and he was soon replaced by John Armstrong who had his own ideas of strategy.

Armstrong’s military experience, as has been related, was limited to his service as a junior officer in the Revolutionary War. He never lost his interest in military matters, and apparently read extensively in the works of military writers. While in France he must certainly have been impressed with the brilliant maneuvers of Napoleon, and the principles laid down by the great Swiss military writer Antoine Henri Jomini in his *Treatise on Grand Military Operations*, published in France in 1805. Armstrong frequently made allusions to the maxims of Napoleon and the principles of Jomini in both his correspondence and in his historical studies. Armstrong thus gave every indication of great military knowledge which might
have appeared to many to be quite impressive. Undoubtedly, that was one reason why the Secretary of War William Eustis consulted him late in 1811 for his views on a possible strategy to follow in the event of war with Great Britain. Armstrong in reply stated the most important object of attack would be Montreal because "if gained, everything depending upon it is gained also." 4

Once in office, however, Armstrong’s plan of strategy was somewhat altered, undoubtedly because, as he saw it, the situation was different. He presented his plan to the Cabinet on February 8, 1813. Montreal, the primary objective, would be impossible to attack until at least May 1, because the enemy had a numerical superiority. Thus, he argued there was the alternative of inaction until they were competent for the main attack or choosing a secondary objective. Kingston and Prescott, and the destruction of the British ships at the former, he contended would present the first object. York and the ships being built there would be the second object, and Forts George and Erie on the Niagara peninsula the third. 5

Armstrong was no doubt influenced by exaggerated reports of the enemy strength at Montreal, but he was correct in assuming that an offensive operation in that quarter would have to be delayed until spring. Kingston was perhaps nearly as valuable as Montreal in overall strategic importance. Besides Jomini had stressed the selection of a flank or the rear as the objective, and envelopment of a single point with a preponderance of force. Many years later the naval
historian, A. T. Mahan, wrote of the strategic importance of Kingston, that its capture "would solve at a single stroke every difficulty in the upper territory," because "No other harbor was tenable as a naval station; with its fall, and the destruction of shipping and forts, would go the control of the lake, even if the place itself were not permanently held." The enemy would be deprived of water communication and "could retain no position to the westward, because neither reinforcements nor supplies could reach them." The capture of Kingston "would have settled the whole campaign and affected decisively the issue of the war."  

Armstrong was undoubtedly anxious to undertake offensive operations, and when the Cabinet approved his plans he began making the preparations to carry out his strategy. On February 10, he conveyed his plan to General Dearborn at Albany. According to Armstrong's estimate Dearborn would have approximately 7000 men at his disposal. The time for the movement would be governed by the opening of the lake, which Armstrong noted was usually about the first of April. He added that the project would have the advantage of severing the line of British operations. He wrote Colonel Peter B. Porter, commanding near Buffalo, not to take any offensive action unless assured of success. He also wrote the Deputy Quartermaster General of the northern district to begin construction of one hundred ships capable of carrying forty men and their baggage and provisions.
Armstrong further informed Dearborn that his staff would soon be increased, particularly in the Quartermaster Department, and also that provisions had been made for a Hospital Department.

Armstrong's activities to get the expedition under way were soon sidetracked by his enthusiasm and thoughts of some quick and easy victories. He allowed the preparations to become diffused by piecemeal efforts and projects, which was more creditable to his zeal than his wisdom. His initial letters all were directed toward the prime objective of an attack upon Kingston. Only five days after sending his plan of campaign to Dearborn, however, he suggested the idea of diverting some of the force to Ogdensburg on the St. Lawrence to confuse the enemy. A week later he wrote Colonel Porter and reversed his initial instructions. He gave contingent orders for Porter to take his force across the frozen Niagara River and attack Fort Erie. Armstrong explained that information indicated the enemy force was small and weak. He added that perhaps Fort George might also be attacked, but that would be up to Porter's judgment.

On February 24, 1813, Armstrong wrote Dearborn suggesting an alteration of the mode of operation. He indicated that he had been informed that an attack upon Kingston was impracticable in the winter, and the plan of attack had been based on that presumption. Now, however, he was informed that a winter attack or something like Major Benjamin Forsyth's activities from Ogdensburg showed "that
small enterprises, at least, may be successfully executed at the present season." He suggested that possibly a movement might be made by the forces at Lake Champlain under the newly promoted General Zebulon Pike up the St. Lawrence in sleighs and seize Kingston. The advantages as Armstrong saw it, was that the maneuver would force Prevost to divert a large force to save Kingston, and such a force would face the difficult task of finding subsistence. His supply lines would be open to attack, and he would be forced to weaken Montreal. In another letter a week later he wrote, "the hints I gave in my last as to a change of plan were for your consideration, choose between the alternatives."\textsuperscript{12}

Armstrong thus revealed in the beginning stages of his tenure of office one of the basic flaws of his character, the lack of a consistent and decisive executive drive. His equivocal orders to his commanders often left them without a clear comprehension of Armstrong's ideas. Many felt, (particularly Wilkinson, as will be shown), that he was attempting to cover himself in case of failure. The truth probably is that Armstrong himself often lacked a clear comprehension of what his objectives were. This factor was an invitation for weaker commanders to avoid taking action when vigorous action was needed.

Events were soon to alter the arrangements Armstrong was suggesting. The British showed that minor expeditions in the winter
were possible when they crossed the St. Lawrence from Prescott on
February 23, and drove Major Forsyth's riflemen from Ogdensburg.
General Dearborn concluded this was the prelude to an attack upon
Sackett's Harbor. He ordered Pike and his men to move from Lake
Champlain by sleighs and also directed troops from Greenbush (near
Albany) to reinforce the post. He then hurried there himself to con-
duct the defense against what he supposed to be a large force massing
at Kingston.

Armstrong discounted any danger arising from Forsyth's dis-
lodgement, and professed to see some advantage. It would serve to
mask the movement of troops to Sackett's Harbor, and also draw
Prevost from Montreal to the west to a country "where subsistence is
both difficult and doubtful & leaving us at the same time an oppor-
tunity of enterprising on his convoys & his Rear." Such actions
might, however, induce the enemy to make similar movements and by
the first of April, "Kingston will not only be untaken, but be in
condition to repel the whole force we shall then be able to bring
against it." In such case, he added, "it would be well to recur to
the first plan of waiting until you can approach your object by
water."

A few days later he confided to William Duane that he was con-
fident the outcome of the campaign would be favorable. He wrote:
My plans of Campaign are made, and if they can be executed,
we shall, I think, do something. Prevost is at Kingston, with
his whole disposable force. It is where I wish him to be. The country is exhausted, and his sustenance will be doubtful, and his place d'Armies one hundred miles in his rear. If we have legs and Arms and a particle of head to direct these, we may weave a net for his Knightship, strong as that thrown around Burgoyne.  

Dearborn, in the meantime, was extremely apprehensive of an attack from the British. He wrote Armstrong on March 3, that Prevost had between six and eight thousand men, and he was expecting an attack within forty-eight hours. On March 9, he informed the Secretary, "I have not yet had the honor of a visit from Sir G. Prevost." He added that he now had some doubts whether they would attack, but the movement of the enemy would "effectually oppose the movements contemplated on our part." On March 14, he announced that the enemy had undoubtedly abandoned the idea of attacking Sackett's Harbor.  

Dearborn had greatly overestimated the size of the British force at Kingston, and there was no likelihood of any attack. Exaggerated reports, nevertheless, convinced him that any attack upon Kingston would be foolhardy. In this view he was supported by the commander of the American fleet on Lake Ontario, Isaac Chauncey. Dearborn seized upon Armstrong's letter of March 4, which allowed him to choose the alternative modes of attack, and informed the Secretary that a council of principle officers, including Commodore Chauncey, had unanimously decided not to attempt an attack on Kingston before the naval force could act. He pointed out that the lake should be open to navigation by April 15. A few days later, around March 20, Dearborn suggested an idea that he and Commodore Chauncey after
"mature deliberation" had determined was the most certain of success. He recommended altering Armstrong's plan so that instead of attacking Kingston first, Commodore Chauncey would first take ten or twelve hundred troops under Pike and capture York, and then proceed and capture Fort George. Then the force would be massed for an attack upon Kingston.

Armstrong accepted the alteration of the plan of campaign, which now made Kingston the last object instead of the first, by stating it "would appear to be necessary, or at least proper." If he really understood the critical strategic importance of Kingston he would not have acquiesced so easily. Still it is conceivable that he believed the diversion westward without first obtaining the prime object could be quickly and easily effected without detriment to the assault on Kingston. There are also hints that he was anxious for a victory to impress public opinion, and thus he allowed the alteration with the prospect of increasing his reputation. He cautioned Dearborn to use a large force so as to leave nothing to chance, "If our first step in the campaign, and in that quarter from which most is expected, should fail, the disgrace of our arms will be compleat. The public will lose all confidence in us, & we shall even cease to have any in ourselves." He stated that there was no need to keep a large force for the defense of Sackett's Harbor as the enemy would be unlikely to attack. He asked "How then would it read in a newspaper, that we
had lost our object on the Niagara for want of Troops, while we had another brigade at Sackett’s Harbor doing nothing? On April 8, Armstrong directed Dearborn to lead the expedition.

While preparations were under way for the attack on York, Armstrong engaged in some speculation on what affect the success of the present expedition might have on the future conduct of the war. His conclusions were embodied in his letter to Dearborn on April 19, outlining the possible mode of operation for the Army to follow after a successful conclusion of the expedition. Armstrong was convinced that Prevost, by assembling a force of six to eight thousand at Kingston, meant to protect that place and hazard his more western posts of Malden, and those on the Niagara peninsula. He also believed that the success of the present expedition might cause him to lose hope, abandon Kingston, and concentrate his forces at Montreal. If Prevost did not abandon Kingston, then Dearborn was to proceed after the expedition to destroy the communication between Montreal and Kingston, and assail Kingston by a joint operation of military and naval means. On the supposition that he abandoned Kingston, then Montreal should be approached down the St. Lawrence rather than by the Lake Champlain route which presented a much stronger defense from assault.

This was typical of many of Armstrong’s letters dealing with strategy. Instead of a realistic appraisal of the various factors,
including the possibility of failure, it appears almost as if he were merely engaging in wishful thinking. He was certainly expecting too much if he sincerely believed that American successes at York, and on the Niagara peninsula, would induce the British to surrender the remainder of his line of defense west of Montreal. If that was his justification for allowing Dearborn and Chauncey to divert the campaign westward, then he was sadly mistaken. The success of the expedition by no means met his expectation, and the net result was to delay the campaign on the St. Lawrence—a delay that eventually proved fatal to any chance of success.

The expedition began auspiciously enough. York was captured on April 27, but the success was marred by a magazine explosion which killed Brigadier General Pike, one of the most promising young officers in the Army. On May 27, Fort George was taken, but the incompetency of American leadership became painfully obvious by a series of reverses that followed. Generals Winder and Chandler, who had been tardily sent on June 1 by Dearborn to pursue the British force which had evacuated Fort George, were surprised and both captured in the confusion. The troops under General Lewis, who had arrived to take command were further harassed by the British and retreated back to Fort George. Armstrong was clearly upset by the turn of events and wrote Dearborn, "There is, indeed, some strange fatality attending our efforts. I cannot disguise from you the
surprise occasioned by the two escapes of a beaten Enemy—first, on the 27th Ulto, and again on the 1st instant." Armstrong then added the admonition which might have been taken directly from Jomini, "Battles are not gained when an inferior and broken enemy is not destroyed. Nothing is done while anything that might have been done is omitted." There was to be yet another disaster. On June 24, an American detachment, which eventually amounted to nearly six hundred men, ventured out from Fort George and was ambushed by Indians and a small force of British regulars. The entire detachment surrendered to a force only half its size.

Although General Dearborn was not directly responsible for these failures, his lack of leadership was obvious. In fact he became so ill he was unable to command, and on June 10, he turned the command over to General Lewis. General Lewis reported to Armstrong that he doubted that Dearborn would ever again be fit for service. On July 6, however, Dearborn wrote the Secretary of War to inform him that his strength was returning and he was resuming command. Ironically that same day Armstrong sent a letter removing Dearborn from command. He had finally convinced the President to take a step which Madison had been reluctant to take before because of Dearborn's political connections. The reason given by Armstrong was Dearborn's ill-health. The matter of incompetency and military failures was never mentioned.
While the Americans were engaged on the western end of Lake Ontario, the British launched an attack on Sackett's Harbor at the eastern end. On May 27, the same day the Americans captured Fort George, they appeared before a small detachment of regulars and New York militia commanded by Jacob Brown, then a brigadier General of the New York militia. The British assault was ineffectual and the American defense well conducted by Brown, and the British retired. Brown was rewarded with a commission of brigadier-general in the regular army.27

One persuasive argument that Dearborn and Chauncey had used in convincing Armstrong to alter the campaign plan was that the capture of York would assure "complete command of the Lake." Nevertheless, Sir James Yeo, and the British fleet on June 3, assumed complete mastery over the lake. Armstrong conjectured that the appearance was temporary and to facilitate a "general retreat to Kingston." On June 19, he wrote to Dearborn, "We count upon very soon hearing of an action on the lake between Chauncey and Yeo."28 On June 25, he wrote General Lewis to be in a condition to immediately intercept the British retreat from the Niagara peninsula, if Chauncey was victorious. If command was not won then, he was to strengthen himself at Fort George and await reinforcements.29

Chauncey, however, had decided not to contest the British control over the lake until his new ship, the "General Pike," was launched,
which would be near the end of July. Armstrong had been hopeful that Chauncey would reappear and recover control of the lake much sooner. The effect militarily was to frustrate his plans because the army could not move. He also had some doubts that a victory on the lake would be won. He expressed his concern to Dearborn, "I am afraid that we have all along acted on a belief very pleasing but ill founded, viz. that we were ahead of the Enemy as to naval means & naval preparation on the Lakes."  

Armstrong was somewhat disconcerted about the turn of events, and undecided on what course to follow. He confided to General Lewis, on July 1, "The losing the command of the Lake has embarrassed us much." The indecision was reflected when he added that if the British won control of the lake, troops would have to be carried from Sackett's Harbor to Niagara and "endeavour to make a stand for the Peninsula & and country west of it," or to add Lewis' force to Hamp- ton's on Lake Champlain and "seize some point below, which shall cut the Enemy's line of communication." He also added that if Prevost detached too freely from Kingston and left it without the protection of the fleet "a fine blow might be struck from Sackett's harbour." Two days later he again wrote Lewis to suggest a possible plan of operation. He assumed that Yeo might take shelter at Kingston when Chauncey reappeared and wait until he could regain control. If that occurred, Armstrong suggested two plans. Troops from Sackett's Harbor might reinforce those at Fort George, and an attempt made to cut off
the British under General Vincent at Burlington Bay (at the western end of Lake Ontario). The other alternative, and the one he preferred, was to bring the troops from Fort George to join those at Sackett's Harbor, and from there launch an attack upon Kingston. He indicated the combined strength would be seven thousand and the enemy force was only about four thousand. He suggested that diversionary attacks could be made from Ogdensburg and Lake Champlain to confuse the enemy. "Could a successful attack be made here," he added, "the fate of the Campaign is decided—perhaps that of the War." A week later, apparently considering the attack upon Kingston to be decided upon, he informed Lewis that he had ordered General Hampton "to push his Head Quarters to the position held by our Army the last Campaign on Lake Champlain." At the same time he ordered General Boyd, commanding at Fort George, to take no offensive action.

General Lewis was by no means anxious to undertake any offensive operations. On July 5, he reported to the Secretary of War that the British force was superior to his, and further his troops were undependable and "eternally intoxicated." He added that he did not believe that Chauncey would be on the lake before the first of August. On July 23, he informed Armstrong that he had from "indubitable authority" received word that large reinforcements had arrived at Quebec. He expected their force to increase opposing him to 12,000 regulars in the next week. "I am completely satisfied," he wrote, "that the British Force in Canada is much larger than has been supposed."
The reticence of General Lewis and the ease with which he could believe the grossly exaggerated reports on enemy strength marked him as of the same stripe as General Dearborn. It was obvious that the element sorely lacking on the northern frontier was aggressive and competent leadership. General Peter Porter, who was commanding a militia force at Fort George wrote to Armstrong on this subject, explaining it was "impossible to remain quiet & witness the ruin of the country." He complained, "The general officers plan nothing unless it be for their own safety; & what has been done, has been at the instigation of inferior officers." Dearborn, he stated, was a good man, but had done nothing he ought to have done as a general; Lewis wanted things too easy. Chandler and Winder were gone; and Boyd was amiable but lacked "scope." "In short Sir," he wrote, "my purpose is to tell you, that unless you, or genl. Wilkinson, or some other officer of more talents & experience than any we have had is sent in, we shall never take Canada."  

As Porter wrote, General Wilkinson was slowly making his way to Washington to receive his instructions before proceeding on to the northern frontier. The order calling Wilkinson to the North had been sent on March 10, but had not been received by him until May and he had not departed New Orleans until early June. Before leaving Wilkinson had warned Armstrong that the late receipt of the order would expose him to a "sultry, fatigueing, dilatory journey, and
retard my arrival on the theatre where I am destined to take a part."

He did not arrive in Washington until the last day of July.

Armstrong's order may have been prompted in part by his desire to have a man of considerable military experience to assist General Dearborn on the northern frontier. More probably, the chief reason was President Madison's desire to remove him from command at New Orleans. William H. Crawford had warned the President just a week before the order was given that unless Wilkinson was removed, the two Senators and the Representative from Louisiana would be driven into opposition to the Administration. Wilkinson was aware of the effort to remove him, and wrote the Secretary of War that he did not believe the rumors "because this is the theatre of my utility, because my Constitution will not bear a northern Climate, and because I do conceive my Rank & Service give me claim to a separate Command."

This letter was received two days before the order calling him to the North was given, and was undoubtedly the reason that Armstrong wrote him a personal letter on March 12, designed to soften the blow. Armstrong and Wilkinson had both served under Gates, a point that Armstrong now alluded to in his letter. He wrote:

Why should you remain in your land of the cypress when patriotism and ambition equally invite you to one that grows the laurels? Again the men of the North and East want you; those of the Southwest are less sensible of your merits and less anxious to have you among them. I speak to you with the frankness due to you and to myself, and again advise, Come to the North and come quickly! If our cards are well played, we may renew the scenes of Saratoga.
When Wilkinson arrived in Washington he was the designated commander in place of Dearborn. While in the Capital, Wilkinson received his instructions and Armstrong's latest thoughts on a plan of campaign. Armstrong's presentation of his ideas to the President on July 23, was premised on the expectation that the time for naval ascendancy would soon arrive. (In fact it had, for the "General Pike" was ready for service on July 20.) Thus, it was a time for new and increased activity. Armstrong thought the forces on Lake Ontario, those at Fort George and Sackett's Harbor, should be concentrated, "because neither Section of them, as they are now divided is competent to any great object." He rejected activity on the Niagara peninsula, because if General Harrison was successful at Malden the Niagara peninsula would be of less importance both to the American forces and the enemy. Success on the peninsula then would "but have the effect of shortening, not of dividing the Enemy's line of operations ... [and] will not give to the Campaign a character of decisive advantage."

If Sackett's Harbor became the point of concentration then Kingston would become the object of attack, which he pointed out would be returning to the original plan of campaign. He noted that Kingston was a place of much importance to the enemy, and would be defended with "great obstinacy," but he added, "That it may be carried by a joint application of our naval and military means is not however to
be questioned." In addition to the attack on Kingston, he suggested that a simultaneous movement might be made from Lake Champlain towards Montreal and actually attacking it if the enemy weakened the post to save Kingston.

