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Fame, the Founding, and the Power to Declare War

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Almost without discussion, and essentially without opposition, the Framers and Ratifiers of the United States Constitution vested in Congress the “Power . . . To declare War, [and] grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal.” During the past fifty years, one of the fiercest controversies in constitutional law has concerned what the Founders meant by this grant. It is a debate that has had, and that continues to have, dramatic importance. When Presidents committed troops or prepared to commit troops in Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, Iraq, Somalia, Haiti, and, most recently, Bosnia, they claimed that the Constitution did not require them to seek explicit congressional approval for their actions. In each instance, critics proclaimed the Presidents’ actions unconstitutional. When Congress sought to control presidential warmaking by passing the War Powers Act of 1973, defenders of the statute declared that it simply tracked the War Powers Clause. Presidents, however, have repeatedly claimed that the statute violates the Constitution, because they believe the War Powers Clause grants Congress only limited powers. The same question has been at issue on each occasion: Does the Constitution give Congress alone the power to initiate conflict?
The roster of scholars engaged in the controversy over the original understanding of the warmaking power reads like a who's who of constitutional scholars and scholars of foreign affairs. On one side of the debate—the pro-Congress side—are such academics as Raoul Berger, Alexander Bickel, John Hart Ely, Louis Fisher, Harold Koh, Leonard Levy, Charles Lofgren, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and William Van Alstyne. They have argued that the original understanding...
was that, except for a limited power to repel sudden attacks, the President could not commit troops to combat without congressional authorization. They believe that modern constitutional law should reflect that understanding. In contrast, other scholars have adopted a pro-Executive stance. These include Phillip Bobbitt,15 Robert Bork,16 Edward Corwin,17 Henry Monaghan,18 Eugene Rostow,19 Robert Turner,20 W. Michael Reisman,21 and John Yoo,22 among others.23 The pro-Executive scholars have argued either that the power to declare war was intended to be a very limited power—conferring on Congress the power to classify a conflict as a war for purposes of international law24 (rather than conferring on it the exclusive power to initiate con-
The debate has reached a point of stalemate. As Professor Stephen Carter concluded, "[E]vidence concerning the original understanding . . . does not come down firmly on one side or the other." Although the evidence is limited—with the critical part of the constitutional debates consisting of little more than a page of the published record and subject to various plausible readings—this is not the principal cause of the stalemate concerning the original understanding. Rather, the problem is that neither side is able to square its claims fully with the evidence that exists. To the extent that the Founders made statements about the war power, those statements support the view that Congress alone has the power to initiate conflict. But pro-Executive scholars can plausibly counter that historical context strongly supports their position. The phrase "declare war" had a fixed meaning in international law; it did not mean to start war, but rather to classify a conflict as a war for legal purposes. Accordingly, precedent in England and in this country suggests a "shared understanding" that the Executive could start wars. To put it simply, the pro-Executive position is that pro-Congress scholars have failed to explain why the Founders would have taken from the Executive the power to declare war. Given that failure, pro-Executive scholars argue that the intent of the great majority of the Founders to have the President possess the power to start war must be given effect, regardless of the belief of a handful of individuals that Congress alone has that power.

There is, finally, one bit of evidence that neither side has explained convincingly. Numerous contemporaneous statements indicate that the decision to declare war was purely a congressional matter, which means that the President could not veto declarations of war. This absence of a veto seems inconsistent with the view of pro-Congress scholars that the Founders sought to slow the path to war as much as possible. Yet it is also inconsistent with the pro-Executive view that the Founders were supportive of presidential involvement (and, generally, control) in all war matters.

25 See, e.g., Bork, Erosion, supra note 16, at 698; Bork, Foreword, supra note 16, at x; Reisman, supra note 21, at 212; Rostow, Once More, supra note 19, at 48.

26 Stephen L. Carter, The Constitutionality of the War Powers Resolution, 70 Va. L. Rev. 101, 111 (1984). See also Bobbitt, supra note 15, at 1374 ("[U]nlike other constitutional disputes, the partisans [of competing positions on the clause] appear to find each of their own points decisive and dispute the validity of all of their opponents' claims ... .").


28 For discussion of the relevant statements, see infra Part I.C.

29 Yoo, supra note 22, at 263.

30 See infra text accompanying notes 181-201.
This Article breaks the stalemate by advancing an explanation for why the Founders would have wanted Congress alone to have the power to start war, the question that pro-Congress scholars have been unable to answer. In offering that explanation, the Article takes a different approach than previous work, which has, in accordance with the normal conventions of legal and constitutional scholarship, explored the original understanding by focusing on what the Founders said about the allocation of the war power, the constitutional structure, the language used, and prior practice. Although this Article uses evidence of this type, it also seeks to employ the approaches of intellectual history, probing the structure of the founding generation's thoughts and the often implicit values that underlie the choices they made.\footnote{Thus, there is a greater emphasis here on context and ideology than there is in standard legal history analyses of original understanding. My approach starts with the premise that, in determining who the founding generation thought should have the power to start war, it is helpful to look at their general views about war and human personality, rather than focusing exclusively on what they explicitly said about allocation of the warmaking power. This broader approach is particularly helpful here because the traditional sources are so slight. The difference between an historian's approach to interpretive questions and the approach traditionally used by legal scholars is incisively probed in Laura Kalman, The Strange Career of Legal Liberalism 167-296 (1996), and Martin S. Flaherty, The Most Dangerous Branch, 105 Yale L.J. 1725, 1745-55 (1996). It should be noted, however, that when historians have turned to questions of legal history, they have generally applied the approach of legal scholars, rather than that of intellectual historians. That is, they have devoted relatively little attention to ideology and context. The treatment of the original understanding of the War Powers Clause by Professor Lofgren, who is an historian, is an example of this practice. Although Lofgren's work is the most convincing treatment of the subject to date, it is still limited by the fact that it looks almost exclusively at the types of sources on which lawyers focus, such as statements about the War Powers Clause made at the constitutional convention and at the state ratifying conventions, English precedent, and early practice. See Lofgren, Understanding, supra note 12.}

In pursuing this project, it will look not merely at the traditional sources directly concerning original understanding, but, more generally, at how political leaders in the early republic talked about war, government, and individual motivation.

This analysis brings to the forefront a subject of critical importance to the Framers as they created the Constitution, but one which constitutional law scholars have essentially ignored: the individual's desire to achieve immortal fame. Although the subject of the Framers' views of fame (using the term in the eighteenth century sense of one whom posterity will remember as great) has yet to receive close, sustained study, a number of historians, and in particular the late Douglass Adair, have shown how the Framers' actions and their political theory reflected their hope of achieving lasting renown. The Framers had, in Adair's words, "an almost obsessive desire for fame"\footnote{Douglas Adair, Fame and the Founding Fathers, in Fame and the Founding Fathers 3, 7 (Trevor Colbourn ed., 1974).}—and they believed that such a desire was a widely-shared
trait. But these historians have not attempted to show the relationship between the Founders' view of fame and the constitutional structure that they created. Similarly, constitutional scholars have not examined the subject, either with respect to the War Powers Clause or the document as a whole. They have thus wholly ignored the way in which the Framers' ideas about fame shaped the Constitution, a disregard which seriously distorts our perception of the original understanding. Piecing together sometimes implicit views, the Article argues that the allocation of the war power reflected the Framers' understanding of the desire for fame. The founding generation believed that, if the President could commit the nation to war, his desire for fame might lead him into war even when war was not in the national interest. By contrast, however, individual members of Congress would not win fame if the nation went to war and won. Therefore, Congress alone could be trusted to decide questions of war correctly. Animated by their concern that Presidents would fall prey to the lure of fame, the Founders thus structured the war power in a way that conflicts with the original understanding of the War Powers Clause as articulated by previous scholarship. The Founders intended that the clause would vest in Congress principal responsibility for initiating conflict; in this regard, pro-Congress scholars have been right and pro-Executive scholars wrong. But the Founders denied the President a veto over congressional decisions to wage war, something that all scholars have missed.

Part I of the Article outlines the background against which this work is set. It discusses the post-World War II era's history of controversies about presidential authority to initiate conflict, the current debate among academics about the original understanding, and the ways in which the explanations that have been offered fail. Part II then begins the analysis of why Congress was given the sole power to start wars by discussing the Founders' conception of fame and the role of that conception in the constitutional order. Part III argues that the Founders' concern that a President's desire for immortal fame would lead him to start wars that were not in the national interest caused them to give Congress alone the power to start war. This Part begins with a close analysis of the way legislators spoke and wrote about war during the ratification debates. It then turns to the nation's first three crises involving the war power, focusing in each instance on how the desire for individual fame and the desire for war were linked in statements from the period. Indeed, in one of the examined documents, James Madison explicitly states that Congress was given the power to start war because a President would use that power too aggressively in

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33 See infra Part III.
34 See infra text accompanying notes 181-201, 380-81.
order to achieve fame.35 This statement from the most important
Founder dramatically supports the thesis of this Article concerning
the original understanding.

Part IV then explores the contemporary significance of the historical
analysis. For originalists, the evidence offered here is important
because it greatly strengthens the case for a pro-Congress reading of
the Clause. It is also important because it suggests that the President
should not be able to veto a declaration of war.

The thesis of this Article is significant for nonoriginalists as well.
Although it does not try to treat the matter conclusively, Part IV
presents evidence that, even though we no longer think of people as
motivated by a thirst for fame in the eighteenth century sense, Presi-
dents have, in fact, been so motivated. A range of historical accounts
indicate that Presidents, in contemplating questions of war, have been
motivated by a desire for fame. That desire may, in part, explain why
throughout our history Presidents have typically been more in favor of
initiating wars than Congress. Recognition of the motivational stakes
in the war powers area indicates that courts’ current application of the
political question doctrine to avoid resolution of war powers contro-
versies is misguided. Such a strategy rests on the false premise that
this is an area in which Congress will struggle for control, when in fact
this is an area in which Congress has an incentive to evade responsibil-
ity. More broadly, for nonoriginalists, recognition of the fact that the
President has an incentive to favor war does not resolve the question
of who should have the responsibility to decide questions of war.
Rediscovery of the Founders’ concern ultimately leads back to the two
fundamental questions with which the Founders struggled and which
have largely been forgotten: When does the desire for a place in his-
tory become dangerous? When does it, instead, inspire greatness?

I
THE DEBATE ABOUT THE WAR POWERS CLAUSE

The meaning of the War Powers Clause has long been the subject
of bitter dispute, both in the realm of politics and in the realm of
academia. This Part begins by presenting in summary fashion recent
presidential military actions and congressional responses. Strikingly,

35 See James Madison, “Helvidius” Number 4, in 15 THE PAPERS OF JAMES MADISON 106,
108 (Robert Rutland et al. eds., Virginia University Press 1985) [hereinafter MADISON PA-
PERS]. Madison wrote:

It is in war, finally, that laurels are to be gathered, and it is the executive
brow they are to encircle. The strongest passions, and most dangerous
weaknesses of the human breast; . . . the honorable or venial love of fame,
are all in conspiracy against the desire and duty of peace.

