



Revolutionary Times



Containing the Latest News from the Sons of the American Revolution

Conway Cabal

A ‘Cabal’ is the “contrived schemes of a group of persons secretly united in a plot (as to overturn a government).”

The Conway Cabal refers to a loosely organized attempt by a group of military officers and members of Congress to remove General George Washington from command of the Continental Army and replace him with Major General Horatio Gates.

The supposed leader of this movement was Brigadier General Thomas Conway, an Irish member of the French army who commanded a brigade in Washington’s army.

Conway was critical of Washington’s performance in the Battle of Brandywine and boastful about his own feats at the same engagement.

Shortly after Brandywine, Conway wrote Congress requesting a promotion to the rank of major general. Washington protested Conway’s promotion and was irritated by the request, believing it would have disastrous effects on the morale of more senior officers.

In October 1777, Conway wrote a letter to encourage Gates’ ambitions.

Washington learned the details of the letter and in response, Washington informed Conway that he was aware of the plan.

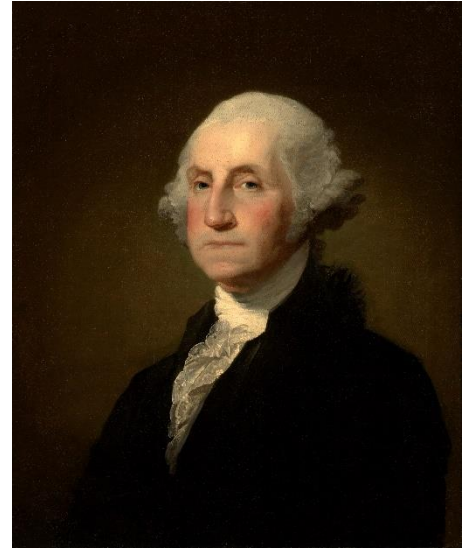
Conway stated that he believed Washington was influenced by men not equal to him in experience.

On November 14, Conway offered his resignation to Congress. However, instead of accepting the resignation Congress promoted Conway to the newly created position of Inspector General and to the rank of Major General.

In addition, a Board of War was created to oversee Washington after some members of Congress, including Samuel Adams, Thomas Mifflin, and Richard Henry Lee, began to question whether Washington could lead the Americans to victory.

Conway served with Washington at Valley Forge, and reported to the Board of War, which appointed Gates as its president on November 27, 1777.

One object of the scheme was to separate the Marquis de Lafayette from Washington, to whom he was devotedly attached, and bring him into the interests of the cabal.



The cabal, however, had overshot their mark. Lafayette, who was aware of their intrigues was disgusted with the plan.

As winter wore on, the so-called cabal dissolved, bringing disgrace to and ending the careers of several of its leaders. Washington’s authority was strengthened, as loyal supporters rallied to defend and exalt the commander in chief.

This broadsheet is dedicated to the 250th Anniversary Celebration of the Declaration of Independence for more information visit the National Society Sons of the American Revolution website at: www.sar.org

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