Another alternative was presented by Armstrong of occupying a point on the St. Lawrence at Madrid (Hamilton) and then move in concert with General Hampton on Montreal. Armstrong suggested finally that he believed Sackett's Harbor to be the most advisable point of concentration. This project was approved by the President and was submitted to General Wilkinson on August 5. When Wilkinson had the temerity to suggest an alteration in Armstrong's plan it gave a portent of a future unhappy relationship between the two men, which eventually developed into bitter acrimony. He recommended that if the forces were not immediately competent to attack Kingston that operations should begin around Fort George while Hampton menaced Montreal. Once victorious on the west end of the lake they would move like "lightning" to attack Kingston, and after reducing it move on downstream and form a junction with Hampton and reduce Montreal.

Armstrong, answered with a long and finely reasoned letter designed obviously to demolish the rather superficial reasoning of his new General. He argued that Wilkinson's idea would carry operations wide of Kingston and westward and leave the strength of the Enemy unbroken. Kingston was the great depot of his resources, and as long
as he kept his lines of communication open to the sea he could reinforce his defenses or renew the war in the West. "Kingston, therefore," he wrote, "as well on grounds of policy as of military principle, presents the first & great object of the Campaign." He then went on to recommend that Kingston be attacked directly or lacking the force, indirectly by seizing and obstructing the line of his communication and dry up his sources of supply. The commander was to determine, and for his benefit Armstrong added some thoughts on an alternative plan that he had previously suggested. This plan called for a feint against Kingston and a rapid movement down the St. Lawrence, form a junction with Hampton and march on Montreal. Armstrong thus compromised his own plan by suggesting an alternative, but he concluded by admonishing Wilkinson to make Kingston the primary object and to choose between a direct or indirect attack as circumstances warranted. 42

Wilkinson expressed contempt for this letter at a later date as "a pleasant work, to a minister in his closet, and quite easy of execution, on paper; where we find neither ditches, nor ramparts, no parapets, nor artillery, nor small arms." 43 Armstrong's letter was typical of his proposals in dealing with strategy. His policy apparently was to devise two or three plans, all of which appeared feasible on paper, and to leave to the commander the execution of the plan he felt most suitable. His refusal to take the responsibility
for a single course of action may have appeared to many as a means to supply himself with an alibi if things went wrong. More probably it was simply his inability to arrive at a definite decision, and then adhere to it tenaciously. He had an equivocal mind, which was capable of allowing him to see the right policy, but not to hold it with any conviction.

Armstrong informed Wilkinson he would soon join him at the front. Perhaps it was a certain sense of insecurity which made him feel that if he were near the scene of action he could better determine the course it should take. Yet, he had a feeling of self-importance and a position in Washington, far removed from the scenes of battle was unsatisfactory. As early as April he dropped hints that he desired to go to the northern front where he could render more important service. The determination to allow him to go to the front was apparently made about the same time. General Dearborn was removed. The first mention of his plan in his correspondence was made to General Lewis on July 9, which without explaining why merely announced, "I shall set out for the frontier of the North within a few days." The tardy arrival of Wilkinson delayed his departure, however, until August. He explained to Wilkinson that he was going North in order to "furnish with promptitude whatever might be necessary."
It soon became apparent that one of Armstrong's main functions would be to keep the two bitter enemies, Wilkinson and Hampton, appeased so that they would cooperate during the campaign. His decision to retain both men was unwise. Armstrong explained later that both had been assigned to the North to augment General Dearborn's staff. Dearborn's removal, however, made Wilkinson the senior officer and thus the commander of the district. Had Hampton foreseen such a possibility, he would never have taken this assignment. Wilkinson was determined to establish his control over Hampton, and while at Washington he brought up the subject of the limitations on his powers, and the instructions to Hampton. Armstrong replied somewhat evasively, that Hampton would operate "cotemporarily with you & under your orders in prosecution of the plan of Campaign which has been given to you." Hampton had pressed Armstrong for an assignment on the Northern frontier with Dearborn, but Armstrong refused probably because of the presence of General Lewis. He then offered Hampton command in the Lake Champlain region, and indicated that it was intended to be a distinct and separate command and only in joint operations would the principle of seniority operate. Hampton accepted reluctantly as he indicated to Armstrong later; "you did not affect to force [it] upon me, although I saw very clearly I was to expect no other." Hampton arrived at Burlington, on Lake Champlain on July 3, and began the task of organizing the army on that front.
Wilkinson was determined to establish the nature of his authority over Hampton, and accordingly wrote Hampton on August 15, as soon as he arrived in Albany, and ordered Hampton to furnish him with returns on troops, and his status on supplies. In short Wilkinson was regarding Hampton as merely a subordinate, and Hampton quickly wrote Armstrong to either reaffirm his separate and distinct status or accept his resignation. Hampton had correctly interpreted Wilkinson's intentions to drive him from the service. Wilkinson was indeed making that point in his letters to the Secretary of War. He asserted that unless Hampton followed orders "he should be sent home."\(^{49}\)

Armstrong attempted to reassure Hampton. He informed him that the operations planned would create a situation where the seniority rule applied, and further that commands could be separate and distinct without being independent. He added that it had not been his intention to make a junior officer serving in the same district independent of a senior. He had meant only that the physical separation would place Hampton's command beyond the immediate supervision of the senior officer. He concluded by reassuring Hampton, "I shall be with you throughout the campaign, & I pledge to you my honor as a soldier, that your rights shall not be invaded."\(^{51}\)

In the meantime, Wilkinson had gone on the Sackett's Harbor to make the arrangements for the campaign. He informed Armstrong that if all went well, he would be ready to move by the fifteenth of
September and should be in possession of Kingston by September 26. Armstrong reported this on August 28 to Madison, and indicated that he had been busily arranging for a militia levy, forwarding supplies, and attempting to appease Hampton. He added that he would leave the next day for Sackett's Harbor. When he arrived in Sackett's Harbor he received Hampton's answer which expressed unhappiness with his situation, but ended by stating, "Your letter has locked the door upon me . . . . The close of the campaign must open me a passage should I not find a shorter route in the course of it." When Armstrong arrived at Sackett's Harbor, Wilkinson had gone to Fort George to push the movement of troops from there. While there he became ill, and for a while nothing was done. Armstrong remained optimistic, and reported to his friend William Duane on September 18 that Wilkinson was better and the troops would soon be in motion. Wilkinson, however, was having other thoughts about the campaign, and suggested a revision. He recommended a sweep of the west end of Lake Ontario and taking possession of Burlington. Such a movement he believed would end in the defeat and capture of as many as three thousand. Armstrong's views for the moment were fixed on Kingston and he advised Wilkinson that if Kingston were seized, "all above perishes, because the tree is then girdled." His answer to Wilkinson was, "The main object must be prosecuted." Wilkinson was not finished. His next letter alluded to another
alternative, that of making a feint against Kingston, and moving down the St. Lawrence against Montreal.\footnote{56}

Armstrong was becoming exasperated, not only by Wilkinson's incomprehensible suggestions, but also by the delay occasioned by the futile activities of Chauncey on the lake. He wrote Madison that he was trying to convince the Commodore that Yeo would continue to refuse a battle, and that instead the fleet should be used for "conveying the troops immediately to this post & thus enabling us, to go to our particular object."\footnote{57} The delay forced Armstrong to halt the movement of General Hampton from Lake Champlain. He was ordered by the Secretary to stop his advance at Four Corners (approximately forty miles from Plattsburgh), and hold his position until further advised.\footnote{58} Armstrong still remained hopeful, and informed the President on October 4, that Wilkinson was moving from Fort George with three thousand men. "The weather is uncommonly fine," he added, "and of the general issue of the campaign we have everything to hope."\footnote{59}

Wilkinson arrived at Sackett's Harbor on October 4, and proceeded to urge that Kingston be passed by, and that the main attack be made upon Montreal. Armstrong disagreed, and according to him a meeting of general officers approved his plan. Wilkinson, however, again became very ill, and this prompted Armstrong to note somewhat whimsically in his next report to Madison: "This climate seems to be
very unfriendly to our commanding generals." He then informed the President what his course would be in the situation: "I know not how discreet it may be, but under the circumstances of the General's indisposition (which fatigue & exposure to a variety of weather may increase) I have determined to accompany the army."  

The determination, however, began to waver almost immediately, because of information that the enemy were moving to reinforce Kingston. In response to an inquiry from Hampton on the progress of the expedition, Armstrong informed him, "thanks to the storm and our snail-like movements down the lake . . . the manoeuvre intended is lost, so far as regards Kingston." He indicated a certain indecision, "What we now do against that place must be done by hard blows, and at some risk. The importance of the object may, however, justify the means." He added that if an immediate descent was made down the St. Lawrence, Hampton should approach the mouth of the Chateaugay River or some other point to effect a junction.  

It was obvious that Armstrong was changing his mind about the propriety of an attack upon Kingston.

On October 19, Armstrong wrote Madison giving him an indication that the attack on Kingston would be called off. The enemy had been reinforced and "we shall no longer find him naked & napping." He added that Hampton's force could be brought to join those at Sackett's Harbor but that would produce delay and "compel us to abandon the
other and better object below."\textsuperscript{63} Heretofore, Hampton's force had not been considered necessary for the reduction of Kingston. Now that they were felt to be necessary, Armstrong realized, correctly, that the season was too late for their use in such a manner. Yet, they had been idly waiting for nearly a month (to cooperate against Montreal) if such a contingency developed as the failure to attack Kingston. Armstrong might be credited with foresight in having a force adequate to obtain a secondary object if the first was unobtainable, but it seems equally clear in retrospect that the failure to use this force of four thousand men against the primary object eventually resulted in neither object being gained.

Nevertheless, at this time Armstrong still had sufficient reason to believe that by prompt and efficient action the second object of Montreal could be gained. Accordingly, he wrote Wilkinson on October 19, that the circumstances no longer existed where Kingston could be easily reduced. He now recommended Montreal as a "safer and greater" object, which "if seized now, will save one campaign." He argued that it would sever the enemy line of operations, "it restrains all below, withers and perishes all above itself." Armstrong's change of mind, was now met by the obstinacy of Wilkinson who had changed his mind. He now preferred to make the attack on Kingston, and used Armstrong's arguments to buttress his case. He also demanded, "before I abandon this attack, which by my instructions I am ordered to make, it is necessary to my justification, that you
should by the authority of the President, direct the operations of
the army under my command particularly against Montreal."

Armstrong replied that Wilkinson appeared to be under the
impression that a direct attack was unavoidable. The August in-
structions, he pointed out, had given the commander the alternative
modes of operation of a direct or an indirect attack. He indicated
he preferred the latter but that view was not intended to infringe
on Wilkinson's right of choice or lessen his responsibility. He
added that he was not at liberty to change the ground of those in-
structions, because "the only effect of this would be to substitute
my opinion for yours." It was obvious the relations between the
two men were growing worse. Wilkinson resented the presence of the
Secretary of War, because it lessened his influence. Under such
circumstances, Armstrong's activities no matter how well intentioned,
merely added to the resentment of the General, as one witness
attested. Armstrong perhaps recognized that his presence might
further agitate the General, and besides he doubted his authority to
accompany the army or act as its head. He may also, as many have
charged, sensed the ultimate failure of the expedition and wished to
disassociate himself as much as possible from that failure. At any
rate, he wrote Madison on the same day he answered Wilkinson, and
reported the General was better, and added "I shall forbear my visit
to Canada until a future day."
In view of Armstrong's background it was and is perhaps too easy to attribute the worst possible motives to his actions at this critical juncture of the campaign. Certainly they had a detrimental effect, whether they proceeded from disgust or design. He had assumed the role of co-ordinator between Wilkinson and Hampton, and now at the moment when cooperation was most essential he removed himself from that role and became merely an interested spectator. He may have felt, as he had informed Hampton, that the role of seniority now applied, but a wiser man would have known that throwing the two enemies upon each other would not have worked.

Hampton in the meantime had been fretting about the progress of the campaign. The long wait caused him to be concerned about his supplies, and nearly every letter to the Secretary of War repeated the same refrain about the "rawness of his troops." As his troops began to march across the border late in October to be in a position to effect a junction with Wilkinson's force, they were met and repulsed by a smaller British detachment. Rather than renew the advance he decided to withdraw. He explained his actions to Armstrong. While engaged with the enemy, he was informed by the Quartermaster General that orders had been given by the Secretary of War through the Quartermaster General to build huts for the army on the Chateaugay River below the border. "This paper," he reported, "sank my hopes, and raised serious doubts of receiving that . . ."
support which had been anticipated." Accordingly, a war council
had unanimously decided to return to Chateaugay (Four Corners),
for the preservation of the army "and the fulfillment of the ostensible
views of the Government." Finally, he stated "The campaign I consider
substantially at an end," and submitted his resignation. 69

Armstrong's order for the building of huts certainly merited
the interpretation Hampton had given it, for it could reasonably be
deduced that the Secretary did not expect the army to reach Montreal.
Armstrong's order to the Quartermaster General Robert Swartwout was
given on October 18, and if Wilkinson is to be believed, without his
knowledge. 70 Probably Armstrong had given the order not expecting
failure, but merely to provide for such a contingency. He defended
his action to Madison as a mere act of providence, "The failure of
the enterprise was a possible event & being such was guarded against.
It showed only wisdom and foresight. If we got to Montreal, we but
lose the labor . . . If we did not get to that city--a covering
for the army was provided." His explanation must be accepted, but
the action, even if it did proceed from good motives, had created
suspicions in the mind of General Hampton and this was to be detri-
mental to Hampton's future conduct.

Armstrong's withdrawal, as an active participant, did not be-
come known to Wilkinson until he was actually ready to depart on the
expedition. He believed Armstrong intended to travel by land down
the river in order to maintain contact with the army. Armstrong informed him on October 30, however, that he would not be joining the army. He explained: "bad roads, worse weather, and a considerable degree of illness, admonish me against receding further from a point where my engagements call me." He then directed Wilkinson to, "Give Hampton timely notice of your approach, and of the place and hour of junction." Wilkinson received this information somewhat reluctantly. The Secretary had previously conducted all the correspondence with Hampton, and he wondered what Hampton's reaction would be. He wrote Armstrong on that point, "he has treated my authority with contempt, & has acted exclusively under your orders. I wish this Information could come from you, that I may be saved the hazard of a second insult." He added: "You may however rest assured, that in this case my feelings shall be silenced, and that I will humiliate myself to make the most of this Pretendce (sic)." Hampton, in the meantime, had all but given up the campaign. On November 4 he informed the Secretary that he had sent most of the artillery and cavalry back to Plattsburgh because of a lack of forage. He indicated the supplies were limited, and the weather was severe. He added that unless the troops were soon placed in winter quarters their health would be hazarded. Hampton was undoubtedly surprised to receive a letter from General Wilkinson calling upon him to effect
a junction because he had heard nothing from Armstrong. He declined to join Wilkinson, in part because of the request to bring with him a "two or three months supply," which he was incapable of doing. Hampton replied, "The idea . . . of effecting the junction at St. Regis, was most pleasing, . . . until I came to the disclosure of the amount of your supplies of provision." His answer ignored the part of the Wilkinson letter which stated that the general officers had unanimously agreed that provisions "should not prevent the progress of the expedition."

Hampton undoubtedly had no desire to join up with Wilkinson, and was looking for an excuse. He could not admit to his personal enemy that he had thought the campaign was over, was preparing to place his army in winter quarters, and was thus unprepared to join Wilkinson's army. He did explain this to the Secretary of War. The best information he had was that Wilkinson did not intend to make a descent down the St. Lawrence. Thus, he had sent off the cavalry, artillery, and provision teams to Plattsburgh for subsistence. "General Wilkinson had no spare transportation for us," he noted, "and the junction would have reduced the stock of provisions to eight or ten days for the whole. The alternative was adopted under the impression of absolute necessity." As a consequence, all Hampton could do was make a feeble effort to create a diversion which he thought might be of some aid to Wilkinson's movements.
Wilkinson interpreted Hampton's refusal to join him as an act of insubordination, and that as such it might be useful to him. He had been reluctant to make the assault upon Montreal, because, as he explained to Armstrong, "we shall advance upon Montreal, ignorant of the force arrayed against us, & in case of misfortune having no retreat, the army must surrender at discretion." Thus, Hampton's letter offered him the opportunity to call off an attack he did not want to make, and the opportunity to shift all the blame upon his old enemy. His reply to Hampton stated that the refusal to join his force, "defeats the grand objects of the campaign . . . no suspicion being entertained that you would decline the junction directed." The next day by a General Order he proclaimed that the army would be compelled to retire because of the "extraordinary, unexampled, and it appeares unwarrantable conduct of Major General Hampton in refusing to join this army." Armstrong had gone to Albany. Arriving there on the eighth of November, he wrote Madison a series of letters expressing his confidence that the campaign would be successful. At this juncture he received Hampton's letters of November 1 and 4, and immediately, by express, ordered him to make a movement to join Wilkinson or to detain the enemy on the South side of the St. Lawrence while Wilkinson passed in the rear and seized Montreal. He noted to Madison that the jealousy and misunderstanding between Wilkinson and Hampton
would make it necessary to part with one of them when the campaign was over. "At the present moment," he added, "these causes are more menacing to the success of the campaign than anything to be found in the form of the enemy or the inclemency of the season." On November 14, Armstrong was still optimistic. He informed Madison that Hampton was on the move and thus Prevost would be compelled to either stand and fight or fall back and try to defend Montreal. His next report to the President, however, began: "you will find in the enclosed letters the probable termination of the campaign on the St. Lawrence."  

The failure of the campaign was followed by efforts of the three men to cast the blame on the others. Wilkinson blamed Hampton and advised Armstrong to have him arrested. The Secretary declined and Wilkinson gave the order for the arrest himself. Hampton, however, had left his army and was proceeding to Washington to defend himself where he had powerful political friends. Armstrong at first believed Wilkinson was chiefly responsible, but later threw the blame on both of them equally. All three were, of course, to blame for the failure. The two American forces probably amounted to twice the number of defenders on the other side. The numerical superiority was never brought to bear upon a single point. Even when the junction of the forces was planned for the assault on Montreal, the merger did not take place in
part because of the jealousy and suspicion of Hampton, and in part because of a lack of liaison. Wilkinson was ill and unaggressive. He arrived at Sackett's Harbor on August 20, but the force was not collected and ready to move for nearly two and a half months. Armstrong's efforts were ineffectual and probably harmful because his presence was resented by Wilkinson.

Armstrong must, however, bear the major share of the responsibility, for he was primarily responsible for the planning and coordination. Instead of directing a build-up of men and supplies and firmly establishing a single objective, he gave the commander a choice of three plans and placed two armies on the front which were widely separated and commanded by two men who were personal enemies. He assumed the responsibility for coordination, but divested himself of that function at the critical moment when his services were most needed. Hampton admittedly was ignorant of the fact that Wilkinson intended a movement down the St. Lawrence, and when so advised by Wilkinson, he was incapable of rendering any service.