Id. See also infra text accompanying notes 309-18.
the Executive has grown more, not less, aggressive in recent years. The Part then discusses the two principal schools of academic thought concerning the meaning of the War Powers Clause. It focuses on the ways in which they treat the original understanding and its significance, and concludes by discussing why neither school of thought has convincingly made its case.

A. The Executive Branch and the War Power Since the Korean War

Throughout most of this nation’s history, Presidents did not claim that they could commit the nation to war without congressional authorization. In 1950, for the first time, the Executive explicitly took the position that it did not need congressional authorization to send troops abroad to fight. In justifying his decision to send United States troops into Korea, President Truman relied on a Security Council resolution. Subsequently, after consulting with Secretary of State Dean Acheson, he decided not to seek congressional authorization, but to rely on his powers as President and Commander in Chief. The Department of State issued a supporting memorandum of law.

President Johnson’s actions in Vietnam were, in contrast, almost modest. As in Korea, the Department of State formally took the position that the President needed no congressional support to send troops into combat. Nonetheless, President Johnson could plausibly claim that he had secured congressional approval for every stage of

36 For example, President Johnson had a legitimate claim to congressional authorization for the Vietnam War, while Presidents Reagan, Bush, and Clinton, in contrast, have repeatedly either sent troops into combat without congressional authorization or been prepared to do so. See infra text accompanying notes 42-68.


38 ELY, supra note 8, at 10.


40 See SCHLESINGER, supra note 13, at 131-33.

41 Department of State Memorandum Authority of President to Repel the Attack in Korea (July 3, 1950), in DEP’T ST. BULL., July 31, 1950, at 173, 173 (“The President, as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States, has full control over the use thereof. . .[T]he President’s power to send the Armed Forces outside the country is not dependent on Congressional authority . . .”).

42 See Office of the Legal Adviser, supra note 23, at 1101 (“The Constitution leaves to the President the judgment to determine whether the circumstances of a particular armed attack are so urgent and the potential consequences so threatening to the security of the United States that he should act without formally consulting the Congress.”).
the Vietnam War through the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution;\(^{43}\) Congress's 1967 declaration of "its firm intentions to provide all necessary support for members of the Armed Forces of the United States fighting in Vietnam";\(^{44}\) and congressional appropriation statutes.\(^{45}\) Significantly, Dean Ely and Professor Henkin, despite their general criticism of executive branch overreaching in warmaking, have found this claim of congressional approval convincing.\(^{46}\)

Recent history is very different. When President Reagan directed the invasion of Grenada in 1983, he simply acted "with respect to the conduct of foreign relations and as Commander-in-Chief of the United States Armed Forces"\(^{47}\) without subsequently seeking congressional ratification of his actions.\(^{48}\) Similarly, in 1986, he unilaterally ordered the bombing of a number of targets in Libya pursuant to his power as Commander in Chief.\(^{49}\)

President Bush continued this trend. Without seeking congressional approval, he sent 24,000 troops into Panama to oust the government of General Manuel Noriega.\(^{50}\) Later, as the Bush administration prepared for the Gulf War, it initially took the position that it would not secure congressional approval.\(^{51}\) Although it ultimately reversed its course and obtained authorization for the commencement of hostilities,\(^{52}\) President Bush repeatedly proclaimed that he did not need that congressional sanction to send troops into combat. At one point he declared, "I didn't have to get permission from some old goat in the United States Congress to kick Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait."\(^{53}\)

\(^{46}\) See Ely, supra note 8, at 12-46; Louis Henkin, Foreign Affairs and the Constitution 101-02 (1972).
\(^{48}\) See Fisher, supra note 9, at 141-42.
\(^{53}\) Remarks of President George Bush Before the Texas State Republican Convention, Federal News Service, June 20, 1992, available in LEXIS, News Library, Script File. For further statements that congressional support was not necessary to launch a military attack against Iraq, see George Bush, Remarks at Dedication Ceremony of the Social Sciences Complex at Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey, 27 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc.
The election of a Democratic President in 1992 did not cause the trend to abate. At the end of his administration, President Bush sent United States troops to Somalia as part of a United Nations relief effort. In June 1993, when twenty-three Pakistani soldiers were killed in Somalia, President Clinton, without seeking congressional authorization, altered the nature of the relief effort by ordering United States military action against Mohamed Farah Aideed, the Somali political leader whom the United Nations believed was responsible for the killing. The President simply announced that, in response to the killing of the Pakistani soldiers, the United States mission in Somalia had become a military one.

The following year, President Clinton prepared to send troops into Haiti to oust that country's military junta without receiving congressional sanction. He stated, "Like my predecessors of both parties, I have not agreed that I was constitutionally mandated" to secure congressional approval before military intervention. United States troops were on the verge of invasion when former President Jimmy Carter negotiated an agreement under which Haitian leaders resigned. In some regards, however, Bosnia represents an even more dramatic assertion of executive authority over the military. Troops were deployed into a war zone pursuant to the President's Commander-in-Chief power, not only without congressional approval,

54 See FISHER, supra note 9, at 153-54.
55 See id. at 153. Under pressure from Congress, President Clinton agreed to withdraw all troops from Somalia by March 31, 1994, and he carried out that agreement. See id. at 154.
56 For discussion of the preparation of an invasion of Haiti and subsequent events, see id. at 154-57.
57 Presidential News Conference: Health Care, Haiti and Crime Transcript of President Clinton's News Conference at the White House, N.Y. TIMES, Aug. 4, 1994, at A16. Assistant Attorney General Walter Dellinger justified the sending of troops to Haiti in a more limited way, arguing, among other things, that the deployment of troops would not be "war" in the constitutional sense because "a 'war' does not exist where United States troops are deployed at the invitation of a fully legitimate government in circumstances in which the nature, scope, and duration of the deployment are such that the use of force involved does not rise to the level of 'war.'" Walter Dellinger, After the Cold War: Presidential Power and the Use of Military Force, 50 U. MIAMI L. REV. 107, 115 (1995). See also Word for Word: A President's Ability to Declare War, N.Y. TIMES, Sept. 30, 1994, at A29 (Office of Legal Counsel letter offering legal basis for troop deployment in Haiti). Neither house explicitly opposed the invasion. After the Security Council passed a resolution on July 31, 1994 urging the removal of the Haitian government, however, the United States Senate unanimously voted that that resolution "does not constitute authorization for the deployment of United States Armed Forces in Haiti under the Constitution of the United States or pursuant to the War Powers Resolution." 140 CONG. REC. S10,415, 10,433, 10,510 (daily ed. Aug. 3, 1994).
59 See Donald L. Robinson, Who Has the Power to Put U.S. Troops in Harm's Way?, CHRISTIAN SCI. MONITOR, Dec. 19, 1995 (discussing President Clinton's "insist[ence] that he did
but over the clearly and repeatedly expressed objections of the House of Representatives.\footnote{60}

Congress's principal check on the military power of the Executive has been the War Powers Resolution,\footnote{61} which was passed in 1973 over President Nixon's veto.\footnote{62} The resolution provides that the President must notify Congress within forty-eight hours of the start of combat involving American troops and that, unless Congress authorizes hostilities, he or she must withdraw those troops within sixty days (a time period that can be extended to ninety days upon appropriate presidential certification).\footnote{63} The measure explicitly presents itself as reflecting the constitutional dictates according to the original understanding, not as altering either the constitutional powers of Congress or of the President. It states that "[i]t is the purpose of this chapter to fulfill the intent of the framers of the Constitution of the United States."\footnote{64}

Presidents have seen the matter differently. In his veto message, President Nixon denounced the resolution as an unconstitutional infringement on his powers as Commander in Chief and as violative of

\footnote{60} On October 30, 1995, the House passed a sense of the House resolution stating that "no United States Armed [F]orces should be deployed . . . until the Congress has approved such a deployment." H.R. Res. 247(2), 104th Cong., 1st Sess., 141 CONG. REC. H11398 (daily ed. Oct. 30, 1995). On November 17, the House passed a bill providing that, in the absence of future specific appropriations, the United States was not to use government funds to support United States troops in Bosnia. \textit{See} H.R. Res. 2606, 104th Cong., 1st Sess., 141 CONG. REC. H13,238 (daily ed. Nov. 17, 1995) (enacted). After troops were deployed, the Senate passed a resolution that expressed "reservations . . . about President Clinton's decision to deploy United States Armed Forces," but, since the mission had begun, sanctioned it provided that the United States would lead an effort to arm Bosnian Muslims and that United States troops would leave Bosnia within "approximately one year." S.J. Res. 44, 104th Cong., 1st Sess., 141 CONC. REC. S18552 (daily ed. Dec. 13, 1995). The resolution was not intended as support for the underlying policy; Senator Bob Dole, its co-sponsor, declared, ""[W]e oppose the decision to deploy troops." \textit{Id.} at S18550. The House was even more critical of the President's actions. It passed a resolution deploring the fact that "[d]espite the expressed will of the House of Representatives . . . the President has chosen to proceed with the deployment of approximately 20,000 members of the United States Armed Forces" and formally declared "opposition to the President's policy." H.R. Res. 302, 104th Cong., 1st Sess., 141 CONG. REC. H14849 (daily ed. Dec. 13, 1995).

For an excellent and detailed account of presidential activity in the years since the Second World War, see \textit{Fisher, supra} note 9, at 70-161.


\footnote{62} \textit{See} Text of President Nixon's Message Vetoing the War Powers Resolution [hereinafter Nixon Veto], \textit{reprinted in Reveley, supra} note 14, at 293-97.

\footnote{63} \textit{Id.} 50 U.S.C. § 1544(b) (1994).

\footnote{64} \textit{Id.} § 1541(a). The statute asserts that the Constitution permits the President to commit troops to combat on his own authority only where an attack upon American territory or against American troops creates "a national emergency." \textit{Id.} § 1541(c).
the original understanding.\textsuperscript{65} Nixon's response has served as the model for subsequent presidential action. As Professor Michael Paulsen has written, "No President has accepted the 1973 War Powers Resolution as binding, on the ground that it unconstitutionally interferes with the President's powers as Commander-in-Chief."\textsuperscript{66} Since 1973, Presidents committing United States troops to combat have repeatedly failed to notify Congress or have filed a report which was intentionally \textit{not} identified as a hostilities report (and which therefore, according to executive branch officials, did not start the War Powers Resolution's sixty day clock).\textsuperscript{67} In the face of Executive actions reflecting the view that the Resolution is unconstitutional, Congress has failed to muster anything remotely resembling an effective response. It has neither denied funding to any of these military efforts nor legislatively proclaimed that, despite the fact that the President has not filed a required hostilities report, the sixty day clock was triggered.\textsuperscript{68}

B. Competing Interpretations of the War Powers Clause

Given the ongoing real-world controversy about the meaning of the War Powers Clause and the enormous stakes involved in such controversy, it is hardly surprising that, since the start of the Vietnam War, the academic debate about the meaning of the War Powers Clause has been one of the most prominent in constitutional law. Two sharply divergent readings of the Clause have emerged, and scholars have justified each reading as consistent with the original understanding.