The failure was a blow to the hopes of the Administration. Late in September, Madison had written William Wirt, and expressed the hope that a victory would stifle "the Censorious adversaries and criticising friends of the Administration." By the end of October, with the prospects of a victory dwindling, he wrote Armstrong, "In the worst event, I hope an intermediate establishment between Kingston and Montreal can be secured." Even that limited objective was not obtained.
Armstrong apparently felt it was necessary to remind the President that despite the recent failure, the campaign of 1813 had also had some successes. On November 25, he wrote a summary of the year's military events:

Taking for granted that something must be said about the progress & events of the war on the land, I have assembled all I could on that subject & presented it briefly and truly. . . . The progress of the Campaign tho' less favorable than was expected in its general issue, has been filled with incidents highly favorable to the American arms. The attacks of the enemy of Craney Island, on Fort Meigs, on Sackett's harbor and on Sandusky, have been vigorously & successfully repulsed; nor have they in any case succeeded, on either frontier, excepting when directed against the peaceable dwellings of individuals or villages wholly un-prepared or undefended.

On the other hand, the movements of the Americans have been followed by the reduction of York and of Fort George, Erie and Malden; by the recovery of Detroit and the extinction of the Indian war in the west & by occupancy or command of a large portion of Upper Canada. Battles have also been fought on the borders of the St. Lawrence, which though not accomplishing their special objects, reflect the highest honor on the discipline and prowess of our soldiery and offer to us the best assurance of eventual victory.87

Armstrong's evaluation of the 1813 campaign was premature. The British at least were not through for the year. They began actions on the Niagara frontier early in December. The frontier was inadequately defended by a few hundred militia, and was quickly overwhelmed by a small force of British regulars, militia, and Indians. Fort George was abandoned (on December 10) by Brigadier General McClure of the New York militia who was defending the post. Before retreating, he burned the town of Newark, and this act brought swift
retaliation from the British. On December 18, they crossed the Niagara River, and surprised the American force at Fort Niagara killing sixty-seven Americans. This was followed on December 29 by the assault and burning of Black Rock and Buffalo and the destruction of all the public stores and American boats located there. 88

Lewis Cass passed through Buffalo a week after the attack, and described the ruins of Buffalo as "a scene of distress and destruction such as I have never before witnessed." He also expressed some strong views on the cause of the recent events. He asserted that the commander of Fort Niagara was away from the fort when it was attacked. The force that had destroyed Buffalo had been greatly magnified. He believed the whole force had not amounted to more than 650. Cass blamed the militia which had greatly outnumbered the attackers. All except a few, he asserted, "behaved in the most cowardly manner. They fled with out discharging a musket." 89

The failure of the militia was not an uncommon occurrence in the War of 1812, and indeed Armstrong was at this same time urging the President and Congress to adopt a plan of conscription which would do away with the necessity of relying upon militia. Yet, even though convinced of their worthlessness Armstrong had confided the defense of the whole Niagara peninsula exclusively to militia. Apparently, he was acting upon the delusion that the British would retire from the peninsula to York for winter quarters, and might possibly retire
to some other defensible position if the expedition against Kingston or Montreal were successful.\footnote{90} Harrison had warned on November 11, when McArthur's brigade was withdrawn from Fort George to defend Sackett's Harbor, that the remaining militia force would be inadequate. Armstrong did nothing, however, except to call upon the Governor of New York on November 25 for one thousand militia to replace those of McClure's force whose terms were up.\footnote{91}

The British offensive was undoubtedly a great surprise to Armstrong, and the people of Buffalo paid dearly for his miscalculation. It may be argued, however, that even he had reason to believe the militia would not prove to be so woefully inadequate. For his defense he included in his report to Congress a letter from Colonel Winfield Scott which stated that Fort George was considered to be quite defensible, and declared, "it is difficult to conceive how one or two hundred men could have been suddenly dislodged from its block-houses, even by a force of one or two thousand assailants."\footnote{92}

Scott undoubtedly was referring to regular soldiers, an advantage not enjoyed by General McClure. Regulars had been stationed to defend Sackett's Harbor and the navy there, and there was a large force at Lake Champlain, but none were sent to relieve McClure's dwindling force. The lack of response to the militia calls, and the miserable conduct of the militia under fire were perhaps in part a result of the absence of any regulars on the Niagara frontier. General McClure pointed this out in his defense. "The militia will
do to act with Regulars," he wrote, "but not without them, in spite of all my exertions to insure subordination, my late detachment ultimately proved to be very little better than an infuriated mob."  

The burning of Newark by McClure had been used by the British to justify their unusually severe actions. McClure had done so without authority or perhaps under a mistaken impression. After burning the town he wrote the Secretary of War that his action was "in conformity with the views of your Excellency disclosed to me in a former communication." Armstrong placed in the margin of this letter a notation before sending it to the President. He wrote: "not true. My letter authorised it only in case it should be necessary to the defence of Fort Geo. In that case the measure would be justifiable." As the British had asked for information whether the "atrocious act" of burning Newark was committed by the authority of the American government or whether it was the unauthorized act of an individual, Madison wrote to Armstrong to instruct Wilkinson "to say frankly to Prevost, that the Burning of Newark was the effect of a misapprehension of the officer & not an order from the govt."

Thus, the Campaign of 1813 ended on a note of humiliation, and as far as the northern front was concerned, the events of the year left the situation in no better condition at the end than it was at the beginning. The gains on the Niagara peninsula had been wiped out; the major British posts of Kingston and Montreal had been
threatened but not attacked, and no American force yet seriously threatened (on the St. Lawrence River) the vital link of communication between these two posts.

Armstrong’s plan of strategy, as originally presented to the cabinet, was sound but it was soon altered both by the timidity and specious reasoning of General Dearborn and Commodore Chauncey, as well as by the indecisiveness of the Secretary himself who lacked the firmness of his convictions. A spring and a summer were wasted on military activity on the Niagara peninsula which reflected little credit on the military leadership, and which had little bearing on the future events because the gains were erased at the year's end by a British offensive. An autumn was wasted organizing an expedition which should have begun in the spring, and began in the winter when it should have ended.

The unique experiment of the Secretary of War going to the front must be counted a failure. There is nothing to indicate that Armstrong performed any creditable function which he could not have performed in Washington. Many functions such as forwarding supplies, issuing calls for troops and issuing tactical orders were more properly the duties of the staff officers. His most important function, that of maintaining liaison between Wilkinson and Hampton, was the least creditable and most unjustifiable from the military viewpoint. That he failed to perform that function at the critical
juncture of the campaign, as has been shown, was one important reason for the failure of the expedition against Montreal. Armstrong had gone to the front primarily to act as an advisor and over-all director of the Campaign, which would leave the conduct of operations to the commanders of the armies. He undoubtedly anticipated that he might render quick and useful recommendations. In the final analysis, however, there was little that he did which was useful, much that was useless or unnecessary, and some things which were actually detrimental.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER V


8. Armstrong to Porter, February 12, 1813; Armstrong to Lt. Van deventer, February 12, 1813, WD/LS, Book 6, pp. 464-465, 465-466. See also Madison's rather pessimistic letter to Dearborn regarding the slowness of recruiting, February 14, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.


10. Ibid.


13. Adams, History, VIII, 147, 151-152; Hitsman, Incredible War, p. 120.


16. Dearborn to Armstrong, March 3, March 9, March 14, 1813, WD/LR, See also Dearborn to Madison, March 13, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.

17. Dearborn to Armstrong, March 16, 1813, WD/LR.

18. Dearborn to Armstrong, [no date], WD/LR; A.S.P., Mil. Af., I, 442.


25. Lewis to Armstrong, June 14, 1813, Ibid., p. 446.


34. Lewis to Armstrong, July 5, July 23, 1813, WD/LR.
35. Porter to Armstrong, July 27, 1813, WD/LR.
36. Wilkinson to Armstrong, May 23, 1813, WD/LR.
37. Crawford to Madison, March 3, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.
38. Wilkinson to Monroe, February 9, 1813, WD/LR.
39. Wilkinson, Memoirs, III, 342; Royal Ornan Shreve, The Finished Scoundrel, (Indianapolis, 1933), pp. 275-276. General Winfield Scott, at a later date declared emphatically, possibly based on inside information, "The selection of this unprincipled imbecile was not the blunder of Secretary Armstrong." See Winfield Scott, Memoirs of Lieutenant General Scott, I, (New York, 1864), 94.
42. Armstrong to Wilkinson, August 8, 1813, WD/LS, Book 7, p. 60.


48. Hampton to Armstrong, May 19, July 13, 1813, WD/LR; Hampton to Armstrong, August 22, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.


51. Armstrong to Hampton, August 25, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.

52. Wilkinson to Armstrong, August 21, 1813, *A.S.P.*, Mil. Af., I, 465; Armstrong to Madison, August 28, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.

53. Hampton to Armstrong, August 31, 1813, WD/LR.

54. Armstrong to Duane, September 18, 1813; *Historical Magazine*, IV, Second Series, (August, 1868), 63.

55. Wilkinson to Armstrong, September 18, 1813; Armstrong to Wilkinson, September 18, September 22, 1813; *A.S.P.*, Mil. Af., I, 467, 468, 469.

56. Wilkinson to Armstrong, September 20, 1813, WD/LR.

57. Armstrong to Madison, September 21, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C. For an account of Chauncey's activities, see Mahan, *Sea Power in War of 1812*, II, 51-61. See also Armstrong to Madison, September 26, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.


59. Armstrong to Madison, October 4, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.


61. Armstrong to Madison, October 8, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.


63. Armstrong to Madison, October 19, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.
64. Armstrong to Wilkinson, October 19, 1813, A.S.P., Mil. Af., I, 471-472; Wilkinson to Armstrong, October 19, 1813, WD/LR.


67. Armstrong to Madison, October 20, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.

68. See, for example, his letters of September 22, September 25, October 4, 1813, A.S.P., Mil. Af., I, 459, 460.

69. Hampton to Armstrong, November 1, 1813, WD/LR.

70. Armstrong to Swartwout, October 18, 1813, WD/LS, Book 7, p. 94; Wilkinson, Memoirs, III, 71fn. Wilkinson also includes a copy of the letter, but with the date of October 16. The latter date seems inaccurate, though it cannot be determined.

71. Armstrong to Madison, November 11, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.


73. Armstrong to Wilkinson, October 30, 1813, Ibid., 474.

74. Wilkinson to Armstrong, November 3, 1813, WD/LR.

75. Hampton to Armstrong, November 4, 1813, WD/LR.

76. Wilkinson to Hampton, November 6, 1813, WD/LR; Hampton to Wilkinson, November 8, 1813, A.S.P., Mil. Af., I, 462.

77. Hampton to Armstrong, November 12, 1813, Ibid., 462-463.

78. Hampton to Armstrong, November 13, 1813, WD/LR.

79. Wilkinson to Armstrong, October 19, 1813, WD/LR.

80. Wilkinson to Hampton, November 12, 1813; General Order of November 13, 1813, A.S.P., Mil. Af., I, 463-479.
81. Armstrong to Madison, November 8, November 9, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.
82. Armstrong to Madison, November 11, 1813, Ibid.
83. Armstrong to Madison, November 14, November 19, 1813, Ibid.
84. Wilkinson to Armstrong, November 15, November 17, November 24, 1813; Wilkinson to Hampton, November 26, 1813, WD/LR.
85. Colonel King's testimony at Wilkinson's Court Martial, Wilkinson, Memoirs, III, 78; Armstrong, Notices, II, 24-44.
86. Madison to William Wirt, September 30, 1813, Gaillard Hunt, ed., The Writings of James Madison, VIII, (New York, 1908), 262-265; Madison to Armstrong, October 30, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.
87. Armstrong to Madison, November 25, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.
88. Adams, History, VIII, 201-205.
90. Armstrong to Harrison, October 30, 1813, WD/LS; Armstrong to Madison, December 5, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.
93. McClure to Armstrong, December 25, 1813, WD/LR.
94. McClure to Armstrong, December 10, 1813, WD/LR.
95. Lt. Col. Harvey (British) to McClure, December 14, 1813. The letter was answered with contempt (December 22), which might account for the fact that the British gave no quarter in burning Buffalo. Madison to Armstrong, December 29, 1813, Cong. Ed. Madison Letters, III, 395.
The failure of the campaign of 1813 to dislodge the British or to occupy effectively any position on Canadian soil along the whole northern front from the Niagara peninsula to Montreal obviously necessitated a reevaluation of the concepts of strategy and the mode of operation for the forthcoming campaign in 1814. Secretary of War Armstrong had written President Madison late in 1813, prior to leaving the northern front to return to Washington, expressing hints that primary emphasis should first be placed on gaining control over Lake Ontario and Lake Champlain before further offensive operations were undertaken. An increase in naval means, he wrote, "will be essential to the only plan of campaign we can pursue (sic) with effect." He was perhaps recalling the success that followed Perry's victory on Lake Erie, and which now, hopefully, might bring similar results if victories were won on lakes Ontario and Champlain.

A disposition first had to be made of the large regular force which comprised the combined armies of Wilkinson and Hampton. Wilkinson after giving up the campaign against Montreal, had placed his army on the Salmon River at a place about five miles from the St. Lawrence. The position had certain advantages as he noted to Armstrong: "Its proximity to the great line of communication between
Montreal and Kingston will enable us when the weather becomes settled and our men have recovered high health and are comfortably clad, to keep that communication in constant jeopardy if not entirely to cut it off." He also indicated that should the British ever weaken Montreal he might make an assault upon that place. Armstrong failed to see the wisdom of such a position and feared that the army might be "hedged in," and be worn down "in thought and spirit" by small attacks and constant alarm. He, therefore, ordered Wilkinson to withdraw to a safer position.

Wilkinson renewed his suggestions for an offensive late in December and indicated that he had made himself "master of every direct approach & every devious route to the Enemy, in my front & on my left flank, by land and water." He asserted, "if the war in this quarter is to be prosecuted . . . the preparations should be now begun, that operations may be commenced the moment the winter breaks." Before receiving this letter Armstrong had already given Wilkinson authority to take minor actions to harass the enemy. Armstrong thought the British activity on the Niagara peninsula might be part of a movement to attack Sackett's Harbor. "Some activity on our part," he wrote, "is the surest method of keeping down their enterprises."

It was obvious that Armstrong preferred to place the armies in winter quarters and wait until spring for renewed offensive activity. Pressure was building up, however, to take some measures to counteract
the British activities on the Niagara peninsula. Governor Tompkins warned bluntly, "Be assured, Dear Sir, that something must be done, & that speedily and effectually, or the confidence of the citizens of this quarter of the United States, in the government, will be lost." The Governor recommended that the forces of Wilkinson and Hampton, acting with the force at Ogdensburg, attack Kingston or Prescott. If that were not approved, he asked for 2500 regulars and he would raise 5000 volunteers and attack Burlington or York. A week later Tompkins again wrote urging action. He stated that if the Government were ready to act, he could easily raise 5000 volunteers in ten days; such were the excited feelings of the people of western New York.

In the meantime Wilkinson was submitting improbable schemes which he asked Armstrong to approve. One plan involved a three-pronged attack which would involve 2000 men each from Chateaugay and Plattsburgh to sweep the British from their posts across the boundary and south of the St. Lawrence, while a third force of 4000 from his camp at French Mills would cross the St. Lawrence, attack Cornwall, and fortify it thereby cutting correspondence between Montreal and Kingston. A little over a week later, however, he reported that subsistence was very low and that he might be compelled to retire from his position on the Salmon River. He suggested that with the approval of the Government he would "endeavour to find quarters for them in Prescott & Kingston, which I consider practicable to a Corps
of Hardihood & resolution, aided by the facility of movement to be derived from Sleds."

Two days after this Wilkinson had again changed his mind. He reported that Governor Tompkins favored the plan of attacking Prescott and Kingston, while he now preferred an attack upon Montreal.

Despite the pressure from Governor Tompkins and the incomprehensible urging of General Wilkinson, Armstrong was determined not to be rushed into any project. On January 20, he ordered Wilkinson to withdraw back to Plattsburg and to detach General Brown with 2000 men to Sackett's Harbor. The Quartermaster General was ordered to provide huts for 4000 men at Plattsburg and for 2000 at Sackett's Harbor. Obviously, the Government intended to take no immediate offensive action, for the troops were being ordered into winter quarters. President Madison assumed the task of explaining the measure to Governor Tompkins. He stated that the events on the Niagara frontier were unexpected and distressing, but it was now feared the enemy would turn to some other quarter. Madison acknowledged Tompkins letter which had urged that 2500 regulars be placed on the Niagara frontier, but added:

As a controul on enterprises of the enemy upwards, as well as a barrier to the Country adjoining Niagara, a regular force of the amount you suggest would be the best provision for that station, could it be spared from the armies below and the objects to be elsewhere kept in view. Sackett's Harbour and the stake on Lake Champlain have an essential and constant claim to attention. If, besides making the
former safe, Kingston can be attacked, or even seriously threatened, the effect will be salutary every where. Armstrong, on January 30, explained the order of January 20, to Wilkinson. He inferred that ordering the troops into winter quarters would not interfere with any "well digested project" of attacking enemy posts on the St. Lawrence during the winter or early spring. He noted that the force ordered to Sackett's Harbor was for the purpose of defense, and not calculated to produce a counter movement on the part of the enemy. If Kingston were not reinforced then Brown might "avail himself of the ice, & with the aid of Commodore Chauncey, carry Kingston by a coup de main." Armstrong also informed Wilkinson that same day of a newly formulated project to begin a campaign against the winter quarters of the enemy on the Niagara peninsula. Armstrong confided that Colonel Winfield Scott with a small group of approximately 500 regulars would cooperate with a force of about 2500 volunteer militia and 500 Indians. Wilkinson was asked to furnish part of the regular force.

It is difficult to determine what prompted Armstrong to change his opinion on an offensive operation on the Niagara peninsula. Just a week before, Madison, presumably expressing the attitude of the War Department, had informed Governor Tompkins that troops could not be spared for such a project. Perhaps there was a belief that a militia force led by such a capable officer as Scott might have some success without committing the regular army. It would also
forestall any ill-advised project of the New York militia which might act without the sanction of the War Department. Whatever the reason, Governor Tompkins was informed by Armstrong on February 3, "It enters into the views of the General Government to dispossess the Enemy of the Country between Lakes Ontario & Erie during the present Winter or early in the Spring." At the least, he informed Tompkins, the enemy would be compelled to retire from Fort Niagara, or if he attempted to maintain it, he would have to weaken his defenses below and "abandon the hope of reestablishing himself at any point on the River Thames, or western part of Lake Erie." At the same time orders were given to other commanders along the shore of Lake Erie to take any offensive actions which circumstances allowed.  

Giving General Scott an independent command within his district was bitterly resented by Wilkinson whose feelings toward Scott were not much different from his attitude toward Hampton. Wilkinson's first knowledge of the command came from Scott, and he approached Governor Tompkins to protest. Tompkins was not impressed, and wrote Armstrong noting that Wilkinson was "wonderfully tenacious of his authority," and was full of plans, but, he added, "I predict that he will venture but little if he can help it."  

In order, perhaps, to keep his General occupied as well as from strategic considerations, Armstrong ordered Wilkinson early in March, to move out a detachment from Plattsburgh. "A position," Armstrong
wrote, "which shall have the effect of keeping the Enemy out of Lake Champlain, & of approaching us within striking distance of St. John's would be desirable, & ought to be seized & held." He added with reference to Wilkinson's schemes, "In choosing between this & a mere desultory march ending where it begins, & exposing your troops to peril & hardship without equivalent or use--there can be no hesi-
tancy."\textsuperscript{12} On March 30, Wilkinson marched 4000 men across the border, and moved against a small garrison of approximately two hundred men. Heavy snow and the inability of his two twelve pound field guns to crack the stone block house, along with the heavy casualties inflicted by the defenders prompted Wilkinson to order a retreat and his force retired back to Plattsburgh.\textsuperscript{13}

It was obvious that the war would not go well in the hands of such leaders, and fortunately that was Wilkinson's last action as a military commander. On March 24, Armstrong wrote Wilkinson relieving him from duty. A Court of Inquiry was ordered stemming from charges of misconduct during the expedition the previous autumn. Wilkinson insisted on a Court Martial, which was postponed, but the active command was given to Major General George Izard. General Hampton's resignation was accepted on March 16, thus, insuring that neither of the principals responsible for the debacle the previous fall would command again on the northern front.
While General Scott was preparing to make a demonstration on the Niagara and hold the enemy to prevent them from operating further westward, General Brown had arrived at Sackett's Harbor. Brown's force was intended mainly for defensive purposes, but as Armstrong had informed Wilkinson earlier, Brown might "avail himself of the ice, & with the aid of Commodore Chauncey, carry Kingston by a coup de main." On February 28, with this thought in mind and information that Kingston's garrison was weakly defended, Armstrong ordered Brown to cross the ice and capture the post. The Secretary, however, qualified the order by cautioning that before the expedition be undertaken there should be "practicable roads, good weather, large detachments (made westwardly) on the part of the enemy, and a full and hearty co-operation on the part of our own naval commander." He then added that if the enterprise was agreed upon Brown was to use an enclosed letter, which directed him to detach a brigade to assist General Scott on the Niagara, to mask the object.\footnote{15}

Armstrong had so qualified the circumstances under which an attack upon Kingston was to be undertaken that Brown was easily persuaded that he had an alternative. There was no reason why Armstrong should not have been more explicit, nor any reason to have a cover letter. The tactic backfired, and once again as in 1813, the thrust of the American forces went westward, away from Kingston and Montreal. Undoubtedly, Armstrong had intended Brown to have the
alternative of either attacking Kingston or not, but Brown was convinced by Commodore Chauncey that the plan proposed in the second letter was an alternative to attacking Kingston. Brown accordingly directed two thousand men for Niagara. Armstrong commented at a later date that the two commanders, "by some extraordinary mental process, had arrived at the same conclusion—that the main action (an attack on Kingston) being impracticable, the ruse (intended merely to mask it) might do as well, and should be substituted for it." 16

Brown was apprehensive that he had mistaken the meaning of the Secretary's letters. On March 21, he wrote explaining that his force was too small to attack Kingston. He went to Batavia, and as the instructions in Armstrong's second letter had directed, informed the Secretary of his arrival and announced he would await further orders. Then, almost as an after thought, he wrote, "If I have misunderstood your instructions it must be my misfortune." Brown, upon reflection, became convinced he had misunderstood the Secretary's order, and hurried back to Sackett's Harbor. Upon his arrival he was again convinced by Chauncey that his first understanding was correct. Brown reported to Armstrong that he was now happy again for he had been "the most unhappy man alive." 17 Governor Tompkins was also confused by the movements of Brown and reported to the Secretary of War: "Gen. Brown proceeded to Geneva, from whence on the 21st, he
wrote me an unintelligible letter about retrograding. On the 24th he wrote me from the Harbour, that in a few hours he would return to his troops ... & would then proceed to Niagara in earnest."¹⁸

Brown's second understanding was no better than his first, but he escaped humiliation when the Secretary of War accepted Brown's movement as an alternative to the attack on Kingston. Armstrong had learned of Brown's movement, and had hastened to write the General:

You have mistaken my meaning. The letter directing your movement westward was intended (as you will perceive by looking again at that which inclosed it) merely as a mask for the operation against Kingston, had that been thought advisable. If you hazard anything by this mistake, correct it promptly by returning to your post—If on the other hand, you left the Harbor with a competent force for its defense, go on & prosper. Good consequences are sometimes the result of mistakes.¹⁹

Brown sent his army on to Buffalo where General Scott had organized a camp of instruction. Three months were devoted to teaching military science and tactics (to the small force) and converting them into a disciplined unit.²⁰ Brown apologized to Armstrong for misunderstanding his instructions, and returned to Sackett's Harbor where he reported he had 1500 men for its defense.²¹ Armstrong expressed some concern for the safety of the post, and wrote a letter of encouragement to General Gaines, who he believed was commanding at Sackett's Harbor. He commented on the movement of the enemy, "Is not the Enemy's object the support of the garrison of Niagara & of their posts at the West End of the Lake? Brown's movement was as
likely to excite their fears for these, as their hopes for carrying the Harbor." Armstrong concluded by stating: "If however they do attack you & you are able to cripple them follow up the blow—until you make their disaster, a defeat."  

Thus, by late April, American forces on the Northern front were holding defensive positions. Scott was drilling Brown's force at Buffalo, and the remainder of his army was defending Sackett's Harbor. General Izard's force on Lake Champlain was much diminished by sickness and expiration of enlistments. Armstrong believed there was no danger of attack, but advised Izard that reinforcements would be sent from all points where they could be spared. He warned, however, that they would be composed chiefly of recruits and would require great attention. He added that if the augmentation of enlistments warranted attacks on the enemy posts in front of Montreal then it should be done.  

Thus far no comprehensive plan of campaign had been drafted. Operations had largely reflected a reaction to the circumstances, with little concept of any over all objectives. The amazing example of Armstrong allowing Brown to march 2000 men to the Niagara peninsula after he had ordered an attack on Kingston was not unlike the situation of the previous year when he allowed Dearborn to carry the operations westward. Armstrong's original plan for the campaign of 1814 had been to maintain the concentration of a large force near
Lake Champlain and operate from there against Montreal or some point on the St. Lawrence. The events on the Niagara peninsula, which he conceived to be the prelude to further enemy operations either towards the Thames and Detroit or possibly against Sackett's Harbor, forced him to alter his plans. Instead he proposed to place the army in a defensive status and wait until spring for offensive operations. Nevertheless, he had rather inconsistently recommended offensive maneuvers at the discretion of the commanders. Thus, when Brown's force had marched away from Kingston toward the Niagara, Armstrong's concern was not that it upset any strategic considerations, but that Sackett's Harbor might be left unguarded.

Finally on April 30, Armstrong presented his ideas to the President for a plan of campaign for 1814. He based his plan on two assumptions, one implicit and one explicit. He obviously assumed that nothing great was to be expected from Commodore Chauncey and control of Lake Ontario would not be gained. Thus the operations could not place much dependence on the fleet. He also believed that a six to eight thousand man force could be assembled on the shores of Lake Erie to carry out the campaign. He explained to Madison:

Lake Erie, on which our dominion is undisputed, furnishes a way scarcely less convenient for approaching the heart of Upper Canada, than Lake Ontario. 8 or even 6000 men landed in the bay between point Abino and Fort Erie and operating either on the line of the Niagara, or more directly (if a more direct route is to be found) against the British post at the head of Burlington bay—cannot be resisted with effect without compelling the enemy so to weaken his more eastern posts, as to bring them within reach of our means at Sackets harbour & Plattsburg.
The attack upon Burlington and York, as he explained to the President, would also have the added effect of creating a barrier which would completely protect Malden and Detroit, and would further reduce the enemy's communication and control over the western Indians.

Madison replied that the force which Armstrong contemplated raising was "greater than I had relied upon; and if employed towards Burlington bay & York can not fail to have a salutary effect in different directions." As Armstrong's plan would call for the use of the ships which the Secretary of Navy intended for use on Lake Huron, Madison indicated that the differences should be resolved by the two Secretaries. Madison further stated some doubts about Armstrong's plan and pointed out the dangers inherent in such a maneuver. "After all," he wrote, "the issue of offensive operations in the neighbourhood of Lake Ontario must have some dependence on the Naval command there. Should this be in the hands of the enemy, sudden concentrations at any point chosen may thwart measures otherwise the best planned." Armstrong undoubtedly believed that even if he did not have control of Lake Ontario, he would use his advantage on Lake Erie to transport troops against the rear of British positions on Lake Ontario. This, however, was the limit of the utilization of the control of Lake Erie, and he must have realized that any prolonged activity on the shore of Lake Ontario without control of that lake would expose the army to great danger. His project seems to have
been offered for want of any better proposal. At least there was the prospect that the British might be forced from the Niagara peninsula. Yet, Armstrong himself had said earlier that operations west of Kingston, even if successful left the strength of the enemy unbroken; that it merely wounded the tail of the lion and would not hasten the end of the war. The conclusion must be that he was willing to accept control over the Niagara peninsula as better than nothing, and unless control over Lake Ontario was won, this was all that could reasonably be expected. As he related a little later to Brown, "If you can best the Enemy out of the Peninsula, or compel him to withdraw from it, and establish yourself at York—you will do well."

In the event that Chauncey was able to meet Yeo and win control over the lake, he added, "I do not dispair of your taking Kingston before the campaign ends."

Armstrong acted upon the assumption that his plan had been approved. On May 7, he wrote General Brown and enclosed his April 30 letter to the President. He asserted that this was the outline of the plan of campaign, and ordered Brown to quicken the pace in assembling troops. It had not, however, been approved by the President, nor had the Secretary of the Navy given up his project for the Lake Huron expedition which would carry with it a large part of the Detroit garrison which Armstrong had contemplated using on the Niagara peninsula. Nor was Armstrong himself clear about the details
of his own expedition. His letters seemed to indicate that General Scott would lead the initial movement, and would be joined later by General Brown. He apparently believed Brown would be occupied with the defense of Sackett's Harbor and the American fleet stationed there. On May 25, he anxiously inquired, "When will your fleet be ready to go out?" He then added, "until it is your post cannot be weakened--nor even then until it be known that we are masters of the Lake." Assuming the fleet would soon come out, Armstrong posed the question, "If Scott can make his way to Burlington or York with what force naval & military from Sackett's Harbor can you join him there & when?"  

On the same day Armstrong wrote General Scott. He admitted that it appeared the regular force would be much less than calculated. He added that little could be expected from the West, and as long as the enemy controlled Lake Ontario prospects from the East were not brighter because of the necessity of providing defense at such posts as Sackett's Harbor and Oswego. He noted, however, that as long as there was a force of considerable size at these points, the enemy would be reluctant to detach a force from Kingston. As the enemy force was estimated not to exceed 2700, and Scott's force amounted to 4800, Armstrong asserted no additional force was needed. He then laid out the course Scott was to pursue in great detail:

You may go to Burlington & destroy the land communication between his posts--& in the event of Chauncy's ability to
shew himself on the Lake--open another by water with Sackett’s Harbour. But on the other supposition, that he does detach--he cannot do it by water and in force, without exposing Kingston,--(where in the absence of the fleet, he has not now more than 2500) and if he detaches by land, he will but do so to secure to Kingston the protection of his fleet, or to avoid a Battle with Chauncy, & in either case, you can be supported and supplied from Sackett’s Harbour.

It is unnecessary to enumerate the many disadvantages resulting to your views from the appearance on the lower Lake of our fleet before your movement begins. It will not do however to wait too long for even these advantages—as nothing will sooner break down the spirit of your militia & Volunteers & Indians than delay & the inactivity it entails. The contingencies of Chauncy’s being beaten & destroyed, or of being forced into port & blockaded these require a single remark. On either supposition, your retreat should be promptly & vigorously made to some point on the Canada side of Lake Erie which you can maintain, or from which you can cross the Lake, and this point should be previously settled by arrangement with the naval commanding officer. This indicates the necessity of keeping open your communication with our side so as to be correctly informed of the fate of our fleet.  

This was an open admission that the fleet was essential to the success of the expedition; that without it a retreat should be ordered immediately. This was a realistic appraisal. What gives it an air of unreality was the inability of Armstrong to recognize that by his own reasoning the force should not have been ordered to advance in the first place without the support of the fleet. The letter to Scott, and the implication that Scott and not Brown was to lead the expedition, caused General Brown to draft an angry letter to Armstrong for an explanation.  

Armstrong's whole strategy was being called into question in Washington at the same time. Madison had not approved the plan,
although Armstrong acted on the assumption it had been. On June 3, shortly after he returned to Washington from his home in Virginia, Madison called a special Cabinet meeting for the purpose "to decide on the plan of campaign." The meeting was held on June 7, and Arm­ strong's previous plan was somewhat altered and extended, although it retained essentially the same features. The Lake Huron expedition was approved, and would employ 800 to 1000 troops which Armstrong had intended to use. Also, 14 or 15 boats were to be built at Sackett's Harbor which were to be used on the St. Lawrence to inter­ cept the water communication between Montreal and Kingston. General Izard was to make demonstrations towards Montreal to divert the enemy from operations westward, and if possible to break up his connection with Lake Champlain. Armstrong's project of sending a force from Lake Erie to Burlington Heights "preparatory to further operations for reducing the Peninsula, & preceding towards York, & C.," was approved. The approval, however, was dependent upon Chauncey winning control of the lake.33

Armstrong duly informed General Brown of the plan of campaign as approved by the Cabinet. After carefully explaining the uncertainty of a success by Chauncey, and how the expedition should be conducted he stated, "On the whole therefore it will be seen, that the expedition is contingent--& that if our fleet on lake Ontario be beaten or destroyed, it will not be undertaken." Then as if to indicate that he
had given up that expedition he suggested another. He suggested that in the meantime Brown should keep his troops occupied, and added, "why not take Fort Erie & its garrison, stated at 3 or 400 men?" He asserted that the enemy must keep some troops at Fort George and Fort Niagara and Brown probably would not meet more than 1600 in the field. Armstrong added that if Brown were able to take Fort Erie and Chauncey were successful, the two could cooperate in reducing Fort George and Fort Niagara.  

Brown had suggested a similar project before receiving Armstrong's letter, and unlike previous commanders on the northern frontier was not hesitant to act. He quickly assembled a force which, although smaller than anticipated, was a competent force of approximately 3500 men. On July 3, they crossed the Niagara River and assailed Fort Erie, which was taken that day. They then marched on to Chippewa, about sixteen miles below, where (on the fifth of July) they defeated the British led by General Riall. Brown marched on to the rear of Fort George, but as he reported to the Secretary of War the enemy would not engage and stayed near their works. The British, however, began massing their forces and reinforcements began arriving. Brown was compelled to retire, and on July 25, fought a desperate and bloody battle at Lundy's Lane. Both sides suffered heavy casualties, and Generals Brown and Scott were both wounded severely. The American force withdrew to Fort Erie, where General
Gaines assumed command on August 5. The British began a siege which
dragged on into September, and that was the situation when Armstrong
left office. The fighting had been extremely creditable to American
arms, but produced no decisive results as Armstrong had foreseen a
year earlier. There was hardly an excuse for the campaign except as
a testing ground for the bright, young military leaders who finally
showed the Americans could fight. It was, however, too late for them
to alter the course of the war.

On the Lake Champlain frontier, Major General George Izard
after taking over the spring of 1814 began the task of organizing his
forces which had become depleted and demoralized during the winter.
Although he was the ranking officer in the district his position was
not unlike that of Hampton in 1813. Armstrong explained to the
General: "Territorial limits of command are found inconvenient." Izard
would have his own command, and "when two or more Divisions
unite, the senior officer will necessarily command." Armstrong
might as well have created a separate district. There was no
coordination between Generals Izard and Brown, except when Armstrong
chose to act.

Armstrong's plan of campaign submitted to the President on
April 30, did not include Izard's force in his strategy. Their
function presumably was to threaten Montreal and hold a large enemy
force from detaching forces westward. Also, the outcome of the
struggle to win control on Lake Champlain would largely dictate the
activity on that frontier. At that time Lieutenant Thomas McDonough's major problem was the lack of seamen, much like the difficulty experi­enced by Perry on Lake Erie. General Izard directed his commanders to meet the needs of the navy, but his order aroused much discontent. Izard reported this to Armstrong on June 10, "The circumstance of taking soldiers from our Ranks to man the Navy is in every aspect a very unpleasant one. It is not only unjust to the Individuals, but mortifying to their officers." Armstrong, while asking Izard to cooperate, also noted the calls were becoming too frequent and were producing a considerable diversion from the field. At the same time he was anxious that the issue of the control over the lake be decided. He advised Izard that if McDonough won or if the enemy failed to engage the American fleet, the course would be to seize and fortify Rouse's Point and by placing heavy batteries there close the entrance to the Lake. If McDonough was beaten, Izard should adopt the best defensive plan he could.

After the June 7, Cabinet meeting Armstrong informed Izard of the plan of campaign and the role his force would play. One element of the plan was to build small armed ships which would operate on the St. Lawrence and attempt to intercept the water communication between Montreal and Kingston. Izard was ordered to establish a post on the south bank of the St. Lawrence, which would be strongly fortified, and garrisoned by a competent force of 1500 men. The order was contingent, Armstrong further advised, upon the American fleet winning
control of Lake Ontario. Izard was also ordered to select a position on Lake Champlain for the purpose of excluding the enemy flotilla.

Izard's force continued to grow, and he reported on July 19, to the Secretary of War that he would have 5000 men by August. He did not feel it was competent, however, to conquer and hold any important part of the country. Izard indicated a concern about the events on the Niagara peninsula, and asked Armstrong if some accident occurred should he move to the St. Lawrence and threaten the rear of Kingston. Armstrong claimed in his letter of July 30, that he had anticipated the General's remarks by ordering a movement towards the St. Lawrence on July 27. If he had, then it was strange that without waiting for a reply from Izard, Armstrong forwarded a copy of the July 27 order on August 2. The order directed Izard to march to Ogdensburg and after leaving a 2000 man force there, proceed to cooperate with Commodore Chauncey in attacking Kingston. If Kingston was considered invulnerable, 2000 select troops would be transported from Sackett's Harbor to Burlington Bay to cooperate with General Brown against General Drummond.

By this time, however, the situation had changed considerably as Izard hastened to inform Armstrong on August 11. He asserted that the enemy force was now superior to his and daily threatened to attack. He suspected the only reason they had not yet attacked was because of their caution and expectation of more reinforcements. "I will make the movement you direct, if possible," he stated, "but I
shall do it with the Apprehension of risking the Force under my Command, and with the Certainty that everything in this Vicinity but the lately erected works at Plattsburg and on Cumberland Head will in less than three days after my Departure, be in the Possession of the Enemy." He further observed that he would execute any project which the Government directed, but wished to have the difficulties he faced properly understood. "It has always been my conviction," he added, "that the numerical Force of the Enemy has been underrated," and he believed his army had kept a much larger British force in check for many weeks. Finally, he concluded, "These things I mention, Sir, because although I anticipate Disappointment I will Guard myself against Disgrace." 47

Armstrong undoubtedly was not persuaded by such arguments. He had noted that several times in the past his commanders had grossly overestimated the strength of the enemy, and he now probably suspected the size of the force was much less than Izard claimed. Armstrong's attitude was clearly shown when he related to General Brown early in the summer of 1814, that the "wild reports" of most informers had done much harm. "It is by duping animals of this kind & sending them to us," he wrote, "that the British Army in Canada have done half their work & prevented us from doing a tenth part of our own. Dearborn believed, last March was a year, that the British Army at Kingston amounted to Eight thousand men." 48 Thus, Armstrong wrote
confidently in the same vein to General McArthur on August 6, "The reports of great detachments having arrived from England are much exaggerated." ⁴⁹

When no alteration of the order was forthcoming from the War Department, Izard resolved against his better judgment to comply with his orders. He warned, however, "I must not be responsible for the consequences of abandoning my present strong position. I will obey orders and execute them as well as I know how." He advised that he would march with 4000 men, and added, "All this however is only in the supposition that we shall not be attacked—a contingency by no means unlikely." ⁵⁰ On August 29, Izard's force marched westward. On September 3, Sir George Prevost crossed the boundary with 15,000 men. The assault on Plattsburg began on September 11, and coincided with the attack of the British squadron on the American fleet. Fortunately for the Americans, McDonough defeated the British fleet, and Prevost withdrew from Plattsburg and returned to Canada.