Defenders of a broad Executive power to initiate combat have claimed that the Framers intended that the War Powers Clause be

\textsuperscript{65} See Nixon Veto, \textit{supra} note 62, at 293, 295.


\textsuperscript{68} See Yoo, \textit{supra} note 22, at 182. Whether the War Powers Resolution could be revised in such a way as to be made effective is a matter for debate. \textit{Compare} Ely, \textit{supra} note 8, at 63-66 (suggesting how the Resolution could be amended to make it effective) \textit{with} Bobbitt, \textit{supra} note 15, at 1371, 1397-1400 (rejecting the War Powers Resolution as an "absurd failure").
read narrowly.69 Under this view, when the Framers gave Congress the power to “declare war,” they intentionally used a term with a precise meaning in international law, a meaning familiar to them from their reading of Blackstone70 and such civil law scholars as Grotius71 and Vattel.72 Dean Rostow, a leading proponent of this view, has written:

Under international law, force may be used between states both in time of war and in time of peace. . . . A “declaration of war” transforms the relationship between the belligerents into a state of war. . . . The state of war contemplates unlimited hostilities between

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69 See, e.g., Bobbitt, supra note 15, at 1375-76; Emerson, War Powers Resolution, supra note 23, at 211-13; Rostow, Once More, supra note 19, at 5-7; Yoo, supra note 22, at 193-94.
70 For Blackstone, conflict could begin without a declaration of war. In particular, issuance of letters of marque and reprisal created an “incomplete state of hostilities.” 1 WILLIAM BLACKSTONE, COMMENTARIES #250. The declaration of war served a limited, although important, role: “[I]n order to make a war completely effectual, it is necessary with us in England that it be publicly declared and duly proclaimed by the king’s authority; and, then, all parts of both the contending nations, from the highest to the lowest, are bound by it.” Id. Blackstone thus treated the declaration of war as the culminating step with respect to conflict between nations.
71 Grotius observed that “most wars are begun without declaration of war.” HUGO GROTIIUS, ON THE RIGHTS OF WAR AND PEACE 318 (William Whewell trans., abr. ed. 1853) (citing Dio Chrysostom). The declaration was necessary for certain “peculiar effects,” id. at 319, such as to authorize seizure of the property of foreign nationals. See id. at 318.
72 Like Grotius, Vattel concluded that not all wars had to be declared, though his treatment differed from Grotius’s, see supra note 71, since Vattel took the position that in some situations declarations of war were necessary to begin hostilities legitimately. Vattel wrote, “He who is attacked and only wages defensive war, needs not to make any hostile declaration . . . .” EMERICH DE VATTEL, THE LAW OF NATIONS 316 (Joseph Chitty ed., 1861). Thus, a declaration of war was not necessary to respond to attack. Pro-Executive scholar J. Terry Emerson has suggested that Vattel distinguished between “wars of aggression and conquest,” which required declarations of war, and defensive wars, which did not require such declarations. See Emerson, War Powers Resolution, supra note 23, at 212. This, however, was not the distinction that Vattel himself drew. For Vattel, nondefensive wars—the wars which required a declaration of war—were those in which the nation had not been attacked, but in which justice nonetheless dictated going to war. “The right of making war,” Vattel began his chapter on declarations of war, belongs to nations only as a remedy against injustice: it is the offspring of unhappy necessity. This remedy is so dreadful in its effects, so destructive to mankind, so grievous even to the party who has recourse to it, that unquestionably the law of nature allows of it only in the last extremity,—that is to say, when every other expedient proves ineffectual for the maintenance of justice. VATTIEL, supra, at 314. Although Emerson suggests that Vattel thought that declarations of war were the means by which wars of “aggression and conquest” were sanctioned, see Emerson, War Powers Resolution, supra note 23, at 212 & n.131, Vattel believed that unjust wars violated natural law, writing that “in order to be justifiable in taking up arms, it is necessary . . . [t]hat we have a just cause of complaint.” Id.

Vattel agreed with Grotius that declarations of war had important juridical consequences: “Without such a public declaration of war, it would, in a treaty of peace, be too difficult to determine those acts which are to be considered as the effects of war, and those that each nation may set down as injuries of which she means to demand reparation.” Id. at 316.
the belligerents, the internment or expulsion of enemy aliens, the termination of diplomatic relations, the sequestration or even confiscation of enemy property, and the imposition of regulations—censorship, for example—which would be unthinkable in liberal-minded states during peacetime.\footnote{Rostow, Once More, supra note 19, at 6.}

In other words, the power to declare war is a quasi-judicial power: Congress determines whether to make a legal declaration that a state of war exists. Such a determination is significant, since a declaration has important consequences for the rights of both citizens and aliens. But the declaration typically follows the onset of hostilities, rather than preceding them, and the declaration is not necessary to legalize the hostilities themselves.\footnote{For more extensive development of this argument, see Bobbitt, supra note 15, at 1396-1400; Emerson, War Powers Resolution, supra note 23, at 211-12; Rostow, Once More, supra note 19, at 3-18; Yoo, supra note 22, at 204-08.}

Similarly, when the Founders gave Congress the power to “grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal,”\footnote{U.S. CONST. art I, § 8, cl. 11.} they were also using “language . . . peculiar to international law,”\footnote{Rostow, Once More, supra note 19, at 6.} and, again, that language had a precise, and limited, meaning. Sovereigns granted letters of marque and reprisal to individuals allowing them to pursue specific claims against citizens of other countries.\footnote{See Yoo, supra note 22, at 250-51.} These people were thereby authorized to take the property—and sometimes, even seize the persons—of their debtors and those who had wronged them. In wartime, the letters empowered civilians to capture the property of the enemy and her citizens.\footnote{See id. at 206.} But the power to grant letters of marque and reprisal was not the power to start war.\footnote{See U.S. CONST. art. II, § 2, cl. 1.} For proponents of this view, then, the power to initiate conflict is not to be found solely—or even primarily—in the War Powers Clause. Rather, it is to be found in the Constitution’s designation of the President as Commander in Chief\footnote{See id. art. 2, § 1, cl. 1. Pro-Executive scholars do maintain, however, that the Framers did not intend for Congress to be powerless to check the President, since they gave it the power “to raise and support armies,” id. art. I, § 8, cl. 12, and the power of the purse, id. art. I, § 8, cl. 1-2, 5. See Bobbitt, supra note 15, at 1388-1400; Emerson, War Powers Resolution, supra note 23, at 201-03; Rostow, Once More, supra note 19, at 14-15; Yoo, supra note 22, at 209-10.} and, in addition, in its grant to him or her of all executive power.\footnote{See id.} Proponents of the pro-Congress reading of the War Powers Clause offer a diametrically opposed reading of the original understanding. They reject the idea that the phrases in the Clause were intended to be read in the established, technical sense. According to
Professor Charles Lofgren, for example, the word "declare" as used in the Constitution "had a broader meaning than it did in the treatises and international practice. It meant 'commence.'"\textsuperscript{82} Similarly, the phrase "Letters of Marque and Reprisal" "conferred on Congress power over general reprisals outside the context of declared war."\textsuperscript{83} Most important, the two phrases were meant to be read together.\textsuperscript{84} They are the only two specific grants of war-initiating power in the Constitution.\textsuperscript{85} Thus, regardless of how they are parsed individually, together they mean that the Founders intended Congress to have the power to initiate all conflict—except when necessary to repel sudden attacks. In this regard, it should be stressed that pro-Congress originalists do not maintain that all wars had to be formally declared, merely that they be approved in advance in some fashion. As Dean Ely writes, "[A]ll wars, big or small, 'declared' in so many words or not . . . had to be legislatively authorized."\textsuperscript{86}

Under this view, the Founders were not ignorant of the fact that the phrases they used had specific meanings at international law. They knew, moreover, that by the eighteenth century most wars were not declared—as Hamilton wrote in \textit{Federalist No. 25}, "[T]he ceremony of a formal denunciation of war has of late fallen into disuse . . ."\textsuperscript{87}—and letters of marque and reprisal were rarely issued.\textsuperscript{88} But, as Professor Lofgren observed, "[D]eviation from international usage [with respect to these terms] would have seemed proper . . . since the Constitution involved domestic arrangements."\textsuperscript{89} According to Professor Bestor, "[T]he phrase 'declare war' [in the Constitution] was universally understood as synonymous with what the Articles of Confederation had described as [Congress's] 'sole and exclusive right and power of determining on . . . war.'"\textsuperscript{90}

Pro-Executive scholars have a counter to such claims (apart from offering their competing vision of the original understanding). These writers contend that, even if the pro-Congress camp is correct about the original understanding of the War Powers Clause, that understanding should not bar Presidents from initiating conflict. The argu-
ment is not that original intent is never relevant, but that it is irrelevant here for reasons unique to the War Powers Clause.

The first "unique" reason advanced is that, regardless of the original understanding, the President's ability to initiate and conduct war without explicit congressional approval is constitutional because of long-standing practice. For example, J. Terry Emerson, after stating that there are over two hundred incidents in which Presidents have initiated the use of military force abroad, concludes that "history has legitimated the practice of presidential war-making."91 Emerson follows Henry Monaghan, who notes "the long and ever-accumulating practice of presidential 'war-making'" and observes that "[a] practice so deeply embedded in our governmental structure should be treated as decisive of the constitutional issue."92

A closely-related second reason is that this practice reflects broader constitutional concerns that have become more pressing with the passage of time. Thus, Judge Bork argues that the President has "primacy in foreign affairs," and that primacy is the joint product of constitutional structure and historical evolution: "The respective roles of Congress and the president developed according to their structural capacities and limitations. Congress, consisting of 535 members assisted by huge staffs, is obviously incapable of swift, decisive, and flexible action in the employment of armed force . . . ."93 Because

91 Emerson, War Powers Legislation, supra note 23, at 72 (quoting with approval Monaghan, supra note 18, at 29). Proponents of this view disagree on the precise number of such incidents. Writing a few years before Emerson, the Office of the Legal Adviser for the Department of State justified President Johnson's activities in Vietnam by asserting more modestly that there were 125 instances of presidential warmaking. See Office of the Legal Adviser, supra note 23, at 1101. Critics of this view both contest its history and the underlying theory. Dean Ely thus argues that "post-ratification practice in violation of the Constitution [cannot] change it," and that "the original constitutional understanding was quite consistently honored from the framing until 1950." Ely, supra note 8, at 10. For other criticisms of the view that there was a pattern of executive-initiated conflict prior to the Korean War, see Schlesinger, supra note 15, at 139; Wormuth et al., supra note 14, at 140-49; W. Taylor Reveley III, Presidential War-Making: Constitutional Prerogative or Usurpation?, 55 Va. L. Rev. 1243, 1258 (1969).