In view of the results, Izard's force was not necessary. Nevertheless, the wisdom of Izard's decision to comply with his orders in the face of the mounting British threat is questionable. Certainly by his own statements he indicated a full realization of the danger. It was obvious that Armstrong did not or could not understand the situation. Under those circumstances little censure would have been attached to his disobedience of the Secretary's orders.
Armstrong's views at this time were directed almost exclusively at the events occurring at the western end of Lake Ontario. He had advised General Izard on August 12, "it has become good policy on our part to carry the war as far to the westward as possible, particularly while we have an ascendency on the Lakes." It is rather ironic to see Armstrong who had recommended Montreal as the major objective in 1812, and Kingston in 1813, focusing the American forces on the Niagara peninsula in 1814. Yet, as has been shown, he apparently believed that only there could American arms achieve success. An attack upon Kingston required not only control of Lake Ontario, but also the destruction of the British fleet. Otherwise, the reticent Commodore Chauncey could not be persuaded to render the necessary assistance. Montreal, Armstrong apparently believed, was too heavily defended. Nevertheless, American success on the Niagara peninsula would not have had much impact on the outcome of the war, while capturing either Kingston or Montreal could have been a decisive factor. Armstrong recognized this fact, but he can be criticized for not acting on this basis and constantly allowing American operations to be carried west of the vital St. Lawrence. When Armstrong left office his successor, James Monroe, returned the focus to the St. Lawrence with a plan of severing this means of communication, but unrealistically planned to use a 40,000 man force. By this time, it was too late.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER VI

1. Armstrong to Madison, November 24, November 25, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.

2. Wilkinson to Armstrong, November 15, 1813, WD/LR; Armstrong to Madison, November 25, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.

3. Wilkinson to Armstrong, December 24, 1813, WD/LR.


5. Tompkins to Armstrong, January 7, January 9, 1814, WD/LR.

6. Wilkinson to Armstrong, January 7, January 16, January 18, 1814, WD/LR.


10. Armstrong to Tompkins, February 3, 1814; Armstrong to General Mead (Erie, Pa.), February 5, 1814; Armstrong to General Harrison, February 5, 1814, WD/LS, Book 7, pp. 118, 120-121, 121.


16. Ibid., p. 66.

17. Brown to Armstrong, March 21, 1814, (two letters), March 24, 1814, WD/LR.

18. Tompkins to Armstrong, March 30, 1814, WD/LR.


20. Eliott, Winfield Scott, pp. 146-150.

21. Brown to Armstrong, April 8, April 29, 1814, WD/LR.

22. Armstrong to Wm. Jones (Sec. of Navy), April 18, 1814; Armstrong to General Gaines, April 26, 1814, WD/LS, Book 7, pp. 165, 173.

23. Armstrong to General Macomb, April 29, 1814; Armstrong to Izard, April 28, May 6, 1814, WD/LS, Book 7, pp. 179-180, 176-177, 186.


25. Armstrong to Madison, April 30, 1814, War Department, Secretary's Office, Letters Sent to the President, National Archives.

26. Ibid.

27. Madison to Armstrong, May 4, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.


32. Brant, Madison, Commander-in-Chief, p. 257.

33. Madison to Armstrong, June 3, 1814; Cabinet Memorandum of June 7, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.

35. Brown to Armstrong, June 17, 1814, WD/LR.


37. Brown to Armstrong, July 6, 1814, WD/LR.

38. Brown to Armstrong, July 16, July 22, 1814, WD/LR.

39. Armstrong had foreseen the possibility that Brown might have to retreat and recommended it if Chauncey failed to win control of the lake; Armstrong to Brown, July 19, 1814, Book 7, pp. 270-271.


41. Izard to Armstrong, May 24, June 10, 1814, WD/LR.


43. Armstrong to Izard, June 10, 1814, Ibid., pp. 269-270.

44. Izard to Armstrong, July 19, 1814, WD/LR.

45. Izard to Armstrong, August 7, 1814, WD/LR.

46. Wm. Jones to Commodore Chauncey, August 13, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.

47. Izard to Armstrong, August 11, 1814, WD/LR.


50. Izard to Armstrong, August 20, August 23, 1814, WD/LR.

51. Quoted in Adams, History, VIII, 100.

When war began between the United States and Great Britain in 1812, Canada was logically viewed as a prize that could be seized as spoils of war. Many southerners, however, also coveted the Spanish territory of Florida. Spain was at peace with the United States, but was a nominal ally of the British. The Spanish control over Florida was very weak, and, therefore, the task of taking possession would not encounter the problems that would be met in taking Canada. President Madison and his Secretary of State James Monroe were particularly anxious to obtain Florida, and in October, 1812, Madison authorized Governor Blount of Tennessee to call out 1500 militia which was intended for the conquest of Florida as soon as Congress gave its approval. The response was rapid and by December 10, Major General Andrew Jackson of the Tennessee militia had raised 2000 men which he pronounced ready to place "the American eagle on the ramparts of Mobile, Pensacola, and Fort St. Augustine."¹

Monroe, in his capacity of acting Secretary of War, began giving the orders to carry out the project. On January 13, 1813, anticipating Congressional approval, he wrote Major General Thomas Pinckney, whose command included Georgia. "It is intended to place under your command an adequate force for the reduction of St. Augustine." The
measure, he reported, would be before Congress in a few days. On January 30, he wrote General James Wilkinson, who was commanding at New Orleans: "The subject of taking possession of West Florida is now before Congress & will probably pass. You will be prepared to carry into effect this measure should it be decided on, of which you will have immediate notice."\(^2\)

Congress did not approve, however, and instead authorized the seizure only of the area of Florida west of the Perdido River. When Armstrong took over the War Department on February 5, his first task was to dismiss Jackson and his force marching to New Orleans. The letter merely explained, "The causes for embodying and marching to New Orleans the Corps under your command having ceased to exist," they were dismissed.\(^3\) Because of the delay in transmission, the order was not received for a month. During this time Jackson's march had been halted at Natchez. General Wilkinson had no desire to have them placed upon his means. He recommended to Jackson not to come on to New Orleans because of the lack of supplies as well as his inability to subsist the men and provide forage for the horses. He informed the Secretary of War of his shortages. He also stated, rather unconvincingly, that he could not determine what the consequences would be of 2000 undisciplined militia far removed from the social restraints in which they were bred "turned loose on this licentious community, made up of all kinds, countries and colors." More to the point, and perhaps the main reason he did not want Jackson to proceed to New
Orleans, he observed to the Secretary that Governor Blount had sent
2000 men and a Major General instead of 1500 men under a Brigadier
General. Jackson would have outranked Wilkinson, and thus would
have taken precedence in command.

Jackson placed his force in a camp near Natchez, and informed
Wilkinson he would remain there and await the orders of the Govern­
ment. Wilkinson learned of Armstrong's appointment, and renewed
their acquaintance. He offered the new Secretary some advice on the
Jackson force. He should scrutinize particularly the impressions
under which General Jackson acted, the composition of his force,
and their expense. Wilkinson wondered if they were necessary, and
added "Two hands in the same purse make waste, & two heads on the
same shoulders form a monster." A week later he reported to the Secre­
tary that he and Jackson would harmonize for the public good despite
the "defective arrangements of your predecessor." He asked Armstrong
to make an immediate decision to keep or dismiss Jackson's troops,
but noted that he thought it might be preferable to keep them and
their expense to the disgust and discontent which would arise from
their dismissal.

Jackson, while in camp, received information that Congress had
refused to authorize the occupation of Florida, and suspected that
his force might be dismissed. Writing the Secretary of War he stated
that if his force was not needed for the march on East Florida, they
would "cheerfully march to the North West Frontier of Canada to meet the foe." Jackson did not receive the order to dismiss his troops until March 15, but a copy was received by Wilkinson on the seventh of March. Wilkinson predicted that "the order will come like a thunder clap on Jackson," and added "I have considered it my duty to soothe him by a complimentary letter." Wilkinson was advised by one of his officers of Jackson's reaction to the War Department order:

"When the Genl. read this he flew into a passion & damned himself if he would disband them till he had marched them back to Tennessee and if the Q Master and contractor would not furnish them with the needful provisions he would take it."^9

Jackson's response to the Secretary of War was more moderate but still very forceful. He wrote:

If it was intended by this order that we should be dismissed eight hundred miles from home, deprived of arms, tents, and supplies for the sick, of our arms and supplies for the well, it appears that these brave men, who certainly deserve a better fate and return from their government was intended by this order to be sacrificed.\textsuperscript{10}

He informed the Secretary that he was going to march his men back to Nashville where he expected the troops to be paid, and the necessary supplies furnished by the agents of the Government, after which he would dismiss his force. Governor Blount, shortly afterwards wrote Armstrong that he assumed the necessity of providing for supplies and payment of the men to be dismissed "had been overlooked,
owing more probably, to the pressure of other important business at
the date of the order." He advised that he had called upon the con­
tractor and paymaster to provide for Jackson's men, and in case they
failed to do so he would borrow the money from the Nashville bank.
He added that he assumed the Government would sanction his measures
as the object was to promote the public good.

Armstrong, in the meantime, unaware of the furor and misun­
derstanding that had been raised by his curt and unexplanatory letter
wrote more fully to Jackson and confirmed what the General had been
contending, viz. that the troops were to be provided for and marched
back to Tennessee where the paymaster was directed to have funds
available for their pay. Had Armstrong been more precise in his
original order the anger which had been aroused by his original order
would have been avoided. The incident, however, could have been
instructive, for it marked General Jackson as a strong-willed and
aggressive man. Armstrong, if he recognized these traits, at any
rate failed to accept Jackson's offer "to support the Eagles of our
country at any point ordered by the constituted authorities."

While these events had been occurring Armstrong had also
written to General Pinckney to call off the invasion plans against
East Florida. On March 7, because of the Russian offer of mediation,
Pinckney was ordered to withdraw American troops from Amelia Island and
Spanish territory in East Florida which had been illegally occupied
since March, 1812. The occupation of West Florida, however, was
ordered by Armstrong under the authority of the Act of February 12, 1813. Wilkinson was instructed to comply immediately, and particularly to take the town of Mobile. Within a month after receiving the order Wilkinson had taken possession of West Florida as far as the Perdido River. The surrender of Mobile occurred on April 15.

Although Wilkinson had conducted himself creditably in this instance the accumulation of grievances against him in Louisiana had led the Administration on March 10 to remove him from command and assign him to the northern front. Wilkinson did not receive the order until May 19, when he returned to New Orleans. He delayed three weeks before setting out on his journey to the North, but finally departed New Orleans on June 10. Brigadier General Thomas Flournoy replaced Wilkinson as the Commander of Military District No. 7, on May 26. Flournoy immediately protested to the War Department of their order of March 29, which called for the Third Regiment to march north for eventual service on the northern frontier. He claimed that "the people are much dissatisfied with it & in my opinion, it not only exposes us to hostile aggression, but is calculated to invite it." Flournoy also asserted that the limit of $5000 monthly expenditures for the Quartermaster would stop all work on fortifications. He concluded by stating that he hoped he would not be held responsible for the consequences resulting from these actions.
Armstrong undoubtedly did not believe any serious consequences would arise from his actions. Before receiving Flournoy's letter he had written, "We have no reason to believe that the Enemy's attention will be turned towards your Command during the present summer." Flournoy was advised to utilize the summer to fill his regiments. Armstrong also urged him to use his best efforts to gain the united support of the public, and to avoid lending his influence to any faction. With an apparent reference to Wilkinson, he noted that past problems "appear to have grown out of the contentions of individuals & the endeavours of these to fasten upon each other public suspicion." When Flournoy's letter was received Armstrong replied that the Third Regiment was not felt necessary for defense, and repeated his earlier statement that there was nothing to fear. The Spanish were too weak and Great Britain, he asserted, "well knows the imprudence of applying any part of her small disposable force to the attack of a Country very difficult to take, & impossible to hold, and the conquest of which from its very remoteness could have no possible bearing upon the defence of her own territory." Armstrong apparently had no serious concern for the safety of New Orleans, but he was concerned about reports of a civil war raging among the Creek Indians and its possible effect on American settlements. The day before writing Flournoy, he ordered the commander of the Third Regiment to halt at Natchez and await further orders.
General Wilkinson, making his way slowly northward, reached Milledgeville, Georgia, early in July. While there he wrote the Secretary of War and gave his observations on the situation among the Creeks. He believed the war party to be very numerous, and added, "it is my opinion, if we do not make some demonstration of interference in behalf of the well disposed, we may eventually be obliged to make some sacrifices of blood & treasure, to extinguish the flame which appears to be on the eve of bursting forth." Wilkinson offered the further advice, "a war in the interior of this Country, however short-lived will cut deep into the public funds and therefore I think it should be prevented by a prompt expedition & a comparative light expense."  

This and other letters like it prompted Armstrong to write on July 13, to the Governors of Georgia and Tennessee. He began: "Information through various channels has reached the Government of the hostility of a portion of the Creek nation, & of the necessity of breaking it down by some prompt & vigorous measures." He called for each Governor to raise a force of 1500 men to cooperate with the Third Regiment. The Governors were asked to correspond with each other in order to effect the best mode of operation. Armstrong advised General Pinckney of the action, and explained that the disturbances among the Creeks had given him "no doubt but that they were the beginning of hostilities against the United States." He then added: 

If they are found to be the result of Spanish, as well as of British intrigue & if the agents of Spain at Pensacola are
seen to give it nourishment & support, it will be an act of War on their part, which may at least leave us at liberty to strike at Pensacola, & thus to seize a point which from local & other circumstances, is, in my judgment, essential to the safety of our frontier on the Gulph.\textsuperscript{27}

Armstrong's actions showed that he anticipated even before most southerners that the Creeks might have a hostile intent toward the whites. This may have been only a pretext. As he intimated to Pinckney, he perhaps hoped to have a force in being which might be used to conquer East Florida if a connection between the Spanish and Creeks could be made. The offer of Russian mediation, and the mission sent to St. Petersburg placed a barrier in the way of projects to seize East Florida, as Armstrong had indicated to Wilkinson late in May,\textsuperscript{28} but Armstrong viewed the cooperation of the Spanish with the Creeks to be sufficient pretext to remove that barrier. On July 26, he again wrote Pinckney and alluded to Monroe's instructions given earlier for operations against East Florida. The increased alarm, Armstrong indicated, might require Pinckney "to hasten the arrangements formerly contemplated."\textsuperscript{29}

The letters to Armstrong in this period were by no means unanimous in their belief that the Creeks intended hostility towards the whites. Benjamin Hawkins, the Creek Indian Agent, even after Armstrong called for the militia, still referred to the Creek disturbances as a civil war. By late July, however, he was warning of a meditated attack, but he did not blame the Spanish. "It is reduced to a certainty," he wrote, "... that the civil war which has raged for some-time among the Creeks originated with the British in Canada."\textsuperscript{30}
The Spanish became involved, however, when a group of Creek warriors visited Pensacola in the middle of July. The Spanish Governor received them politely, but gave them only a small quantity of powder and bullets. On their way back to their villages the Indians were surprised by a group of Americans who had learned of their visit to Pensacola. The Indians fought off their attackers, but the incident at Burnt Corn on July 27, 1813, was, as Henry Adams has written "regarded by the Indians as a declaration of War by the whites." On August 30, the Creeks attacked the post of Fort Mims, about forty miles north of Mobile, and massacred over 250 of the inhabitants including many women and children. The Fort Mims massacre aroused the whole country, and in the South it became the task of the force called for earlier by Armstrong to destroy the hostile Creeks.  

The organization of the force ordered by the Secretary of War on July 13, was slowed by the necessity for coordination between the Governors of Tennessee and Georgia. Governor Mitchell of Georgia in acknowledging Armstrong's order pointed out that no mention had been made of where or how the troops were to be supplied. He also stated that he believed a junction of the Tennessee and Georgia forces would be impracticable because there was no road over which provisions and supplies could be easily transported. He advised that the two forces merely cooperate in their movements. Governor Blount of Tennessee received Armstrong's order enthusiastically and informed the Secretary of War he could raise 5000 men.
The ambiguity of Armstrong's letter led to considerable confusion between the Governors and the War Department. The problems and misunderstandings were complicated by the fact that Armstrong departed for the northern front on August 10, leaving the Department in the hands of Daniel Parker, the Chief Clerk. The two Governors had gained different impressions from Armstrong's letter of July 13. Governor Mitchell had issued a call for militia upon receipt of the letter, but Governor Blount did not feel that he had been given that authority. The Georgia Militia was collected at a rendezvous point in the western part of the state on August 25, and Governor Mitchell informed the War Department that due to Governor Blount's interpretation the force would be raised to 2500 men. The lack of instruction on how funds and supplies were to be furnished led him to make repeated requests for information. Parker finally answered Governor Mitchell early in September informing him that instructions and funds had been sent to the contractor, and that additional funds would be placed at the disposal of the Governor.

Governor Blount in the meantime allowed the month of August to pass while awaiting further instructions from the War Department. Finally, after word of the Fort Mims massacre he wrote the War Department on September 8, and asked that if the letter of July 13 was intended as authority to call out the troops then what provision had been made for arming and supplying them? "There is," he stated, "no
public arms, munitions of war or camp equipage here or in any part of the state that I am authorized to command or call for . . . nor to draw Bills for defraying any expenses attendant on a campaign."

He continued: "The want of instructions & information on these heads & of supplies embarrasses me very much which difficulties will I hope soon be removed by my getting full instructions from the War Dept." 36

On September 28, still without instructions, he informed the War Department that the Tennessee Legislature had authorized a force of 3500 men to march against the Creeks. He added that he had already called for the 1500 men indicated as authorized by the Secretary of War for the service of the United States. He requested that the President also accept the additional 3500 men into the public service.

Blount further related: "I have thought it indispensibly necessary (without authority) to order supplies to be furnished them . . . and to provide for the expenses of all the troops, I have considered it my duty to draw Bills on the Secy of War." 37

Madison decided to accept the additional force into public service, because as he explained to Armstrong it was thought best to deliver "a decisive blow" before the British or Spanish could render the Creeks much assistance. Armstrong following the events from the northern front, disagreed with Madison. "After so much unaccountable sluggishness," he wrote in reply, "Tennessee is pouring out thousands.
How shall we pay them? I think it would be well to admonish Gov. Blount that our calculations were made with strict regard to our means—and that the amount of the requisition (1500) is as many as we can pay & feed." Madison was not persuaded and explained his decision more fully:

The expence threatened on the part of Tennessee is much to be regretted. It was submitted to in consideration of the delays & uncertainties which had occurred, and in the hope that the augmented force from that quarter would insure success before Br. or Spanish measures could cooperate with the hostile Indians, particularly in drawing other tribes into the war; and that the period of service would be very short. Govr. Blount has been already reminded of the expediency of avoiding every waste of force & expence . . . .