92 Monaghan, supra note 18, at 31.

93 Bork, Foreword, supra note 16, at 3x. Explicitly embracing Judge Bork's position, Professor W. Michael Reisman has similarly declared that original intent should not control the meaning of the War Powers Clause: "The Constitution is part of our constitutive process in which we determine how to establish and maintain our fundamental decision-making institutions so that they can provide liberty, security, and the fulfillment of other constitutional goals in ways optimally consistent with historic values but responsive to contemporary exigencies." Reisman, supra note 21, at 212. See also Ely, supra note 8, at 143 n.24 (stating that Judge Bork's view of War Powers Clause "seems out of accord with [his] usual strongly argued 'original intent' approach to constitutional interpretation"). Dean Rostow has advanced an argument similar to Judge Bork's. See Rostow, Once More, supra note 19, at 48 ("The problem facing the nation is to fashion and refashion the Presidency and Congress as responsible and cooperative institutions capable of carrying out a foreign policy adequate to the security needs of our times and of the foreseeable future.").
situations change so rapidly and dangers to the national well-being arise almost instantaneously, necessity dictates that the Executive have the power to use force abroad without congressional approval. As Judge Bork has argued, "The need for Presidents to have that power, particularly in the modern age, should be obvious to almost anyone." 94

In contrast, pro-Congress scholars have not been as quick to argue that their reading of the War Powers Clause is superior, even if not supported by the original understanding. Ely's treatment here is illustrative. The saliency he accords to the original understanding in framing his proposal for contemporary jurisprudence is similar to that accorded the original understanding by, for example, Professors Glennon, 95 Koh, 96 and Henkin. 97 Ely offers three closely-related reasons which he suggests animated the Founders and support giving Congress the power to initiate war. First, and most important, the requirement of congressional consent ensures that "the concurrence of a number of people of various points of view" has been obtained before the nation goes to war. 98 (Ely explicitly assumes here that the War Powers Clause also requires that the President consent before the nation go to war). 99 Second, large bodies move more slowly, ensuring careful consideration before war begins. 100 Third, "[t]he requirement of authorization by both houses of Congress was . . . calculated to increase the probability that the American people would support any war we entered into." 101 But the focus of his argument is not that these rationales are independently correct. Rather, it is that, because the original understanding is clear, it must be followed. He writes:

One of the recurrent discoveries of academic writing about constitutional law—an all but certain ticket to tenure—is that from the standpoint of twentieth-century observers, the "original understanding" of the document's framers and ratifiers can be obscure to the point of inscrutability. Often this is true. In this case, however, it isn't. 102

Because of its clarity, the original intent is dispositive: "In language and recorded purpose the War Clause made an unmistakable point

94 Bork, Erosion, supra note 16, at 698.
95 See Michael J. Glennon, Constitutional Diplomacy 80-84 (1990).
96 See Koh, supra note 10, at 69-79.
97 See Henkin, supra note 46, at 32-35.
98 Ely, supra note 8, at 4.
99 See id.
100 See id.
101 Id.
102 Id. at 3.
that needed no further gloss: Acts of war must be authorized by Congress."  

Thus, the question is squarely presented: Who is right about the original understanding? And is the underlying rationale that informed the Founders' decisionmaking one that merits serious independent regard, or is it merely one that merits respect to the extent that the original understanding merits respect?

The next section examines the evidence to which scholars typically attach the greatest significance—the debates at the Philadelphia constitutional convention and the state ratifying conventions. The section focuses on what the words "To declare War" meant. There was almost no debate in Philadelphia on the Commander-in-Chief Clause or the phrase "letters of marque and reprisal." Neither generated much concern. To the extent that there was discussion, the Commander-in-Chief Clause received more. According to both pro-Executive and pro-Congress writers, the most influential comments about the Commander-in-Chief Clause were made by Alexander Hamilton and James Iredell, both of whose statements reflect a view of the Commander-in-Chief power as limited to commanding troops once war is in progress. At the same time, these comments do not repre-
sent a sufficient quantity of evidence to reveal clearly the meaning of
the Commander-in-Chief Clause or, by inference, the meaning of the
War Powers Clause.

C. The Framing of the War Powers Clause

Although the War Powers Clause has become the source of ex­
tensive controversy, it received very limited discussion at the time of
the founding. Moreover, as discussed below, the critical passage in
the debates at the Constitutional Convention is obscure and confus­
ing. Thus, the documents on which scholars traditionally focus in
their quest to determine the original understanding of constitutional
text provide only limited insight.

The initial discussion at the Constitutional Convention concern­
ing the war power occurred in response to the plan of government
submitted by Edmund Randolph of Virginia. The Virginia plan did
not address the question of who should be able to commit the nation
to war; it merely allocated to the “National Legislature . . . the Legisla­
tive Rights vested in Congress by the Confederation” and assigned to
the “National Executive . . . the Executive rights vested in Congress by
the Confederation.”

The question of which powers were executive and which were legislative was left open. A number of speakers urged
that the war power be given to Congress. While South Carolina’s
Charles Pinckney proclaimed himself an advocate of a “vigorous Exec­
utive,” he declared that he “was afraid the Executive powers of [the
existing] Congress might extend to peace & war.” James Wilson
argued that the “Prerogatives of the British Monarch [were not] a
proper guide in defining the Executive powers.” Some of these
prerogatives,” he stated, “were of a Legislative nature. Among others
that of war & peace &c.” James Madison “agree[d with] Wilson in
his definition [sic] of executive powers—executive powers ex vi ter­
mini, do not include the Rights of war & peace &c. but the powers
[should] be confined and defined—if large we shall have the Evils of
elective Monarchies.” Finally, John Rutledge of South Carolina an­
nounced that “he was not for giving [the Executive] the power of war
claring war by his own authority, nor that of raising fleets and armies.
These powers are vested in other hands. The power of declaring war is
expressly given to Congress . . . .

4 THE DEBATES IN THE SEVERAL STATE CONVENTIONS 107-08 (Jonathan Elliot ed., 1907)
[hereinafter Elliot].
108 1 Farrand, supra note 27, at 21.
109 Id. at 64-65 (alteration in original).
110 Id. at 65.
111 Id. at 65-66. See also id. at 73-74 (“Mr. Wilson said the great qualities in the several
parts of the Executive are vigor and dispatch. Making peace and war are generally deter­
mined by Writers on the Laws of Nations to be legislative powers.”).
112 Id. at 70.
and peace.” 113 No one argued that the Executive should have the power to initiate war. 114

The Convention subsequently created the Committee on Detail and assigned to it the task of preparing a constitution that reflected the decisions previously made. 115 None of the resolutions forwarded to the Committee, however, provided guidance in allocation of the war-initiating function. 116 At the same time, as indicated above, to the extent the matter had been debated, the consensus had been that the power to initiate war should be a legislative function. Moreover, Wilson and Randolph submitted draft constitutions that gave the legislature the power “to make war.” 117 Reflecting these points of view, the Committee’s final report assigned Congress the sole power “To make war; To raise armies; To build and equip fleets;” as well as “To call forth the aid of the militia, in order to execute the laws of the Union, enforce treaties, suppress insurrections, and repel invasions.” 118 The Convention debated the proposed War Powers Clause on August 17, 1787. Although the account of what was said—the account recorded in Madison’s notes—is brief, the debate was apparently the most sustained discussion of the proper allocation of the power to declare war. Therefore, this short and cryptic interchange tends to be the focus of modern academic discussion about the original understanding. 119 Although it is clear that one participant in that debate, South Carolina’s Pierce Butler, 120 thought that the President should have the

113 Id. at 65.
114 The only other participant in the Convention to make relevant statements at this point in the debates concerning the scope of the executive power was Roger Sherman. Apparently concurring in the prevailing sentiment that the Executive should not have power over war and peace, Sherman responded to Pinckney’s expressions of concern by stating that he saw the Executive “as nothing more than an institution for carrying the will of the Legislature into effect.” Id.
115 See 2 Farrand, supra note 27, at 85.
116 William Paterson also formally submitted a plan to the Committee but, similar to Randolph’s plan, it did not allocate the power to initiate war. See 1 Farrand, supra note 27, at 242-45 (Paterson’s plan). Alexander Hamilton offered a third plan of governance, although, unlike Randolph and Paterson, he did not make a formal proposal. In general, Hamilton envisioned an extremely powerful Executive. Indeed, a few years later, as the author of the Pacificus letters, Hamilton was to take an expansive view of the Executive’s war powers. See infra Part III.B. But in his speech he did not argue that the Executive should have the power to start wars. Rather, while the Executive was “to have the direction of war when authorized or begun,” Hamilton urged, without offering an explanatory justification, that the Senate “have the sole power of declaring war.” 1 Farrand, supra note 27, at 292.
117 See 2 Farrand, supra note 27, at 143 (Randolph’s draft plan); id. at 168 (Wilson’s draft plan).
118 Id. at 182.
119 See id. at 314-19.
120 Butler argued that the power “to make war” should be given to the President “who will have all the requisite qualities, and will not make war but when the Nation will support it.” Id. at 318.
power to make war, the intent of virtually every other participant is subject to dispute.

According to Madison's notes, following Butler's comment, he and Elbridge Gerry "moved to insert 'declare,' striking out 'make' war; leaving to the Executive the power to repel sudden attacks." 121 This motion is the critical moment in the debates and has inspired dramatically different readings. Ely, for example, contends that it makes clear that the President has the power under the Commander-in-Chief Clause to assume "tactical control" of military operation that had already received congressional authorization, and that it "reserved to the president the power, without advance congressional authorization, to 'repel sudden attacks.'" 122 Thus, the change did not take from Congress the sole power to start wars, except in case of emergency created by "sudden attacks." In contrast, pro-Executive scholars see this amendment as departing from the original proposal and granting the President the power to start wars; they minimize the significance of the phrase "leaving to the Executive the power to repel sudden attacks." Thus, Professor Yoo contends that "to repel sudden attacks" was seen as establishing the floor of executive power under the amended clause, not its ceiling: "Adopting the amendment made clear that the President could not unilaterally take the nation into a total war, but that he might be able to engage the nation in hostilities short of that." 123

Following the motion of Gerry and Madison, Connecticut's Roger Sherman stated that the original language "stood very well. The executive [should] be able to repel and not to commence war. 'Make' better than 'declare' the latter narrowing the power too much." 124 Thereby, on a pro-Executive reading, Sherman asserted his view "that the President already had the power to respond to attacks, and that reducing Congress' power to that of declaring war would permit the Executive to commence wars unilaterally." 125 A pro-Congress reading is simply that Sherman feared that the new language would, by narrowing Congress's power, in some unspecified way, increase the power of the Executive. 126

Gerry then said that he "never expected to hear in a republic a motion to empower the Executive alone to declare war." 127 The standard pro-Congress reading is that he is responding to Butler's com-

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121 Id.
122 Ely, supra note 8, at 5.
123 Yoo, supra note 22, at 264.
124 2 Farrand, supra note 27, at 318.
125 Yoo, supra note 22, at 262.
126 See Lofgren, Understanding, supra note 12, at 676.
127 2 Farrand, supra note 27, at 318.
ment that the President should be able to make war. Thus, Gerry is using "declare" as synonymous with "make." The problem with this view is that it breaks the sequence—Sherman, not Butler, was the speaker before Gerry—and Butler was not addressing the motion that was on the floor at the time of Gerry's speech. Thus, it would seem odd for Gerry to be responding to Butler. On the other hand, Professor Yoo argues that Gerry thought that Sherman was seeking to give the President the power to declare war (in the sense of declaring war under international law), and was asserting that he was appalled that anyone would suggest that the President should have such a power. But, as Yoo acknowledges, this reading is based on Gerry's complete misunderstanding of Sherman. Although Sherman's statement can be read in different ways, there is nothing in Madison's notes that would indicate that Sherman wanted to expand presidential power.