With Armstrong at the northern front Madison assumed the task of selecting a commander to head the expedition against the Creeks. Originally he had planned to name Governor Mitchell to command, but changed his mind and decided instead to select General Pinckney. He explained to Monroe his reason: "I was governed by the sole consideration that it was in a manner necessary to an effective organization of the military supplies." There were also many difficulties, Madison continued, including the risk of delay; the possibility that Pinckney's appointment might be unsatisfactory to Governor Mitchell, and would probably be unacceptable to the Georgia militia. When he was assured by Monroe that provisions for supply could be handled without Pinckney, Madison reverted to Governor Mitchell as his choice, and asked Monroe to convey the message to the War Department.
Governor Mitchell was informed by Parker on September 5, that the Secretary of State would soon write to give the Governor the views and instructions of the President on the campaign, and that the command had been assigned to him. During the month of September nothing was accomplished by the Georgia militia. Governor Mitchell apparently was satisfied to hold a defensive position along his frontier, and perhaps was waiting for the Tennessee force to be called out and organized before engaging in any offensive.

By early October, Madison was undoubtedly having some second thoughts. He wrote to Armstrong, "It would be fortunate if we had an eligible Maj. Genl: in that quarter, at once to effect a general concert & to secure the command in regular hands." He explained that Governor Mitchell had been appointed to command and would continue to do so if he were reelected in the approaching session of the legislature. If not, he continued, General Floyd would command the Georgia militia, and be subordinate to General Flournoy, but Flournoy in turn would be subordinate to the Tennessee commander who would undoubtedly be a Major General.

This circumstance prompted Madison to revert to Major General Pinckney, who commanded the Sixth Military District, which encompassed the two Carolinas and Georgia. On October 18, Pinckney was informed that his command would be extended to the Seventh Military District for the purposes of the campaign against the Creeks.
appointment, however, was not made until November 7, after Madison was informed that Governor Mitchell declined reelection. Armstrong could not, and did not exercise much control over the policy in the South. On September 26, after being informed that the Spanish had burned some block houses on the American side of the Perdido, he urged Madison to act immediately to take Pensacola.

"The force assembling for the Creek business," he added, "will be competent to the object." Despite Armstrong's advocating an action with which he was sympathetic, Madison doubted he had the authority without Congressional approval. Such a measure would undoubtedly have met with enthusiastic approval in the South. These territorial ambitions, however, assumed that the Creeks would be easily subdued. Madison was not optimistic, and (he informed Armstrong) one reason for not acting against the Spaniards at Pensacola, was that "it is not certain that in the present state of Indian affairs in that quarter a sufficient force could be spared for another object." Madison's concern about the state of the war was justified, but misplaced. Actually there was never really a shortage of troops, but there were serious problems of supply and there was a want of cooperation and coordination among the various forces around the Indian country. Five thousand Tennessee volunteers under Major Generals Jackson and Cocke were operating separately in northern Alabama. In early November, Jackson and his men won two decisive
victories, but could not follow up because of a lack of supplies. The Georgia militia, acting completely independent of the Tennessee force, confined their activity to defensive measures along their frontier until late November when General Floyd led a successful raid into the Indian Country, but they shortly returned back to their defensive positions. Another expedition led by Brigadier-General Claiborne of the Mississippi volunteers raided from the South up the Alabama River, but without cooperation and supplies, he was forced to retreat. Thus, four expeditions were made into the Indian country in 1813 from four directions without successfully ending the war.  

General Jackson wrote to General Floyd at the end of the year expressing his views, which reflect the reasons for the failure of the campaign. He wrote, "I must be permitted to lament that there has been so little concert in the operations of the Georgia and Tennessee troops." He reviewed his actions during the campaign and then stated: "When I had approached nearly to the heart of the Enemy's Country, I found myself standing alone, unsupported by the Georgia troops; or those from E. Tennessee; and what was worse; unsupported by the contractors."  

The lack of direction from the War Department, and the lack of a military commander to coordinate the actions of the various forces were also reasons for the ineffectiveness of the campaign against the Creeks. Armstrong did not return to Washington until late
December, and General Pinckney did not arrive in west Georgia until the last of November to assume command of the Creek campaign. Jackson at first believed Pinckney was a Georgia officer. Pinckney was soon informed of the problems of supply, and that the terms of service of his forces were soon to expire. He wrote the Secretary of War on December 14, that the lack of a force would soon be a critical problem. Armstrong authorized the General to call for militia or volunteers, but ever careful of finances, cautioned: "It is of importance not to load the Service with a larger force than may be necessary. The Gen. will therefore pay particular attention to this point."  

Pinckney's appointment, as has been noted, was made primarily because a major general of the regular army was wanted so that no militia officer would out-rank him. Consequently, Brigadier General Flournoy, who commanded the Seventh Military District in which the Creek campaign was taking place, was informed that special direction of the expedition against the Creeks was given to General Pinckney while he was expected to give his attention to the other areas of the District. Both Generals placed different interpretations on their positions, and Armstrong was soon called upon to resolve the conflict between them. Pinckney adopted the position that he was commander of both the Sixth and Seventh Districts. Flournoy asked the Secretary of War on January 24, 1814, for a clarification, and
wrote, "I am of opinion that the General has mistaken the extent of his powers." 52

Armstrong found himself in a peculiar situation, one that he was not responsible for making. Rather than decide between the two Generals, he decided to allow the situation to exist until a replacement was found for General Flournoy who had asked to be relieved as early as December 12, 1813. When Flournoy repeated his request on January 5, 1814, Armstrong wrote that he would be relieved as soon as possible. 53 While Armstrong was looking for a suitable successor, the relations between the two men grew worse. Flournoy was particularly upset when Pinckney countermanded his order for the Thirty-Ninth Regiment to march to New Orleans, and he also objected to the requisitions upon his supply officers by Pinckney without sending them through him. 54 Pinckney admitted that it was with reluctance that he "diverted any of the troops originally destined for the defence of the other parts of the District," but he believed them to be necessary for the campaign and General Jackson had specifically requested that he be allowed to keep them. 55 Pinckney further contended that Flournoy's position that all supply requisitions be made through him was impracticable. 56

The situation between the two Generals was becoming untenable, and undoubtedly Armstrong would have had to relieve Flournoy or strictly define the limits of the two commanders' powers if the Creek
War had continued any longer. By April, however, the campaign against the Creeks was entering its final phase. In January both General Jackson and General Floyd had launched movements into the Creek country intending to form a junction, but the effort was premature, and both were compelled to withdraw before they could join. On March 27, Jackson won a bloody and decisive battle at Horseshoe Bend, and by April 15, when he effected a junction with the Georgia force the Creek resistance was broken. General Pinckney joined the two armies on April 20 and took command, but two days later he advised Armstrong, "Accounts from every quarter concur in assuring us that all effectual resistance of the hostile Creeks is at an end." He related that he had allowed General Jackson to dismiss some of his troops, and that he would soon go back to the sea coast and give General Flournoy notice of his relinquishing command of the Seventh Military District. Pinckney urged that commissioners be quickly appointed to make the arrangements with the hostile Indians. He also indicated that he felt his duties would render it impracticable to take part in the settlement. Two weeks later Pinckney repeated his earlier assertion that Creek resistance was at an end, and related that many were in a wretched state and starving. He reaffirmed his disinclination to take part in arranging a treaty with the Creeks.

The task of writing the treaty fell to General Jackson who was appointed a Major General in the regular army late in May and assigned
command of the Seventh Military District to replace General Flournoy. The circumstances of his appointment have been dealt with elsewhere. Armstrong in his initial instructions directed Jackson to "proceed without delay to Fort Jackson and consummate the arrangements committed to Major General Pinckney in relation to the hostile Creeks." He enclosed a copy of the instructions he had given General Pinckney. Included in these instructions were demands for an indemnity in the form of a cession of land equivalent to the expense of the war; that the Creeks cease all intercourse with the Spanish; that they surrender their prophets and other instigators of the war; and that they agree to allow roads, military posts, and trading houses to be built in their territory. Armstrong continued his letter to Jackson:

If the hostile part of the Creeks is really broken down—If they are prostrate before us and even begging from us the means of subsistence, and if the friendly part of the nation has in itself any force & a disposition to employ it, (& of all these facts there is no doubt) why retain in service any portion of the militia? The 3d & 39th of the line (with the friendly Creeks) will be amply sufficient to cover the negociation; and that terminated (as you think it may be) even these may be carried promptly to New Orleans, where their Services may be wanted.  

Jackson assumed command of the Seventh Military District on June 15. That same day the man he relieved, General Flournoy, offered his resignation to Armstrong in a strongly worded letter which indicated his bitter feelings. Flournoy complained particularly of Armstrong's failure to resolve the conflict with Pinckney who he claimed
had acted in an "insufferable manner" and without the "respect due from one officer to another." He also complained that the War Depart­ment had frequently corresponded directly to officers under his command, and "produced such a state of insubordination, that I can no longer command the district." In reply, Armstrong disavowed any misconduct on his part. He explained that the delay in relieving him was due to the illness of General Howard who had been designated to replace him. He accepted the resignation, and expressed regret about the controversy between the two Generals and stated that it appeared to have grown out of misconceptions.

Jackson in the meantime was preparing to draft a treaty with the Creeks. As the Secretary's instructions with regard to the dismissal of the militia had been in the form of a question, he advised that until the "business" was completed, and the boundary lines run and marked "good policy forbids the discharge of the militia." He noted that part of the hostiles had fled to the Seminoles and might with their assistance still attempt to do harm, as well as the rumors of a British force hovering on the southern coast, indicated the wisdom of that policy. Referring to the treaty Jackson asked that someone be appointed immediately to run the boundary as soon as the arrange­ments were entered into. "This is suggested from a full conviction," he said, "that [there is] no time like the present (when the past is fresh on their minds) to receive ample remuneration for this war."
Armstrong in reply discounted the importance of a British naval force on the southern coast because, he argued, "having permitted the month of April, May & June to escape without effort, on their part, it is not presumable, that they will attempt much during the hot & sickly seasons." Nor did Armstrong believe the Seminoles, who had not taken part when the issue was doubtful, would be disposed to enter now. Under this belief Armstrong ordered Jackson to discharge the force "as early as may consist with the interests of the Public." Armstrong was not emphatic in his order, but indicated that he believed the war was over and there was little to fear either from the Indians or the British and Spanish. He was more concerned, as he so often was, of the expense entailed in keeping a large militia force in the field, particularly when it was not fighting.

Jackson was operating under different assumptions. He believed the Indian threat still remained, and to reduce the militia force might encourage the Creeks to renew their efforts, particularly if they were given assistance by the British and Spanish. In order to ascertain more clearly the Government's viewpoint, and to slyly give them his, he wrote Armstrong on June 27, and posed a question. He asked that if it could be proven that the Creeks, who had taken refuge in East Florida were being fed and armed by the British, and that the British had landed troops and were fortifying positions with a large supply of ammunitions, would the Government allow him to raise
a few hundred militia and "with such of my disposable force, proceed to and reduce?" If the Government approved, Jackson wrote, "I promise the war in the South has a speedy termination, and British influence forever cut off from the Indians in that quarter."  

"The case you put is a very strong one," Armstrong wrote in reply "& if all the circumstances stated by you unite, the conclusion is inevitable. It becomes our duty to carry our arms where we find our Enemies." He noted, however, that it was not believed the Spanish Government was disposed to break with the United States nor to encourage any conduct from their territory such as Jackson had mentioned. He concluded by repeating his policy: "If they admit, feed, arm & cooperate with the British and hostile Indians, we must strike on the broad principle of self preservation. Under other & different circumstances we must forbear."  

Jackson could only base his statements on reports which were subject to error, and had to operate on his instructions from the War Department. On July 24, he wrote Armstrong that the capitulation of the Indians would be signed in a few days. He repeated the reports that had been given him of a British landing. He noted that by his instructions he was ordered to dismiss the militia when the treaty with the Creeks was signed. Under the new circumstances he asked to be advised "whether it is the order of the President that this post be left defenceless and a frontier of eight hundred miles open'd to the incursions of Frances, McQueens, and other Mauraders, who be
excited to mischief by British influence and Spanish intrigue. At the same time he was corresponding with General Pinckney about the lack of defense once the militia was dismissed. "Should hostilities be again renewed," he wrote, "and they aided by the British and Spaniards, I shall have to lament much the necessity under my instructions of having abandon the posts in my rear." This was particularly unfortunate, he continued, because the Creeks might again be "excited to a spirit of hostility" when the terms of the capitulation became known. "I am determined," he said, "to remunerate the Government for the expenses incurred in this unprovoked War to its full extent."  

True to his word, Jackson forced the Creeks to submit to a harsh treaty (signed August 9) which appropriated approximately two-thirds of their lands. Most of the southern and western half of Alabama was taken from them. In other respects the treaty followed closely the instructions which Armstrong had originally sent to General Pinckney. The treaty was written with chiefs representing only about one-third of the Creeks. Most of the hostile Creeks had fled to East Florida, and Jackson had every reason to expect that the terms of the treaty might lead the Indians to renew hostilities before submitting. 

When Jackson's latest letters were received in Washington, Armstrong made it clear that he had never intended for the entire area
Madison was informed that instructions had been given to General Pinckney to maintain a garrison at Fort Jackson, and also at other posts along the Georgia frontier. Pinckney wrote Armstrong on August 11, indicating that he believed Jackson had misunderstood the orders. It is possible that Pinckney had never passed them on. At any rate Jackson was ordered on August 20, not to abandon Fort Jackson. Armstrong also indicated that if the rumors of a British landing were true then a military force from Tennessee might be needed. He was further informed that Governor Blount had been ordered to hold 2500 men in readiness. Jackson had not waited for the authority. After receiving definite proof of a British landing at Pensacola early in August he had called out the Tennessee militia, and informed the Secretary of that fact on August 25.

The day before, Washington was burned by the British, and the aftermath of that incident led to Armstrong's removal. For over a month Jackson was without instructions from the War Department, and for some time after he continued to run affairs in his department as he pleased. He indulged his desire to strike at the Spanish, and without authority occupied Pensacola on November 7. From there he went eventually to conduct the defense of New Orleans for which he gained great fame and became one of the foremost American heroes of the War of 1812.
For many reasons Armstrong exerted little influence or control over the southern front. Initially he assumed that there was little possibility of invasion because of its remoteness, and thus he evinced little interest in the events of that area. The Creek War broke out after he had gone to the northern front, and upon his return he did not attempt to alter the policies which were in effect. Unlike the other theaters of war, he never developed a plan of strategy for the South, nor did he interfere to a marked extent with the commanders. In short, Armstrong for the most part allowed those in the South to conduct their own affairs, and with such men as Andrew Jackson, he could have done nothing better.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER VII


4. Wilkinson to Secretary of War, February 9, 1813, WD/LR.

5. Jackson to Wilkinson, February 16, 1813, WD/LR.

6. Wilkinson to Armstrong, February 23, March 2, 1813, WD/LR.

7. Jackson to Armstrong, March 1, 1813, Bassett, I, 283-285; Jackson to Armstrong, March 7, 1813, WD/LR.

8. Wilkinson to Armstrong, March 9, 1813, WD/LR; Wilkinson to Jackson, March 8, 1813, Bassett, I, 290-291.

9. Colonel Covington to Wilkinson, March 15, 1813, WD/LR.


11. Blount to Armstrong, April 6, 1813, WD/LR.


15. Armstrong to Pinckney, March 7, 1813, Ibid., p. 309.


20. Flournoy to Armstrong, April 1, 1813, WD/LR, acknowledges his appointment of March 10, 1813.

21. Flournoy to Armstrong, May 29, 1813, WD/LR.

22. Armstrong to Flournoy, June 24, 1813, WD/LS, Book 6, p. 479.


25. Wilkinson to Armstrong, July 6, 1813, WD/LR.


32. Mitchell to Armstrong, July 29, 1813, WD/LR.

33. Blount to Armstrong, July 30, August 1, 1813, WD/LR.

34. Mitchell to Armstrong, August 9, August 24, August 31, September 14, 1813, WD/LR.

35. Parker to Mitchell, September 5, 1813; Parker to Ward & Taylor (Contractors), September 3, 1813, WD/LS, Book 7, pp. 40-41, 56.

36. Blount to Sec. of War, September 8, 1813, WD/LR.

37. Blount to Sec. of War, September 28, 1813, WD/LR. See also Blount to Major General Cocke (Tenn.), September 25, 1813; Blount to Major General Jackson (Tenn.), September 24, 1813, WD/LR.
38. Madison to Armstrong, October 11, 1813; Armstrong to Madison, October 20, 1813; Madison to Armstrong, October 30, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.

39. Madison to Monroe, September 1, 1813, September 2, 1813, Monroe MSS, L.C.


41. He expressed his view a little earlier that he would keep his troops near Creek country "to protect vulnerable spots." Mitchell to Armstrong, August 24, 1813, WD/LR.

42. Madison to Armstrong, October 11, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.

43. Parker to Pinckney, October 18, 1813, WD/LS, Book 7, pp. 58-59.


45. Armstrong to Madison, September 26, 1813, Madison MSS, L.C.

46. Madison to Armstrong, October 8, 1813, *Ibid.* Governor Blount among others was advocating the seizure of Pensacola, to get rid of Spanish influence over the Indians, see Blount to Col. John McKee, November 7, 1813; Blount to Sec. of War, September 27, 1813, WD/LR.


48. Jackson to Floyd, December 27, 1813, WD/LR.

49. Pinckney to Sec. of War, November 23, November 30, December 2, December 4, 1813, WD/LR.

50. Pinckney to Sec. of War, December 14, December 17, December 23, 1813, WD/LR; Armstrong to Pinckney, January 1, 1814, WD/LS, Book 7, p. 90.


52. Flournoy to Armstrong, January 24, 1814, WD/LR.

53. Flournoy to Armstrong, December 12, 1813, January 5, 1814, WD/LR; Armstrong to Flournoy, February 8, 1814, WD/LS, Book 7, p. 122.

54. Pinckney to Armstrong, February 16, 1814; Flournoy to Armstrong, March 4, 1814, WD/LR.
55. Pinckney to Armstrong, March 20, 1814; Jackson to Pinckney, February 4, 1814; Pinckney to Jackson, March 23, 1814, WD/LR.

56. Pinckney to Armstrong, April 5, 1814; Pinckney to Flournoy, April 5, 1814, WD/LR.


58. Pinckney to Armstrong, May 6, 1814, WD/LR.


60. Armstrong to Jackson, May 24, 1814, Ibid., p. 203.


62. Jackson to Armstrong, June 13, 1814, WD/LR.


64. Jackson to Armstrong, June 27, 1814, Cong. Ed., Madison Writings, III, 408.


66. Jackson to Armstrong, July 24, 1814, WD/LR.


68. A.S.P., Indian Af., I, 826-827.

69. Armstrong's instructions to Pinckney were given on June 23, 1814, which Pinckney noted in his letter. Armstrong's annotation on this letter which was sent to Madison, indicated his belief that Jackson still had authority to alter the arrangement according to the circumstances. See Pinckney to Armstrong, August 11, 1814, WD/LR.

70. Armstrong to Jackson, August 20, 1814, WD/LS, Book 7, p. 297.

71. Jackson to Armstrong, August 25, 1814, WD/LR.
CHAPTER VIII
THE FALL OF WASHINGTON

The arrival of the British fleet off the American coast in the spring of 1813, caused great excitement and alarm all along the seashore. The new Secretary of War, John Armstrong, reported to William Duane that the whole coast was "demanding defence, at a hundred points." He observed that at best the War Department would be able to fortify only the most prominent points. The British were active particularly in the Chesapeake Bay area, and made occasional raids along the coast, which were accompanied by much destruction of private property and outrages upon the defenseless inhabitants. One exception was on June 22, when an attack upon Norfolk was repulsed.

The actions of the British fleet, and the prospect of further incursions prompted a proposal by Armstrong in the summer of 1813 for additional defenses along the coast. His interest was short-lived, however, and as noted elsewhere (Chapter II), most of the funds for fortifications were diverted to other needs. Armstrong was, in fact, convinced that fortifications were much too expensive in proportion to their military importance. Not only did he divert the funds, he also attempted to discourage the demands for them. In the spring of 1814, in response to a plea from General Dearborn for
money to build additional defenses, Armstrong bluntly stated: "If New York and its neighborhood, with a population of 100,000 souls--the defences already made, and 1800 or 2000 Regular troops, are not a match for 4 or 5000 British assailants we may as well give up the game at once." He also observed, "If the present rage for fortifications was yielded to, there would be no end to them. The truth is that one generally begets a supposed necessity for another."\(^5\)

In a similar manner Armstrong resisted demands for fortifications for the defense of Washington. Major General John P. Van Ness, commander of the District of Columbia, reported that he frequently brought up the matter of the defenseless situation of the District, but Armstrong "appeared rather indifferent, and expressed an opinion that the enemy would not come, or even seriously attempt to come to this District."\(^6\) Van Ness also noted that the lack of defensive works caused "great anxiety, inquietude, and alarm \([in]\) the District and surrounding country." In fact a deputation from Alexandria, Washington, and Georgetown had, as early as May, 1813, urged a more efficient defense for the District, particularly at Fort Washington on the Potomac. As a consequence Armstrong sent Colonel Decius Wadsworth of the Ordnance Department to examine the fort and make recommendations. Wadsworth reported on May 28 that "an additional number of heavy guns...and an additional fort in the neighborhood, are both to be considered unnecessary."\(^7\)
Nothing further was done in 1813. In the early summer of 1814, however, Armstrong was approached by a committee of bankers who renewed suggestions for increased defenses and recommended an additional fort be built below Fort Washington. Armstrong reported to the House committee investigating the capture of Washington, that he answered, "that a small work would be unavailing, and that, to erect one of sufficient size and strength, was impracticable, for want of money."

The bankers then offered to loan the Government $200,000 on condition that it be used to defend the District. The offer was accepted, and the money was to be paid into the Treasury on August 24, the day Washington was captured by the British. As Armstrong noted to the committee: "The events of that day put an end to the business, and at the same time furnished evidence of the fallability of the plan, had it even been executed, by showing that no works on the Potomac will, of themselves, be sufficient defence for the Seat of Government." He continued:

The lack of money certainly modified Armstrong's actions, and undoubtedly had the Government not been verging on bankruptcy some
fortifications would have been built if merely to satisfy the anxious citizens of the District. Nevertheless, as he stated himself, he believed bayonets were "the most efficient barriers." The lack of funds limited even the utilization of that expedient, as he later showed by his reluctance to incur the additional expense of militia calls. Essentially Armstrong believed that Washington was relatively safe because it offered no military objective of great importance. As late as August, 1814, when the British had entered the Patuxent River, Armstrong was not very concerned. General VanNess stated that in conversation with the Secretary he noted that the enemy intended to strike a serious blow. "His reply", according to VanNess, was "'Oh yes! by God, they would not come with such a fleet without meaning to strike somewhere, but they certainly will not come here; what the devil will they do here,' etc." VanNess indicated that he disagreed, and Armstrong countered, "no, no! Baltimore is the place, sir; that is of so much more consequence."\(^9\)

Armstrong's attitude was disturbing to the people of the District of Columbia. There is no evidence that he ever made an attempt to explain to them the lack of funds as a limitation on the expenditures for fortifications, except to the committee of bankers as previously noted. The public confidence in the Secretary of War was rapidly declining, and he must have realized that the blame would all be attached to him if Washington were attacked. In fact he was warned of this fact early in July by William Tatham, a consultant for
the War Department's topographical branch. Tatham had made a study of the area about Washington and was aware of the problems facing the War Department. His warning proved to be prophetic:

My belief is, we cannot defend Washington; because Congress have such a mistaken notion of public economy that they will not allow us the where with all—Thus, I foresee, if they are in a condition to make a push from the enemies fleet, as policy will direct them to do if we are not the peculiar favorites of heaven, the result will be that, we shall fail; and popular clamour will shelter the real pittiful cause, by an abuse of John Armstrong, for being less than omnipotent.10

The increased activity of the enemy in the Chesapeake Bay area in the spring of 1814, which had prompted a call-out of the District for a short period in June, along with the arrival of the news from Europe of the fall of Napoleon, prompted Madison to call a Cabinet meeting for July 1, to discuss measures for the defense of Washington. It was decided to create a new military district on the Potomac, and on July 2, Brigadier General William Winder was designated to command the new Tenth Military District. Winder was to have at his disposal a force of approximately 3,000 men, of which about 1,000 were regulars. In addition 10,000 militia were to be designated by the neighboring states and held in readiness for a call from Winder.11

Armstrong apparently had little to do with the planning of these measures. He reported at a later period that he had not approved of Winder's appointment and he claimed it was made because Winder was a native of Maryland and a relative of the governor.
Armstrong also referred to the measures taken as "prescribed by the President." Considering the poor relations between the Secretary and the President at this period, Armstrong's statement is plausible. In view of the President's lack of knowledge of military science, Armstrong may have suspected that his rival, Secretary of State James Monroe, was in reality responsible for the measures. Armstrong's actions in this period tend to indicate that he believed the responsibility for the defense of Washington to be as much the President's (and Secretary of State's) as his own. The relatively passive role of the Secretary of War, and the rather aggressive attitude of the President are also completely at variance with the former relations between the two men.

The new commander of the Tenth Military District and Armstrong quickly clashed on the best manner to utilize the militia. Even before he was officially confirmed, Winder was suggesting that the militia "should be called out for one, two or three months." When he arrived in Washington on July 6, he again repeated his suggestion, but as he related to the House committee, "The Secretary was of opinion that the most advantageous mode of using militia was upon the spur of the occasion, and to bring them to fight as soon as called out." If that was indeed the argument Armstrong used, then he was being less than truthful. Undoubtedly the real reason was his objection to the expense resulting from what he considered to be...
unnecessary calls. He was also resisting at the same time a
suggestion by General VanNess that the militia of Washington be
called out on a rotational basis until the danger passed. Armstrong
apparently believed they should not be paid unless they were fighting.
This was essentially the same position he had taken to limit General
Harrison's militia calls a year earlier.  

Winder obstinately persisted, and on July 9, again recommended
a militia call which he believed should amount to 4,000 men. This
force, he related, he would place in the best positions for defense
and they would thereby retard the advance of any enemy movement.
Winder's argument was designed to refute the contentions of the
Secretary of War on the best manner to utilize the militia:

Should Washington, Baltimore, or Annapolis, be their
object, what possible chance will there be of collect-
ing a force, after the arrival of the enemy, to inter-
pose between them and either of those places?...allow-
ing, liberally for all causes of detention, he can be
in either of those places ten days from his arrival.
What time will this allow us to hear of his arrival,
to disseminate through the intricate and winding chan-
nels the various orders to the militia, for them to
assemble, have their officers designated, their arms,
accoutrements, and ammunition, delivered, the necessary
supplies provided, or for the commanding officer to
learn the different corps and detachments, so as to issue
orders with the promptitude and certainty so necessary in
active operations? If the enemy's force should be strong,
which, if it will come at all, it will be, sufficient
numbers of militia could not be warned and run together,
even as a disorderly crowd, without arms, ammunition,
or organization, before the enemy would already have
given his blow.
Winder's arguments apparently had no effect on Armstrong who would have done well to have heeded them. Instead Armstrong replied on July 12, that Winder had authority to call for militia, "in case of actual or menaced invasion of the District." He also cautioned Winder, "You will be careful to avoid unnecessary calls, to proportion the call to the exigency." There was some reason for Armstrong to believe his ideas were correct. During June the British appeared at the mouth of the Patuxent, about fifty miles below Washington. The Georgetown and city militia had been swiftly mobilized and marched to the river, but the British retired back down the river and the militia was dismissed. Also Armstrong's ideas on the utilization of the militia had the sanction of the President. Madison in fact explained the Government policy to Governor Barbour of Virginia in June. The question, he indicated, was whether the militia should be called out immediately and under an uncertainty as to the objects of attack, or whether they should be held for immediate call of states under attack. There were many objections to an immediate call, he contended, because it would be a waste of resources, exhaust the means and hazard everything. The task, he concluded, was to find or discover the objects of the enemy and then the resources and militia could be applied to greater effect.

On July 17, the British again appeared on the Patuxent River, and at the call of General Winder three companies of the Washington
militia were promptly dispatched. When they had reached Woodyard, about ten miles from the city, they were halted by Winder who had received information that the British were again retiring down the river. Rather than utilize the force at his disposal to prepare defenses or for some other measure, Winder dismissed the force even, as he admitted, while still unsure of the intentions of the enemy.

He explained in terms which Armstrong undoubtedly approved:

>The facility with which they can turn out and proceed to any point, renders them nearly as effective as if actually kept in the field; and the importance of them individually of attending to their private affairs, decides me, even in the doubt of the enemy's probable movement, to give this order.22

Until this time, and for some time after, Winder was busily engaged in travelling about his district, which he explained to Armstrong, was to inform himself of the topographical advantages of the area. His letters indicate that he rarely stayed in one place more than one day, during the whole month of July. There was really no reason why Winder had to engage in this incessant activity. Through the War Department a series of topographical reports of the Tenth District were prepared by William Tatham in late June and early July. These reports should have been very useful to Winder, but he chose to study the area first hand. Occasionally he was accompanied by Tatham.23

The constant movement allowed Winder no time for the organizational activity which demanded his attention. For example, he
wrote Armstrong on July 23, that he had designated Bladensburg, four
miles north of Washington, as the rendezvous point for the Maryland
militia, and asked that arms, ammunition, tents, equipage, and other
supplies be deposited there. Although he had been in command of
the Tenth District for three weeks, he revealed, "I have no knowledge
where these articles are in store, nearest that point, nor under
whose charge they are." Winder also revealed that he did not
inspect the regular detachments of the Thirty-Sixth and Thirty-
Eighth Regiments for the first time until July 27, and it was not
until August 1, that he established his permanent headquarters in
Washington.

The War Department was even more remiss in not giving Winder
staff support. Aside from an aide and the assistance of the Topo-
 graphical Department, Winder had no staff. An Assistant Adjutant
General was finally assigned on August 16, and an Assistant Inspector
General on August 19. It was apparent that Armstrong rendered
assistance only when it was asked for, and during the whole period
offered no advice. This is all the more remarkable when his past
inclinations to interfere with his commander's activities is
remembered. He never explained what prompted this reluctance. The
surmise that he was merely indolent, does not take into account his
thrill of being in the midst of events, and his enjoyment of the
use of his powers. It is more probable that he felt constrained by
the knowledge that Madison was then investigating his conduct, which resulted in a reprimand, delivered on August 13, and greatly restricted the powers he had exercised freely at an earlier period. Also because Madison had dictated the policy for the defense of Washington, Armstrong may have felt it removed from him a part of the responsibility for the defense of the district.

While Armstrong demonstrated a rather remarkable indifference to the affairs of the Tenth Military District, the President showed no reluctance to interfere. Winder related to the House committee that the people on the lower shores of the Patuxent River had been plundered by the enemy, and "had become extremely importunate with both the Secretary of War and the President" for aid and protection. Winder indicated that he had hesitated to put a force so far down the river, because it exposed them to the danger of being cut off, and also reduced the force available to protect Washington and other places. "But the President, in conversation," he related, "told me that their situation required aid, and directed me to move the detachments of the Thirty-Sixth and Thirty-Eighth down." The British had already withdrawn and the first week of August was wasted by an exhausting march for the troops, and Winder lost still more valuable time. 28

When Winder returned to Washington, he learned that instead of the 3,000 Maryland militia which he had expected to assemble at
Bladensburg, only one company appeared. He then hurried to Baltimore to speed the raising of a force. On August 13, he informed Armstrong, "I apprehend that, after all shall be assembled, under this second order from the Governor of Maryland, they will not exceed one thousand men." Winder also called for Pennsylvania to send a regiment, but he learned that due to a reorganization of the militia the state would not be able to meet the requisition.  

This was the situation when information was received on August 18, that the British had again entered the Patuxent with a very large squadron of ships. There were only two hundred and fifty men at Bladensburg when the enemy landed at Benedict with a force of 4,000 to 4,500 men. The British were undoubtedly unaware of the disarray of their foes, and in fact the primary object at first was Commodore Joshua Barney's flotilla which had taken refuge up the Patuxent. Once cornered, however, Barney blew up his flotilla, and the British decided to make an attempt on Washington.  

In Washington there was a great flurry of activity. Calls for militia were sent out to Virginia and Maryland and all of the militia of the District was ordered out en masse. Winder reported his calls to the Secretary of War, and added somewhat pessimistically, "The result of all these operations will be certainly slow, and extremely doubtful as to the extent of force produced."  

James Monroe, the Secretary of State, offered to take a troop of cavalry
and scout the enemy positions, and he left on the morning of the nine-
teenth of August. He hardly made a good scout, because he dared
not venture too close to the enemy for fear of capture. He failed
to take any field glasses, and had to borrow pen and paper. At best
he gave only exaggerated estimates of the size of the enemy force.
Madison, with whom Monroe corresponded, did what he could to assist
in the arrangements being made for the defense of Washington.

Armstrong now began to offer advice to Winder. On August 19,
he wrote:

If the enemy's movements indicate an attack on this place,
means should be taken to drive off all horses and cattle,
and remove all supplies of forage, and c., on their route;
a moment is not to be lost in doing both. For this purpose
the whole of your cavalry may be pushed into the neighbor-
hood of the enemy without delay.

Armstrong cited at a later period a journal by an officer who
recorded a conversation overheard between General Winder and Arm-
strong on August 23. According to the journal, Armstrong upon being
advised of the size of the enemy and the equipment he brought with
him, deduced that if they did attempt to attack Washington it would
be a "mere Cossac hurrah, a rapid march and hasty retreat." Arm-
strong then recommended two modes of operation: either harass the
flanks with repeated attacks, or retire slowly before the enemy to
Washington where the houses could be utilized to place artillery to
break the advance of the enemy. As the enemy was unprepared for
siege or investment he would gain nothing and endanger himself. Armstrong preferred the second plan. The conversation could very possibly be correct, for in many respects the recommendations are typical of Armstrong. He rarely ever proposed a single mode of operation, and his advice frequently, as in this case, apparently was based on the assumption of an ideal situation and not on the circumstances at hand.

The day before the conversation cited above, Armstrong had recommended placing Barney's seamen (about six hundred) at Nottingham, which would have been at the rear of the enemy and threatened his communications. The harassed Winder, however, could not think of diversionary tactics, nor of splitting his force, particularly in the state of uncertainty of the objects of the enemy.

Winder related to the House committee that by August 22, "A doubt at that time was not entertained by anybody of the intention of the enemy to proceed direct to Washington." Yet by his own account he sent out troops that evening to check on rumors that they were moving toward Annapolis. By August 23, the British commander Major General Robert Ross had marched his troops about twenty miles through Maryland without meeting an enemy. He camped at Upper Marlboro that day, and did not move out his troops towards Washington until two o'clock in the afternoon. Winder was confused by the tardy movement of the British. He conceived a variety of movements they could make, and this indecision delayed positive steps to retard
their advance. Upper Marlboro, he explained, was "at the point from
whence he could take the road to Bladensburg, to the Eastern Branch
bridge, or Fort Washington, indifferently, or it might be to cover
his march upon Annapolis." 41

Ross' movements continued to confuse Winder. Instead of taking
the road which led north to Bladensburg, he marched by the road toward
the Eastern Branch bridge, and camped about nine miles from Washing­
ton on the evening of August 23. Winder then believed that Fort
Washington might be the object, particularly as he had received infor­
mation of the enemy fleet coming up the Potomac. Uncertain of the
enemy objective, he withdrew across the Eastern Branch bridge into
Washington. From there, he believed, as he later explained, he could
harass the enemy if they moved toward Fort Washington, or follow him
if he reversed his march and moved toward Annapolis, or he could rush
to Bladensburg if that became the enemy objective. 42 Winder now had
an army of approximately 2,500 men at the Eastern Branch bridge and
five miles to the north, he had another army of about the same
number.

On the morning of August 24, Winder wrote the Secretary of War
informing him that he had established his headquarters near the
Eastern Branch bridge, and added: "I should be glad of the assistance
of council from yourself and the government." 43 For some unexplained
reason, the letter was delivered to the President, who recorded:
"Not doubting the urgency of the occasion, I opened and read it, and it went on immediately by the Express to Genl. Armstrong." Armstrong evidently was insulted by the fact that the President had opened the letter which was addressed to the Secretary of War. This incident, along with the other activities of the President during the preceding week, apparently was taken by Armstrong as a lack of confidence in his ability. Moreover the lack of deference given to Armstrong's opinions by General Winder, and the bustling activity of Secretary of State James Monroe during this period added to Armstrong's feeling of insecurity. He chose not to act, but to sulk. He tarried an hour before going to Winder's headquarters. Madison reported that Armstrong "had been impatiently expected, and surprize at his delay manifested." Armstrong's wounded pride was evident, even at a later period when he recorded the events of the morning of August 24, for the House committee. Referring to Winder's request for counsel, he wrote, "This letter was late in reaching me. It had been opened, and passed through other hands." When he arrived at the headquarters, Armstrong recorded, "General Winder was on the point of joining the troops, at Bladensburg, whither, it was now understood, the enemy was also marching. I took for granted that he had received the counsel he required; for, to me, he neither stated doubt nor difficulty, nor plan of attack or of defence." Madison related that when Armstrong arrived "he was asked whether he had any arrangement
or advice to offer in the emergency. He said he had not; adding that
as the battle would be between Militia and regular troops, the former
would be beaten."47

The Secretary of Treasury, George W. Campbell, who lived in
the same rooming house as Armstrong, noticed the Secretary's attitude.
He related to the House committee that he had approached the Secretary
of War and asked whether the movement of the troops were made on
his advice, and whether he would give any suggestions for their
future movements:

he gave me to understand that the movements which had
taken place were not in pursuance of any plan or advice
given by him; that General Winder, having been appointed
to the command of the district, including the city, and
the means assigned for its defence placed at his dis­
posal, he was considered as having the direction of their
application.48

Armstrong also informed Campbell that he would not interfere
unless the President approved, and this prompted Campbell to approach
Madison and recommended that Armstrong be given such a sanction to
assist Winder. "I told him", Madison recorded, "I could scarcely
conceive it possible that Genl. Armstrong could have so misconstrued
his functions and duty as Secretary of War." Madison related that
he talked to Armstrong, and expressed surprise at his reserve and
his scruples in offering advice. He also stated that he hoped Arm­
strong had not construed the reprimand of August 13, as restraining
him in the exercise of the functions of his office. He suggested
that Armstrong proceed to Bladensburg and aid Winder. Any problem on authority would be settled instantly by the President who would be on hand. According to Madison, Armstrong replied that he had put no such construction on the August 13 letter, and that he would go to aid Winder.