Neither the pro-Congress nor the pro-Executive reading is necessarily wrong. After all, people misunderstand each other all the time and they frequently address the comments of someone other than the previous speaker. But each reading is problematic. And so the record provided by Madison—both with respect to Gerry's comment and, more generally, with respect to the debate as a whole—does not tell us with any certainty what the Convention understood itself to be doing when it voted eight to two (with one abstention) to substitute "declare" for "make." Professor Jack Rakove has recently suggested an explanation for the unsatisfying record of this debate. He notes that the War Powers Clause was discussed toward the end of the pro-

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128 See Ely, supra note 8, at 3.
129 See Bestor, supra note 14, at 603-04.
130 See Yoo, supra note 22, at 262-63.
131 See id. at 262.
132 Philip Bobbitt offers another pro-Executive reading of the text: Gerry is responding to Sherman's appeal for "make," rather than "declare," by suggesting that use of the word "make" would have the consequence of giving the President the power to declare war (again, using the term as it is used in international law). Bobbitt, supra note 15, at 1380-81. But this reading necessarily requires that Gerry engaged in hyperbole and indirection. Sherman had very clearly not made "a motion to empower the Executive alone to declare war." 2 Farrand, supra note 27, at 318.
133 Even the actual vote is unclear, and that is significant as well. Madison indicates that the original vote was seven in favor, two against, one abstention, and that Ellsworth changed his vote (and hence Connecticut's vote) when Rufus King said "that 'make' war might be understood to 'conduct' it which was an Executive function." 2 Farrand, supra note 27, at 319 n.9. This suggests that, once Ellsworth understood that the change was needed to make clear that Congress would not have tactical command of the military after it had authorized combat, he shifted his vote. The official record indicates, in contrast, that the change was originally defeated 5 to 4, but that on re-vote, it passed eight to one. See id. at 314. This would suggest that King's comment was not simply important to Ellsworth, but to the critical swing voters. See Lofgren, Understanding, supra note 12, at 676-77; Yoo, supra note 22, at 264 & n.475.
ceedings in Philadelphia. Weary delegates were no longer carefully articulating their positions, and Madison was no longer carefully recording them.

In addition to arguing that the debates in Philadelphia support their view, pro-Congress scholars also highlight statements made during the ratification debates in the states, which they believe demonstrate that the power to declare war was the power to initiate conflict. The most powerful statement from this perspective is one made by James Wilson at the Pennsylvania ratifying convention:

This [new] system will not hurry us into war; it is calculated to guard against it. It will not be in the power of a single man, or a single body of men, to involve us in such distress; for the important power of declaring war is vested in the legislature at large: this declaration must be made with the concurrence of the House of Representatives: from this circumstance we may draw a certain conclusion that nothing but our national interest can draw us into a war.

As Lofgren writes, in this statement Wilson "not only implicitly equated declaring war and entering war, but also explicitly foreclosed exercise of the power by the President acting alone." Others at the state conventions equated Congress's power over war under the Constitution with its power under the Articles of Confederation, and thus implicitly indicated that Congress was retaining the power to initiate conflict. As Robert Livingston declared at the New York convention: "But, say the gentlemen, our present [Articles of Confederation] Congress have not the same powers [as Congress would have under the Constitution]. I answer, They have the very same . . . [including] the power of making war. . . ."

135 See id.
136 See id.
137 It should be added that, as a matter of constitutional interpretation, these statements are more significant than the statements made during the constitutional convention, although the scholarly controversy about the war power tends to focus on the Philadelphia debates. To the extent that the founding generation thought original understanding relevant to constitutional interpretation, it was the understanding of the ratifiers, who made the Constitution law, not the understanding of the participants at Philadelphia, whose deliberations were secret. The classic statement on point is Madison's: "As the instrument came from [the Philadelphia convention], it was nothing more than a draught of a plan, nothing but a dead letter, until life and validity were breathed into it, by the voice of the people, speaking through the several state conventions." James Madison, Jay's Treaty: Speech in the House of Representatives (Apr. 6, 1796), in 16 Madison Papers, supra note 35, at 296. See also Rakove, supra note 134, at 339-65; Charles A. Lofgren, The Original Understanding of Original Intent?, 5 Const. Commentary 77 (1988); H. Jefferson Powell, The Original Understanding of Original Intent, 98 Harv. L. Rev. 885 (1985); Treanor, Judicial Review, supra note 5, at 544-52.
138 2 Elliot, supra note 107, at 528.
139 Lofgren, Understanding, supra note 12, at 685.
140 2 Elliot, supra note 107, at 278. See also 3 id. at 259 (Madison).
In contrast, there are apparently no statements in which the term "declare War" as used in the Constitution is clearly defined by reference to international law. But this absence is far from dispositive. A number of pro-Congress scholars—although not all—have acknowledged that their evidence, while probative, is not sufficient to decide the question. As Lofgren candidly observes of his reading of the clause, "[O]ne cannot pretend that the matter is beyond all doubt." Similarly, W. Taylor Reveley III, the author of War Powers of the President and Congress, perhaps the most thorough treatment of the war power, concludes that the records of the Constitutional Convention are "inconclusive" and that they "are not sharpened by available accounts of the ratification debates."

A number of Antifederalists took the position that the Constitution vested in Congress the power to initiate war and criticized the Constitution for this reason. For example, at the Virginia debates Patrick Henry bemoaned the fact that "Congress can both declare war and carry it on, and levy your money, as long as you have a shilling to pay." Id. at 172. In making his argument, Henry highlighted the distinction between the United States Constitution and English practice since, under the latter, "[t]he King declares war; the House of Commons gives the means of carrying it on." Id. at 172. For other examples of Antifederalist objections to the fact that Congress possessed both the powers of purse and sword, see id. at 374-77 (John Lansing, Jr. & Melancton Smith); Richard Henry Lee, Letters of a Federal Farmer, in Pamphlets on the Constitution of the United States 279, 291 (Paul Leicester Ford ed., 1888). These criticisms drew on one of the traditional and fundamental principles of mixed government, which was, as George Mason stated it during the course of the Constitutional Convention, that "[t]he purse & the sword might never get into the same hands <whether legislative or executive>." 1 Farrand, supra note 27, at 139-40. In response, some Federalists took the position that this reading of the Constitution was correct, but the concern unfounded. Thus, Oliver Ellsworth asked:

[D]oes it follow, because it is dangerous to give the power of the sword and purse to an hereditary prince, who is independent of the people, that therefore it is dangerous to give it to the Parliament—to Congress, which is your Parliament—to men appointed by yourselves, and dependent upon yourselves? This argument amounts to this: you must cut a man in two in the middle, to prevent his hurting himself.

2 Elliot, supra note 107, at 195. Such statements reflect the view that the decision to declare war is not simply a decision as to whether hostilities should be classified as a war for purposes of international law. Rather, it is the power of the sword. Similarly, John Marshall asked: "Are the people of England more secure, if the Commons have no voice in declaring war? or are we less secure by having the Senate joined with the President?" 3 id. at 233. Marshall's statement, however, apparently reflects a confusion of the war-making power and the treaty-making power.

141 See Bestor, supra note 14, at 608 & n.279. Thus, even Professor Yoo, author of the most careful and complete pro-Executive history, does not offer any examples of this type. See generally Yoo, supra note 22.

142 Dean Ely, for example, treats the evidence as unambiguous. See Ely, supra note 8, at 5 (noting "clarity" of original understanding). He has received significant criticism on this point. See Peter D. Coffman, Power and Duty: The Language of the War Power, 80 Cornnell L. Rev. 1296, 1241 n.90 (1995) (reviewing Ely, supra note 8, and finding his discussion of original understanding "peremptory"); Peter J. Spiro, War Powers and the Siren of Formalism. 68 N.Y.U. L. Rev. 1338, 1357 (1993) (reviewing Ely, supra note 8, and attacking his treatment of original understanding).

143 Lofgren, Understanding, supra note 12, at 697.

144 Reveley, supra note 14, at 84.
Not surprisingly, pro-Executive scholars find this evidence unconvincing, in part because only a few speakers equate the power to declare war and the power to initiate conflict, but also because many of the statements quoted above are unreliable indicia of what the Constitution meant. Thus, Yoo suggests that Livingston's statement equating the new and old Congress's power reflected a "misunderstanding [that] may have occurred due to a failure to read the new Constitution carefully ...." Wilson's statement, in contrast, is clear, and he was obviously familiar with the Constitution's text as a result of his service as a delegate at the Philadelphia Convention. It is nonetheless possible to argue that his statements only reflect his view, and that he is a "dissenter from the prevailing Federalist view on war powers." Therefore, Professor Yoo, a sophisticated pro-Executive scholar, argues not that all the Founders thought that the President could initiate war, but that this was the dominant view. Of course, if all that the pro-Executive camp could do was criticize and minimize the evidence offered by the pro-Congress camp, the case for a pro-Executive reading of the Clause would not be very substantial—particularly in view of the absence of statements directly supporting that reading. But pro-Executive scholars have advanced a strong independent argument: the Founders operated against a background in which there was a "shared understanding" that the Executive had the power to start war, and pro-Congress scholars have failed to offer convincing evidence that the Founders departed from that understanding. This argument and the inability of pro-Congress scholars to respond to it or to another type of evidence that challenges their thesis—evidence that the President did not have a veto over declarations of war—are discussed in the next section.

D. The Case against the Pro-Congress Reading of the War Powers Clause

Pro-Executive scholars have advanced a number of contextual arguments favoring their reading of the War Powers Clause. Knit together, these arguments powerfully suggest that, in the absence of some countervailing consideration not previously uncovered by scholars, the Founders would not have given Congress alone the power to initiate war.

The first point, and the point that has been treated as central by pro-Executive scholars, has already been discussed. The terms used

145 Yoo, supra note 22, at 282 n.532.
146 Id. at 287 n.547.
147 See id.
148 Id. at 173.
149 See supra Part I.B.
in the War Powers Clause—declarations of war and letters of marque and reprisal—were terms that had a particular meaning under international law. The power to declare war was a quasi-judicial function, and letters of marque and reprisal had a limited role. The Founders knew these meanings and presumably relied on them when they used these terms. As Dean Rostow explains, "The language . . . can only be understood in the setting of international law."[150] "Was . . .” J. Terry Emerson asks, "if the framers meant to make the Executive no more than the ‘agent’ of the Legislature in matters of military affairs, did they not say so in clear words . . . ?"[151]

Second, English precedent accorded the Executive the power to initiate war. Professor Yoo writes:

The eighteenth-century English monarch was commander-in-chief of the armed forces and possessed exclusive power to enter into treaties, to declare war, and to raise and regulate the army and navy. . . . Naturally, then, when the Framers allocated war powers between the President and Congress, they used as their baseline the separation of powers they believed to exist between King and Parliament.[152]

Third, the writers to whom the Founders looked on separation of powers matters—John Locke, William Blackstone, and Montesquieu—all believed that the Executive should have responsibility for starting and carrying on war.[153]

Fourth, the majority of state constitutions that preceded the Federal Constitution “either assumed that the governors had broad war-making authority, or explicitly gave them such power in terms reminiscent of the British constitution and the colonial charters.”[154]

Fifth, as former Secretary of State William Rogers has argued, the Founders believed that the Executive was distinguished by its capacity to act swiftly, vigorously, and secretly, attributes that they recognized were of peculiar value in the realm of foreign affairs.[155]

Sixth, the Federal Constitution vested in the Executive powers that the first state constitutions, departing from English and colonial precedent, had given to the legislature.[156] “[A]n impartial review of the history of this early period,” Terry Emerson observes, “reveals that the attitudes of the majority of persons who wrote the state constitu-

[150] Rostow, Once More, supra note 19, at 6.
[152] Yoo, supra note 22, at 217. Colonial governors also had broad military powers, although, as subordinate crown officials, typically lacked the power to declare war. See id. at 219-20.
[153] See id. at 199-204.
[154] Id. at 226.
[155] See Rogers, supra note 23, at 1196 & n.10.
tions had undergone a change from an initial dread of the royalty in the 1770's to a perception of the need for a strong executive by the 1780's."

Taken together, these factors suggest that it would be profoundly surprising for the Founders to have granted Congress the power to initiate conflict. For them to believe that such a decision was appropriate, there would have had to have been some concern causing them to turn against the great tide of constitutional history. In general, the first state constitutions took from the Executive his traditional powers; the Constitution gave them back. To allocate the war power to Congress alone would have been directly countercyclical—taking from the Executive a power that was so much a core Executive function that even anti-Executive state constitutions had allocated it to him.

Moreover, each of the points made by pro-Executive scholars is historically accurate. The power to start war was historically an Executive function, and this was an allocation supported by the thinkers who influenced the Founders. Blackstone was unambiguous in describing British practice. "[T]he King," he wrote, "has also the sole prerogative of making war and peace." "[W]ar is not undertaken by private persons, but by the will of the whole community; whose right of willing is in this case transferred to the supreme magistrate by the fundamental laws of society." Locke believed that this was the proper assignment of the power, and Montesquieu similarly assigned to the Executive the power to start and conduct war. The

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157 Id.
158 See id. at 207.
159 1 WILLIAM BLACKSTONE, COMMENTARIES *249.
160 Id. at *250.
161 In Chapter XII of his Second Treatise of Government, Locke divided governmental power in a commonwealth into three parts: legislative, executive, and federative. See JOHN LOCKE, TWO TREATISES OF GOVERNMENT bk.II, §§ 143-48 (Peter Laslett ed., Cambridge University Press 1960) (1690). The federative power encompassed relations between the commonwealth and all persons and entities outside of it. See id. at bk.II, §145. "[T]he power of War and Peace" was part of the federative power. See id. at bk.II, § 146. Locke contended that the federative power should be exercised by the executive:

Though, as I said, the Executive and Federative Power of every Community be really distinct in themselves, yet they are hardly to be separated, and placed, at the same time, in the hands of distinct Persons. For both of them requiring the force of the society for their exercise, it is almost impracticable to place the Force of the Commonwealth in distinct, and not subordinate hands; or that the Executive and Federative Power should be placed in Persons that might act separately, whereby the Force of the Publick would be under different Commands: which would be apt sometime or other to cause disorder and ruine.

Id. at bk.II, § 148.
162 Montesquieu divided governmental power into three parts: "the legislative; the executive in respect to things dependent on the law of nations; and the executive, in regard to things that depend on the civil laws." MONTESQUIEU, THE SPIRIT OF LAWS bk. XI, ch. 6,
Founders also recognized that the President possessed certain attributes of obvious value in war. As Hamilton explained, "Decision, activity, secrecy, and dispatch will generally characterise the proceedings of one man, in a much more eminent degree, than the proceedings of any greater number . . . ."163

It is also true that the first state constitutions, enacted in the initial flush of independence, had vested in the legislatures powers traditionally held by the Executive.164 This system of governance gave many of the Framers an appreciation of the importance of limiting legislative power. Accordingly, as Gordon Wood observed, the Federal Constitution represented a "repudiation"165 of the first state constitutions because the Federal Constitution gave the President traditional executive functions which the state governors had been denied.166 There is, however, a complicating factor regarding the pro-Executive trend that pro-Executive scholars have not addressed: although it is true that the first state constitutions gave the Governor substantial authority over war matters, the later constitutions, surprisingly, assigned the Governor less such power. For example, South Carolina and Virginia, the two states that in the 1770s enacted constitutions with clauses specifically allocating war power, involved the Governor in the exercise of that power.167 Virginia's 1786 constitu-


163 The Federalist No. 70, at 472 (Alexander Hamilton) (Jacob E. Cooke ed., 1961). Hamilton's recognition that the Executive possessed these attributes was in accordance with the standard formulation. See, e.g., 1 Farrand, supra note 27, at 140 (Dickinson) (proper attributes of executive include "[s]ecrecy, vigor & despatch [sic]" and "responsibility"); James Iredell, Answers to Mr. Mason's Objections, in Pamphlets on the Constitution of the United States 351, 352 (Paul Ford ed., 1888) ("One of the great advantages attending a single Executive power is the degree of secrecy and dispatch with which on critical occasions such a power can act.").


166 See id. at 521.

167 South Carolina's 1776 constitution stated, "[T]he president and commander-in-chief shall have no power to make war or peace . . . without the consent of the general assembly and legislative council." S.C. Const. of 1776, art. XXVI. The state's 1778 constitution also provided that the governor "shall have no power to commence war" without legislative approval. S.C. Const. of 1778 art. XXXIII. Likewise, Virginia's 1776 constitution gave the governor power to "make war" as advised by his executive council. Va. Const. of 1776, pt. i, § xi. Vermont, although not recognized as a state at the time, passed a constitution containing a similar provision. Vt. Const. of 1777, § xviii.
tion was similar. However, the two other state constitutions from the 1780s that contained provisions concerning starting war—the Maryland Constitution of 1780 and the New Hampshire Constitution of 1784—gave the power to initiate war to the legislature alone. Moreover, the Massachusetts Constitution, despite the fact that it generally created a strong Executive, gave the legislature the power to appoint army and navy officers. Thus, the history of the revolutionary era state constitutions suggests that treatment of war functions was counter-cyclical to the overall trend in separation of powers.

This point supports a pro-Congress reading of the War Powers Clause, but it is hardly conclusive. It merely leads us back to the larger question created by the factors stressed in pro-Executive scholarship: Why might the Framers, at a time in which they were taking so many powers from the Legislature, give Congress alone the power to start war? In explaining why the Founders gave the power to initiate war to Congress, pro-Congress scholars have highlighted a simple explanation. In the words of Dean Ely, requiring congressional approval before the nation went to war, reflected “a determination not to let such decisions be taken easily.” Similarly, Professors Firmage and Wormuth observed, “The legislative branch was purposely given the war power as a check upon the impulsive use of military force by the executive,” and Professor Bickel argued that “the Framers of the Constitution intended . . . to make it harder [to start wars].”

Pro-Congress scholars point to a number of statements made by the Founders as an indication that, because the Founders believed presidents would be war-prone, they designed the Constitution to make war less likely by circumventing the Executive and granting Congress sole warmaking power. As previously noted, Wilson wrote that “[t]his system will not hurry us into war . . . . It will not be in the power of a single man . . . to involve us in such distress . . . .” Similarly, Madison wrote Jefferson: “The constitution supposes, what the History of all . . . [Governments] demonstrates, that the Executive is the branch of power most interested in war, and most prone to it. It has accordingly with studied care, vested the question of war in the

168 See Va. Const. of 1786, ch. ii, art. xi (Governor to “make war” as advised by Executive Council).
170 See Mass. Const. of 1780, pt. II, ch. II, 4, art. 1. For a discussion of this Massachusetts clause, see Flaherty, supra note 31, at 1770.
171 Ely, supra note 8, at 3.
172 Wormuth et al., supra note 14, at 179.
173 Bickel, supra note 7, at 131-32.
174 2 Elliot, supra note 107, at 528. For use of this quote as support for a pro-Congress reading of the war power, see, e.g., Wormuth et al., supra note 14, at 30.
Legislature." Jefferson wrote Madison that the system gave an "effectual check to the Dog of war," and early treatise-writer William Rawle opined that "every possible precaution should be used before a nation is plunged into [war]."

Yet the question remains why the Founders would have thought this an area in which the President was less prudent than Congress—given that they repeatedly stated in a range of other contexts that it was legislative abuses of power that most needed to be guarded against. Moreover, why did they think that the path to war had to be slowed? Perhaps because most of the pro-Congress literature is shaped by an explicit or unstated view that the war in Vietnam was a tragic mistake, it is typically assumed that the Founders would have wanted to avoid war. But the Founders themselves engaged in warfare with some frequency. Not only had the new republic fought successfully for independence in the Revolutionary War, but before it was twenty-five years old, it had engaged in a series of wars with Native Americans; launched military actions against the Barbary states; and fought the world's two most formidable military powers—France, in the undeclared naval "Quasi-War" of 1798 to 1800, and Great Britain, in the War of 1812. Given early America's apparent proclivity for armed conflict, it cannot simply be assumed that, even if the Founders thought the President was particularly likely to lead the nation into war, they would have thought such inclination was a bad thing. Thus, some explanation is required as to why they would have thought that the President was too likely to lead the nation to war.