Armstrong perhaps inferred more from the conversation than Madison intended. His statement to the House committee was vague, but noted that the understanding was that he should go to Bladensburg, and "give such directions as were required by the urgency of the case." He added:

I lost not a moment in fulfilling this intention, and had barely time to reconnoitre the march of the enemy, and to inform myself of our own arrangements, when I again met the President, who told me that he had come to a new determination, and that the military functionaries should be left to the discharge of their own duties, on their own responsibilities. I now became, of course, a mere spectator of the combat.

The implication was that Madison had committed the direction of military operations on the field of battle to Armstrong, and then at a critical moment intervened and withdrew sanction. It could also be implied that Armstrong was suggesting that the events of the day might have been different if he had been allowed to remain on the field. Madison later denied that he had given Armstrong any such sanction to command, and added that he could not legally do so.

There were three lines of battle, and though the American forces
were superior in number, the British were assured of the advantage numerically at every stage of the battle. Armstrong apparently did not recognize the weakness of the deployment of the troops. Madison reported that he asked Armstrong if he had suggested any improvement in the arrangements, "He said that he had not; that from his view of them they appeared to be as good as circumstances admitted."\textsuperscript{52}

The disciplined British regulars soon turned the American flanks and the raw militia broke. The battle quickly turned into a rout as they fled back to Washington. The only stiff resistance the British met was from Commodore Barney's sailors, who were forced to retreat due to the lack of support. At the Capitol, Winder found Armstrong and Monroe. He recommended a stand not be made at Capitol Hill, and the the disorganized state of the troops made it necessary to retire back to the heights above Georgetown where he could collect his troops. Both of the ministers agreed.\textsuperscript{53} The responsibility for this order was soon attributed to Armstrong by the angry inhabitants of Washington, who now began to lay all the blame on him.

General Walter Smith, who commanded the city militia failed even to mention Monroe's presence at the Capitol. According to his report to the House committee, he and his troops halted at the Capitol and asked for orders from Winder. Smith continued:

\begin{quote}
He then conferred for a few moments with General Armstrong who was a short distance from us, and then gave orders that the whole should retreat through
\end{quote}
Washington and Georgetown. It is impossible to do justice to the anguish evinced by the troops of Washington and Georgetown on the receiving of this order. The idea of leaving their families, their houses, and their homes, at the mercy of an enraged enemy, was insupportable. To preserve that order which was maintained during the retreat, was now no longer practicable.  

Considering the circumstances, the decision was undoubtedly correct. Nevertheless, the humiliation of the defeat and the failure to get another chance at battle was difficult to accept. It was widely believed that Washington could have been successfully defended, and as one officer remarked, "I have not met a man who was not of the same opinion with me on that score." Armstrong shortly after answered the charge that he had prevented Winder from defending the Capitol, by calling it "a total perversion of the truth." In later years he even claimed he had recommended making a stand, but was outvoted by Winder and Monroe.

The British entered Washington early in the evening of August 24 and began to burn the public buildings. In the meantime, the Cabinet had scattered. According to prearrangement Armstrong and Secretary Campbell went to Frederick, Maryland. The President and the rest of the Cabinet, in a last minute change of plan, went into Virginia. In the next few days there was considerable confusion. The British evacuated Washington on the evening of August 25. On August 27, the commander of Fort Washington abandoned that post upon the approach of a British naval squadron, and the next day Alexandria capitulated.
Madison returned to Washington late in the afternoon of August 27. Monroe recorded in a memorandum the events that followed:

There was no force organized for its defense. The secretary of war was at Fredericktown, and General Winder at Baltimore... Prompt measures were indispensable. Under these circumstances, the President requested Mr. Monroe to take charge of the Department of War, and the command of the District ad interim, with which he immediately complied.59

Monroe took such measures for defense as he could, but his chief contribution was to restore their confidence.60 Armstrong returned to Washington on August 29. Public hostility against him was running high. The militia had held a meeting the evening before and passed a resolution denouncing Armstrong as the willing cause of the destruction of Washington, and stated they would no longer serve under the orders or military administration of the Secretary of War.61 Armstrong thus became the focal point of all the frustrations and humiliations suffered in the past few days. Of all of those in positions of responsibility he was the easiest to blame. He had frequently denied that Washington would be attacked, and he had done nothing to provide fortifications. All else that had happened, to their view, could be traced to him. There was one other subtle aspect which was noted by a participant in these events. He claimed Armstrong "had no sympathies in common with the people of the District and would have been glad to see the seat of government removed." This sentiment, "he was not at all solicitous to conceal."62
One of Armstrong's first actions after arriving in Washington was to visit the militia in their camp. One eye-witness claimed his first notice of Armstrong's presence "was from the loud voice of Mr. Charles Carroll...refusing his proferred hand, and denouncing his conduct." Armstrong left. Shortly afterward a delegation was sent to the President to inform him, as Madison recorded in a memorandum, "that every officer would tear off his epaulettes if General Armstrong was to have anything to do with them." They also informed the President that "Mr. Monroe...was very acceptable to them." Madison visited Armstrong that evening, to discuss with him the "violent prejudices" against the Administration, and particularly against the Secretary of War. He related the message from the militia. Armstrong replied that he "was aware of the excitement against him; that it was altogether artificial, and that he knew the sources of it, and the intrigues by which it had been effected." He claimed the excitement was founded on falsehoods, but that it was evident that he could not stay in the city. According to Madison he offered to resign or as an alternative, retire from the scene for a while and visit his family in New York. Madison refused to accept the resignation, but agreed that a temporary retirement might be desirable.
Armstrong denied any deficiency on his part with regard to the defense of the city, but Madison replied that he could not truthfully say that "all that ought to have been done had been done, and in proper time." When Armstrong insisted that he had omitted no steps for the defense of the city, Madison again disagreed and stated that "it was the duty of the Secretary of War not only to execute plans or orders committed to him, but to devise and propose such as would, in his opinion, be necessary and proper." He noted that Armstrong had never been scrupulous or backward before in taking this course, but with regard to the city of Washington, Madison continued, "he had never himself proposed or suggested a single precaution or arrangement for its safety, everything done on that subject having been brought forward by myself." 66

Armstrong left Washington the next morning. When he arrived in Baltimore, he addressed a letter to the editors of the Baltimore Patriot and it was published on September 3. He denied the charges which he noted had been made against him: that he had ordered the retreat at Bladensburg; prevented Winder from defending the Capitol; had ordered the withdrawal from Fort Washington; and that he had ordered the navy yard burned. As for the charge that no effort had been made to collect a sufficient force, he claimed no effort had been omitted. A militia force of 15,000 was authorized, he asserted, to which was added over a thousand regulars. The reasons for the militia not being collected, he added, were "altogether extraneous
from the government, and entirely beyond its control." He also noted sarcastically, that from what was known of the enemy force, "if all the troops assembled at Bladensburg, had been faithful to themselves and to their country, the enemy would have been beaten and the Capitol saved." Armstrong by inference charged the President with bad faith, as he attributed his removal to the "humours of a village mob, stimulated by faction and led by folly." On September 9, Armstrong sent Madison his resignation. He stated that he had given "the late occurrences at Washington, in relation to myself, all the consideration due to them, as well on public and private grounds", and had therefore arrived at this decision.

The circumstances that led to Armstrong's resignation, as have been described, were as much a result of his attitude as his actions. Although the blame for the misfortunes could be reasonably distributed among many, Armstrong was singled out, and the abuse heaped on him. Monroe's assumption of the duties of the War Department in Armstrong's absence prepared the public mind for Armstrong's dismissal, for it could only be assumed he was out of favor. Militia leaders such as VanNess and Smith, placed the lack of preparedness squarely on Armstrong. Private leaders such as Charles Carroll, (who was a close friend of General Wilkinson) detested him, and the President failed to support him. Yet it was true that Armstrong had to share much of
the responsibility for the burning of Washington. Because of his self-satisfied feeling that Washington offered no important military object to the enemy, he chose to economize and not provide for fortifications. Regardless of the lack of funds, if the Secretary of War had considered them worthy, fortifications could have been built with private loans and donations.

Armstrong also failed to render any important assistance to General Winder who obviously needed it very badly. In fact for the first time in his term of office, he appeared reluctant to interfere in any way with the affairs of one of his commanding officers, a point which Madison noted in their conversation of August 29. It is difficult to determine the exact cause of this reluctance, but it probably stemmed from the fact that the plan of defense was dictated by Madison (or Monroe), and Armstrong thus felt that the responsibility was no longer his. His attitude during this period, and particularly after receiving a letter of reprimand from Madison on August 13, was one of detachment. On the fateful day of August 24, he was sullen and uncooperative.

The War Department was occupied temporarily by Monroe after Armstrong's resignation. After three weeks, however, he wrote Madison asking to be given the post permanently. Monroe was obviously having some feelings of guilt, for he stated that if he stepped down it might be inferred that he shrank from responsibility
for fear of injuring his reputation. He then added: "this may countenance the idea, that the removal of the other was an affair of intrigue, in which I partook,...from selfish and improper motives; and did not proceed from his incompetency or misconduct." In an addendum to the letter Monroe wrote: "I am sensible that the motive to my last letter may be misconceived, even by you...the imputation to which it exposes me is that of acting under the influence of resentment or prejudice against Mr. Armstrong, for some supposed injury received from him." Monroe was appointed. He was only partly responsible for Armstrong's removal from the War Department, but according to Henry Adams, "the suspicion that he had intrigued for that object troubled his mind to the day of his death." Armstrong returned back to his estate at Red Hook on the Hudson River, and although he lived until 1843, he never again held a public office. He devoted his attention primarily to agricultural pursuits, but also wrote history. He contributed biographies of Richard Montgomery and Anthony Wayne in the Library of American Biography, edited by Jared Sparks. He also published in book form, A Treatise on Agriculture, in 1839. His major historical work, perhaps intended as a vindication of his conduct as Secretary of War, was his two volume, Notices of the War of 1812. The work is too brief and frequently marred by Armstrong's biases. He was at work on a history of the American Revolution when a fire destroyed his manuscripts.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER VIII


2. See the report of the House Committee of July 31, 1813, "Spirit and manner in which the War is waged by the Enemy," A.S.P., Mil. Af., I, 339-382.


5. Armstrong to Dearborn, April 15, 1814, WD/LS, Book 7, p. 162.


7. Statement of Citizens of Alexandria, Annals, 13 Cong., 3 Sess., 1722; Wadsworth to Armstrong, May 28, 1813, WD/LR.

8. Armstrong statement, Annals, 13 Cong., 3 Sess., 1565. The fortification at the Pea Patch below Philadelphia was being built at the same time with a loan from the city to be repaid one year after the end of the war at the interest rate of 6% annually. See Armstrong to Thomas Leiper, (Phil.) July 1, 1814, WD/LS, Book 7, pp. 240-241.


10. Tatham to Armstrong, July 10, 1814, WD/LR.

11. Memorandum on the Cabinet meeting of July 1, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.; Armstrong, Notices, II, 128.


13. An example of Madison's attitude is reflected in his precise, brisk instructions to the Secretary of War to carry out the decisions of the Cabinet meeting, July 2, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.

14. Winder to Armstrong, June 30, 1814, WD/LR.


20. Madison to Barbour, June 16, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.


23. Among the reports made by Tatham are those dated June 25, July 2, July 4, July 10, July 13, 1814. On July 22, Tatham informed Armstrong he was studying the roads approaching Washington with Winder, WD/LR. See Winder's comments on Tatham's reports, Winder to Armstrong, July 7, 1814, WD/LR.


34. Monroe to Madison, August 20, 1814, WD/LR.

35. Madison to Monroe, August 21, August 22, 1814, Monroe MSS, L.C.


43. Winder to Armstrong, August 24, 1814, WD/LR.


45. *Ibid*.


51. Secretary of State Monroe made some particularly unfortunate movements of the lines which earned from Armstrong the contemptuous reference "this busy and blundering tactician." Armstrong, *Notices*, II, 148.
69. Armstrong to Madison, September 9, 1814, Madison MSS, L.C.


73. The first volume was published in 1836, and the second in 1840.

74. L. D. Ingersoll, History of the War Department, pp. 443-444.

CONCLUSION

John Armstrong entered the office of Secretary of War at a critical time. The 1812 campaign was miserably ineffective and reflected many of the difficulties which Armstrong had to surmount. Supply organization, hastily organized on the eve of war, was rudimentary. The regular army was far below authorized strength because of anti-war sentiment in some sections and the preference of most Americans for the less rigorous militia service. The militia had been engaged in most of the battles of 1812, and had already proved to be lamentably deficient as a fighting force. The War Department was understaffed and loosely organized, and the Secretary of War overburdened with a vast assortment of functions. Armstrong not only assumed the vast task of organizing the War Department, the supply departments, and the raising and equipping of the armies in the field, he also assumed the duty of planning strategy, communicating his plans to his commanders, and coordinating the movement of the armies in the field.

There was nothing in Armstrong's background that particularly qualified him for the position he assumed. He had been only a junior officer in the Revolutionary War, and although he apparently read widely in works on military science, this hardly qualified for
Secretary of War. There was, in fact, good reason to doubt his
capacity for the office. He had shown an inclination for intrigue,
and his tenure as minister to France marked him as a rather indolent
person with an ill-tempered disposition. He had little admiration
for President Madison, and none for Secretary of State James Monroe.
Though not particularly desired by Madison as an appointee, for
the reasons mentioned above, others shunned the office and Armstrong
was selected. Undoubtedly Armstrong's residence in New York, where
most of the fighting would take place, was a factor in influencing
the appointment.

The selection of Armstrong disrupted the harmony of the
Cabinet. Monroe, in particular, was antagonistic to the Secretary of
War and engaged in some dubious activities, apparently to undermine
Armstrong's influence and thwart his ambitions. Armstrong likewise
engaged in questionable activities, characteristically reflecting
his penchant for intrigue, particularly his flirtation with the
Federalists. He had few friends and his dismissal resulted from the
growing opposition to his conduct, which was climaxed by his mis-
calculations and lethargy in regard to the defense of Washington.

One of the primary functions of the War Department was to
perform the vital service of supply. The Quartermaster Department
and the office of Commissary General of Purchases were hastily
organized on the eve of war, and not until March 3, 1813, were
sufficient numbers authorized to allow the Secretary of War to staff
each military district. One of Armstrong's first duties was to provide rules and regulations for these departments (and others as well), which were long overdue and an important accomplishment, but did not improve much the loose organization nor lack of supply accountability. The stresses of war rendered many supply procedures impracticable. Armstrong did not attempt to alter the use of contractors to provision the troops despite their numerous failures to fulfill their obligations. The only plausible alternative, the commissariat system, under the circumstances probably would not have done any better.

Despite anything Armstrong could have done to improve the efficiency of the Quartermasters or Contractors, the scarcity of funds would still have seriously hampered the supply of the troops. This necessitated the most careful expenditure by Armstrong who had to establish priorities and apportion the funds according to his best judgment. There were failures to furnish timely supplies to armies, and the troops were frequently ill-fed, poorly clothed, and inadequately equipped, but it was a credit to Armstrong's careful budgeting that the situation was not worse. The difficulty of planning and fighting a war under those conditions are obvious.

Raising and organizing the army was also a critical function of the War Department. It was already obvious when Armstrong assumed the duties of Secretary of War that recruitment would not fill the
regular army, and that a heavy reliance must be placed upon the militia. Armstrong considered the militia wasteful and inefficient, and sanctioned their use only with great reluctance. Near the end of the 1813 campaign he recommended a plan of conscription to raise a large regular force to fight the next campaign. Congress, however, would not approve such a measure. The strong opposition to the war and the indifference of a large segment of the population to the fortunes of the American Army meant that the effective regular force never amounted to much more than half the authorized strength (about 60,000). Therein lies one reason for the lack of success in the war. Armstrong at least advocated the correct solution to the problem, but it was a measure which the country would not accept.

The failure of Congress to create the grade of Lieutenant General tempted Armstrong in his capacity as Secretary of War to assume the function of an overall commander of the armies. Perhaps he could not have avoided such a role. From the beginning of his occupancy of office he proceeded to act in so far as possible to fulfill this function. He had a broad concept of his military powers and frequently infringed on the authority of his district commanders. He went to the northern front to superintend the operations, but he did not refrain from interfering in the internal operations of the district. For a time he contemplated accompanying the army on its expedition against either Kingston or Montreal, and presumably would have acted as commander.
Armstrong's plans of campaigns, based on his strategic concepts, were often sound, but his equivocal nature would soon cause him to alter the arrangement. This was certainly an unredeeming quality of his leadership. Further, he would offer, quite frequently, two or three specific proposals and leave to the commander the determination of the plan to be followed ultimately. Such proposals were an open invitation to the weak commanders (who were abundant on the northern frontier) to attempt the least hazardous, and usually the least rewarding plan of operation. Perhaps a single plan without allowing some flexibility according to circumstances, such as he followed with regard to General Harrison and the Northwest was worse, but Armstrong's normal method did nothing to bring about a unified, coordinated campaign.

Armstrong's equivocation and willingness to allow alterations in his plans raised the question of whether he had any firm concept of a mode of operation. It appears that he did understand, or at least he expressed repeatedly his view of the vital strategic value of the St. Lawrence which linked the two important British posts, Kingston and Montreal. It was certainly true that if this line of communication could have been severed, or even endangered by a relentless pressure at one or several points, the outcome of the war could have been affected significantly. Yet no attack was ever made upon either Kingston or Montreal, though many were projected, and no point was occupied on the St. Lawrence for a period long enough
to endanger British communications. Instead American forces spent most of the war fighting on the Niagara peninsula, which could not have been a decisive factor even if successful.

It should be added, however, that there were many problems which Armstrong had to consider when projecting strategy. Control over Lake Ontario was never completely gained. If command had been won there is little doubt that operations would have been considerably more effective, and undoubtedly all British posts west of Montreal would have eventually fallen. The lack of funds was also a matter that he had to continually hold in view. Not only was he forced to restrict the expenditures of his commanders very greatly, he also had to consider the priorities for a three-front war. Finally, he had to bear in mind the shortage of troops, and their usually undisciplined, ill-equipped state. Not until 1814 was there a regular army in the field capable of meeting the British regulars on equal terms. By this time, however, British reinforcements were arriving from Europe, and had the war continued into 1815, the small American forces would undoubtedly have been overwhelmed.

Armstrong was only an average administrator. He lacked consistent drive and initiative. With his rather limited scope there were no marked innovations in the War Department during his administration. Still he improved the organization of the War Department, and left it at least capable of carrying out its functions. As
Secretary of War Armstrong frequently was concerned with matters of minute detail, which could have been left to others. His interference often raised resentment among his commanders.

When Armstrong took office the army was led by old Revolutionary War veterans, and when he left not a one was in a position of importance. The caliber of men advanced to positions of command was very high, and these men who rose to prominence in the War of 1812 continued to exert a marked influence over the regular army until the Civil War. As most of these men were advanced upon his recommendation, Armstrong should be credited with recognizing their merit.

It is difficult to evaluate Armstrong's performance as Secretary of War because he was neither a complete failure nor a singular success. He was faced with many obstacles. Armstrong met these problems the best he could, but he had certain limitations which detracted from his performance. Among these were his lack of drive or initiative, his morose disposition, his penchant for intrigue, which, coupled with his rather average abilities, were such that his overall conduct of his office must be counted a failure. These traits, combined with the opposition of powerful rivals largely negated what might otherwise have been a more productive service for his country.
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