This Part has so far focused on the evidentiary weaknesses of the pro-Congress reading of the Constitution. However, one significant evidentiary problem undermines the positions advanced by both pro-Congress and pro-Executive scholars: the fact that relevant evidence strongly indicates that the predominant view was that the President did not have the power to veto declarations of war. Early statements about the War Powers Clause repeatedly feature the assertion that the decision to declare war is Congress's alone, and that the Executive has

176 Letter from Thomas Jefferson to James Madison (Sept. 6, 1789), in 1 Republic of Letters, supra note 175, at 631, 635.
179 See Bobbitt, supra note 15, at 1373.
no role in the matter. For example, in 1793 George Washington wrote, "The Constitution vests the power of declaring war in Congress; therefore no offensive expedition of importance can be undertaken until after they have deliberated upon the subject and authorized such a measure."\textsuperscript{181} During the same year, James Madison similarly declared that it was "the simple, the received and the fundamental doctrine of the constitution, that the power to declare war . . . is fully and exclusively vested in the legislature; that the executive has no right, in any case to decide the question, whether there is or is not cause for declaring war . . . ."\textsuperscript{182} Furthermore, while President, Jefferson acknowledged that "Congress alone is constitutionally invested with the power of changing our condition from peace to war."\textsuperscript{183} In fact, Chief Justice Marshall ruled that "[t]he whole powers of war being, by the constitution of the United States, vested in congress, the acts of that body can alone be resorted to as our guides in this inquiry [of whether 'war' existed]."\textsuperscript{184}

Also significant are President John Adams's actions regarding the Quasi-War with France and the legislature's response to them. In 1798, the Federalist congressional caucus debated whether to seek a vote of Congress declaring war against France—a declaration that Adams, a Federalist, opposed. Adams's position against a declaration of war; the motions on the floor of Congress in favor of a declaration of war; and the abandonment of those motions after the caucus's vote not to pursue war have been frequently discussed.\textsuperscript{185} Strikingly, there

\textsuperscript{181} GEORGE WASHINGTON, 10 THE WRITINGS OF GEORGE WASHINGTON 367 (Jared Sparks ed., 1836).
\textsuperscript{182} "Helvidius" Number 4, supra note 35, at 106, 108.
\textsuperscript{183} ANNALS OF CONG., 9th Cong., 1st Sess. 19 (Dec. 1805).
\textsuperscript{184} Talbot v. Seeman, 5 U.S. (1 Cranch) 1, 28 (1801). See also United States v. Smith, 27 F. Cas. 1192, 1230-31 (C.C.S.D.N.Y. 1806) (No. 16,342) (power to make war "exclusively vested in congress"). The one proponent of a different view of the War Powers Clause was St. George Tucker. In his appendix to Blackstone's Commentaries, Tucker wrote, "With us the representatives of the people have the right to decide this important question [whether to declare war], conjunctively with the supreme executive who may, on this occasion as on every other, (except a proposal to amendment the constitution,) exercise a qualified negative on the joint resolutions of congress . . . ." ST. GEORGE TUCKER, BLACKSTONE'S COMMENTARIES (1803), excerpted in 3 THE FOUNDERS' CONSTITUTION 101, 102 (Phillip B. Kirland & Ralph Lerner eds., 1987). Tucker's statement indicates that there was not a consensus on the question of whether the President had a veto over the power to declare war. Moreover, Tucker was a prominent judge, legal educator, and lawyer, so his opinion deserves weight. At the same time, he had not been a member of the Philadelphia convention or his state ratifying convention, and, as indicated in the text, the predominant view was that the Congress alone had responsibility for determining whether war was declared. For information on Tucker's career, see CHARLES T. CULLEN, ST. GEORGE TUCKER AND LAW IN VIRGINIA, 1772-1804, at 186-89 (1987); Treanor, Judicial Review, supra note 5, at 520-21.
\textsuperscript{185} For leading secondary accounts, see ALEXANDER DECONDE, THE QUASI-WAR: THE POLITICS AND DIPLOMACY OF THE UNDECLARED WAR WITH FRANCE, 1797-1801, at 103-141 (1966); BRADFORD PERKINS, 1 THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF AMERICAN FOREIGN RELATIONS: THE CREATION OF A REPUBLICAN EMPIRE, 1776-1865, at 105-07 (Warrin I. Cohen ed., 1993);
is no mention in any of this material of the possibility of a presidential veto of a congressional decision to declare war. This implies that it was understood that the President did not have the power to veto declarations of war. Presumably, if anyone thought that the President had such veto power, that fact would have entered into the discussions of whether Congress should declare war over the President's opposition. Furthermore, when Congress debated whether to declare war, numerous legislators stated that the decision whether to go to war was Congress's alone. For example, Congressman Sitgreaves declared:

The House know[s] that, by the distribution of powers under this Government, it is only competent for Congress to declare the country in war; therefore, until that declaration is made by this department, the Executive and Judiciary cannot act in the same way as if the country was at war.\textsuperscript{186}

Made in the teeth of presidential opposition, such statements strongly suggest a belief that the President had no role of any kind—including a veto—in the decision whether to declare war.

Moreover, in his 1812 message asking Congress for a declaration of war, President Madison made clear that the decision about whether to declare war was, under the Constitution, purely a matter for Congress:

Whether the United States shall continue passive under these progressive usurpations and these accumulating wrongs, or, opposing force to force in defense of their national rights, shall commit a just cause into the hands of the Almighty Disposer of Events . . . is a solemn question which the Constitution wisely confides to the legislative department of the Government. In recommending it to their early deliberations I am happy in the assurance that the decision will be worthy the enlightened and patriotic councils of a virtuous, a free, and a powerful nation.\textsuperscript{187}

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\textsuperscript{186} Annales of Cong., 5th Cong., 2117 (July 1798). See also id. at 1321 (Congressman Baldwin: "[T]he subject seemed to be placed wholly in the hands of the Legislature."); id. at 1324 (referring to statement of Congressman Nicholas: "[H]e had never heard it doubted that Congress had the power over the progress of what led to war, as well as the power of declaring war."); id. at 1336 (referring to statement of Congressman Pinckney: "Mr. P. agreed that this was Legislative power, and not Executive.").

\textsuperscript{187} James Madison, Message to the Senate and House of Representatives (June 1, 1812), in 2 A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents 484, 489-90 (James D. Richardson ed., 1897) [hereinafter Compilation].
The day after Congress voted to declare war, Madison issued "A Proclamation," which asserted that the United States was in a state of war because of congressional action:

Whereas the Congress of the United States, by virtue of the constituted authority vested in them, have declared by their act bearing date the 18th day of the present month that war exists between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the dependencies thereof and the United States of America and their Territories . . . .

Surprisingly, given the wealth of literature on the original intent of the War Powers Clause, no scholar has argued that the original understanding was that the President could not veto a declaration of war. This is particularly striking because modern scholars have argued on textualist grounds that the War Powers Clause means precisely what it says—that "Congress shall have power . . . To declare War"—and the President cannot veto such declarations. Only two scholars, Dean Ely and Gregory Sidak, have even raised the possibility that the original understanding was that the President could not veto declarations of war, and they dismiss the possibility rapidly. Instead, they argue on purely textual ground that declarations of war fall within Article I, Section 7, Clause 3 of the Constitution, the Presentment Clause, which requires that every congressional "Order, Resolution, or Vote" be presented to the President for his signature or veto. The problem with this argument is that the Framers understood the Presentment Clause narrowly. That is, if all congressional orders, resolutions, and votes must be presented to the President, this presumably applies, not just to declarations of war, but also to congressional proposals for constitutional amendments. However, in the 1798 case Hollingsworth v. Virginia, the one early Presentment Clause case, the Supreme Court rejected the claim that the Eleventh

188 James Madison, A Proclamation (June 12, 1812), in 2 Compilation, supra note 187, at 497.
189 For the most complete argument on point, see Carter, supra note 26, at 129-32. See also Bobbitt, supra note 15, at 1385 n.69 ("[I]t seems clear from the language of the Constitution that the President cannot veto a declaration . . . . ").
190 See Ely, supra note 8, at 231 n.21; Gregory Sidak, To Declare War, 41 Duke L.J. 27, 84 (1991).
191 U.S. CONST. art. I, § 7, cl. 3. In its entirety, the clause reads: Every Order, Resolution, or Vote, to Which the Concurrence of the Senate and House of Representatives may be necessary (except on a question of Adjournment) shall be presented to the President of the United States; and before the Same shall take Effect, shall be approved by him, or being disapproved by him, shall be repassed by two thirds of the Senate and House of Representatives, according to the Rules and Limitations prescribed in the Case of a Bill.

Id. 192 3 U.S. (3 Dall.) 378 (1798).
Amendment was invalid because it had not been signed by the President. The Court observed that the Presentment Clause "applies only to the ordinary cases of legislation . . . ." A congressional declaration of war, like a congressional decision to propose amendments, would seem to fall outside the category of "ordinary cases of legislation."

The other principal piece of evidence on which Ely and Sidak rely is that Madison signed the declaration of war against England which Congress passed in 1812. But Presidents sign documents for political reasons—even when they know the signature has no legal consequence—in order to highlight a personal endorsement. For example, despite Hollingsworth, on the eve of the Civil War, President Buchanan signed the congressionally-approved Corwin Amendment, which would have barred subsequent amendments banning slavery, and President Lincoln signed the Thirteenth Amendment after it was approved by Congress in 1865. The real question is not whether Madison signed the declaration, but what significance he attached to that signing. Evidence of Madison's intent can be found in his previously-quoted message to Congress and his proclamation following the declaration of war. Neither document is discussed by Ely or Sidak. Both documents, however, clearly state that the decision whether to go to war is purely congressional. According to Madison's war message, "[T]he Constitution wisely confides [the decision about whether to go to war] to the legislative department of the Government." And, according to Madison's proclamation, "[The Members of] Congress . . . have declared [war] by their act." The President is not part of the process. Ely's and Sidak's position is further undercut by the evidence concerning the 1798 controversy over whether to go to war with France (a subject that neither discusses).

That previous commentators—both pro-Congress and pro-Executive—have not even raised the issue of a presidential veto may reflect the fact that, under either view of the original understanding, it would make no sense for the President to be without veto power. If the Founders sought to ensure that the President was intimately involved in all matters of foreign policy, as pro-Executive scholars maintain, he

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193 Id. at 381 n.*.
194 See Ely, supra note 8, at 231 n.21; Sidak, supra note 190, at 84.
196 See id. at 100.
197 Madison, Message to the Senate and House of Representatives, supra note 187, at 490. See also supra text accompanying note 186.
198 Madison, A Proclamation, supra note 188, at 497. See also supra text accompanying note 187.
199 See supra text accompanying notes 185-86.
should obviously have been equipped with veto power over warmaking decisions. Similarly, if the Founders sought to slow the path to war by constructing all possible barriers to war, as pro-Congress scholars maintain, a presidential veto would be one obvious barrier.

The remainder of this Article seeks to answer the question posed in this Part: Why would the Founders have given Congress the power to initiate war at the same time they denied the President a veto over those declarations? There are several reasons why the Founders might not have wanted to give the President much, if any, power over the decision whether to go to war. In addition, examination of the Founders' writings suggests that the continuing power of English oppositionist thought likely influenced the structuring of the War Powers Clause. That ideology made the Founders particularly fearful that unconstrained Executive control of the military would enable the President to seize power directly or to undermine the system of government indirectly through his use of patronage and the financial assets at his disposal. However, this factor was at least as much a concern at the start of the Revolution as it was at the time of the Federal Constitution, yet to the extent that they dealt with the matter, the first state constitutions involved the Governor in the warmaking decision. Therefore, an additional explanation is needed for why the Founders might have become convinced that the President should be excluded from the decision to go to war, even as he was being re-invested with so many powers. In offering such an explanation, this Article will turn to a topic whose relationship to the War Powers Clause has gone wholly unexplored—the Framers' conception of fame.

II

Fame

In his 1967 essay, Fame and the Founding Fathers, Douglass Adair advanced the novel argument that the Framers' conception of fame played a critical role in shaping their actions. Adair began by contrasting the "explosion of [political] talent" in late eighteenth century America with the comparative dearth of such talent in the modern United States. He noted that the nation that produced "a Hamil-
ton, a Dickinson, a Rutledge, and the galaxy of great Virginians" had a population "slightly less than that of Wisconsin."²⁰⁴ He added:

Virginia in 1790, the largest of the states, contained just over seven hundred thousand people, if one counts the slaves as well as free inhabitants; but this state, which produced Washington, Mason, Henry, Jefferson, Madison, Marshall, had a total white population, including women and children, of about four hundred thousand souls. This is much smaller in number than such modern spawning grounds of political genius as the Wilkes-Barre metropolitan area or Phoenix, Arizona.²⁰⁵

These comparisons suggested an obvious question: "How can we account for this amazing concentration of political ability in this generation born into a tiny nation on the fringe of the Atlantic?"²⁰⁶

The answer lies in the fact that "lust for the psychic reward of fame, honor, glory, after 1776 be[came] a key ingredient in the behavior of Washington and his greatest contemporaries."²⁰⁷ Following eighteenth century usage, Adair defined fame as:

the action or behavior of a "great man," who stands out, who towers above his fellows in some spectacular way. To be famous or renowned means to be widely spoken of by a man's contemporaries and also to act in such a way that posterity remembers his name and his actions. . . . The love of fame encourages a man to make history, to leave the mark of his deeds and his ideals on the world; it incites a man to refuse to be the victim of events and to become an "event-making" personality—a being never to be forgotten by those later generations that will be born into a world his actions helped to shape.²⁰⁸

Desiring to be remembered, the Framers became great.

Three reasons explain why this desire for fame was particularly powerful among the framing generation. Part of the reason was cultural. The writers they read—classical authors such as Plutarch, Cicero, and Aristotle, as well as more modern authors such as Machiavelli and Francis Bacon—celebrated fame and its pursuit and deemed fame an appropriate measure of individual worth. Aristotle declared, "'Honor and dishonor are the matters with which the high-minded man is especially concerned.'"²⁰⁹ Francis Bacon opined, "'[The] winning of Honour is but the revealing of a man's virtue and worth.'"²¹⁰ And these authors placed the founders of states and the legislators

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²⁰⁴ Id. at 4.
²⁰⁵ Id. at 5.
²⁰⁶ Id.
²⁰⁷ Id. at 8.
²⁰⁸ Id. at 11.
²⁰⁹ Id. at 12 n.8 (quoting Aristotle).
²¹⁰ Id. at 14 (quoting Bacon).
who created perfect constitutions at, or near, the apex of justly-won fame. Thus, Plutarch provided as a model for emulation the “great LAWGIVER and the FOUNDER OF A COMMONWEALTH.”²¹¹ Machiavelli found “the Founders of a Republic” to be the most praiseworthy individuals, except for “the authors and founders of religions.”²¹² Bacon declared the individuals most worthy of fame to be the “FOUNDERS OF STATES AND COMMONWEALTHS[,] such as . . . Romulus, Cyrus, Ottoman, and Julius Caesar.”²¹³

Second, Adair contended that many of the Framers had no faith in a heavenly afterlife.²¹⁴ Fame was important to them because it offered them what religion no longer could: immortality. “[W]e must recognize,” Adair wrote, “[that] the hope of fame like the hope of Christian immortality is a mode for dealing with proud Death and conquering him.”²¹⁵

Finally, the Founders became obsessed with fame because the Revolutionary War proved that great fame was attainable. Despite their generally high ambition, the Founders nonetheless had limited aspirations before the war. “When I was young,” Adams wrote Jefferson in 1813, “the Summum Bonum in Massachusetts was to be worth ten thousand pounds Sterling, ride in a Chariot, be a Colonel of a Regiment of Militia and hold a seat in his Majesty’s Council. No Man’s Imagination aspired to anything higher beneath the skies.”²¹⁶ Even Hamilton, one of the few Founders who dreamt of personal glory years before the Revolution, dreamt almost modestly: he fantasized about following in the steps of General James Wolfe who won immortality, a great victory for his country, and death on the Plains of Abraham.²¹⁷ The Revolution opened previously unimaginable horizons. According to Adair, “As the War for Independence enlarges the provincial stage upon which they act their roles to that of a world theater, the greatest of the great generation develop an almost obsessive desire for fame. They become fantastically concerned with posterity’s judgment of their behavior.”²¹⁸ And so, to take two examples, Adams came to develop “a sort of pathology of ‘the love of fame’ ”²¹⁹ while Hamilton became consumed with a “demonic passion

²¹¹ Id. at 13 (citing Plutarch).
²¹² Id. at 15 n.12 (quoting Machiavelli).
²¹³ Id. at 14-15 (quoting Bacon).
²¹⁴ See id. at 12.
²¹⁵ Id.
²¹⁶ Id. at 6 (quoting John Adams).
²¹⁷ See id. at 7.
²¹⁸ Id.
²¹⁹ Id. at 3.
for fame,"220 and adopted a somewhat grander role model than Wolfe: Julius Caesar.221

Thus, Adair concludes that the Founders' desire for fame made possible national independence and the creation of the republic.222 Their concern for immortality "bec[a]me[ ] a spur and a goad that urge[d] some of them to act with a nobleness and greatness that their earlier careers had hardly hinted at."223

Although a number of historians and students of the Founding Fathers have explored Adair's insight,224 legal scholars have mistakenly ignored it, despite the wealth of writings on original intent. The same concern with fame that Adair saw as guiding the personal actions of the Founders also profoundly influenced their thinking about governance. 

"[L]ove of fame," Hamilton wrote, is "the ruling passion of the noblest minds, which would prompt a man to plan and undertake extensive and arduous enterprises for the public benefit."225 "[L]ove of fame," declared Gouverneur Morris at the constitutional convention, "is the great spring to noble & illustrious actions."226 "The love of honest and well earned fame is deeply rooted in honest and susceptible minds," James Wilson asserted.227 He then rhetorically asked,

Can there be a stronger incentive to the operations of this passion, than the hope of becoming the object of well founded and distinguishing applause? Can there be a more complete gratification of this passion, than the satisfaction of knowing that this applause is given—that it is given upon the most honourable principles, and acquired by the most honourable pursuits?228

220 Id. at 16 n.14.
221 See id. at 16.
222 See id. at 8.
223 Id.
226 2 Farrand, supra note 27, at 53.
228 Id. Wilson also wrote:
The love of reputation and the fear of dishonour are, by the all-gracious Author of our existence, implanted in our breasts, for purposes the most beneficient and wise. Let not these principles be deemed the growth of dispositions only which are weak or vain; they flourish most luxuriantly in minds, the strongest and, let me add, the most humble.

2 id. at 593.
John Adams observed that "if the citizens, or a majority of them, or any party or individual of them, in action and practice, preferred the public to their private interest, as many undoubtedly would, it would not be from any such passion as love of the democracy." Such a preference was instead likely rooted in "a desire of fame, and the applause, gratitude, and rewards of the public."229

At the same time, the Framers did not see the desire for fame as wholly beneficial. Their conception of a "passion" for fame followed David Hume's approach. In classifying the "love of fame" as a "passion," Hume conceived of the attraction of fame as emotional rather than rational in nature, and he therefore broke with the classical celebration of the quest for fame.230 Thus, for the Framers, while love of fame could inspire individuals to serve the polity, it also could harm, and even endanger, when not properly channeled and constrained. Although the proper future audience was the wise and good, an individual, fearful of being forgotten, might care more about simply being remembered, rather than by whom or for what. The haunting example from antiquity of Herostratus burning down the beautiful Temple of Diana at Ephesus so that his memory would be immortal231 teaches that the desire for such immortality can triumph over concern for others. Adams was cognizant of this danger when he wrote:

With what impatience does the man of spirit and ambition, who is depressed by his situation, look round for some great opportunity to distinguish himself? No circumstances, which can afford this appear to him undesirable; he even looks forward with satisfaction to the prospect of foreign war, or civil dissension; and with secret transport and delight, sees, through all the confusion and bloodshed which attend them, the probability of those wished-for occasions presenting themselves, in which he may draw upon himself the attention and admiration of mankind.232

Hamilton, too, warned of the dangers posed by the "man of irregular ambition" driven by his love of fame and power.233

Furthermore, the Founders did not consider their peers immune from the corruption caused by love of fame. For example, when Hamilton, after dinner with Jefferson one evening in 1791, declared, "The greatest man that ever lived, was Julius Caesar," Jefferson concluded,

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229 John Adams, A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States, in 6 Adams Works, supra note 185, at 210 [hereinafter Adams, Defence].
231 See Braudy, supra note 224, at 51.
232 John Adams, Discourses on Davila; A Series of Papers on Political History, in 6 Adams Works, supra note 185, at 260 [hereinafter Adams, Davila].
233 The Federalist No. 72, supra note 225, at 340 (Alexander Hamilton).
as he wrote Benjamin Rush, that Hamilton intended to overthrow the
government in order to achieve a place in history like Caesar’s. 234 Fittingly, a few
months later Rush received a letter from Adams accusing Jefferson of illegitimately
pursuing glory. Adams wrote: “The Declaration of Independence I always considered as a theatrical show. Jeffer­
son ran away with all the stage effect of that . . . and all the glory of it.” 235 As Leo Braudy has explained, “It is impossible to read the let­
ters and sometimes even the public statements of virtually any one of 
the Founding Fathers without quickly finding an attack on one or sev­
eral of the others for their ambition, their greed for praise, their van­
ity, and so on.” 236

Thus, a crucial problem in structuring government became how
to control the desire for fame and renown. In his Discourses on Davila,
Adams observed, “The desire of the esteem of others is as real a want
of nature as hunger.” 237 He added, “It is a principal end of govern­
ment to regulate this passion, which in its turn becomes a principal 
means of government.” 238 Returning to the subject later in the book,
the future President quoted with approval Adam Smith’s observation,
“To those who have been accustomed to the possession, or even to the
hope of public admiration, all other pleasures sicken and decay,” and
then framed his discussion around a question posed by the poet John­
son: “Heroes proceed! What bonds your pride shall hold?” “The an­
swer,” Adams wrote, “can be none other than this, that, as nature has
established in the bosoms of heroes no limits to those passions; and as
the world, instead of restraining, encourages them, the check must be
in the form of government.” 239 Adams’s choice of language is signifi­
cant. Government does not seek to root out the desire for applause; it seeks only to “check” it, to “regulate” it, to convert it into “a principal 
means of government.” Similarly, in discussing the proper response
to a person’s “love of fame,” Hamilton urged that it be harnessed, not
eradicaded: “[T]he desire of reward is one of the strongest incentives
of human conduct, [and] the best security for the fidelity of mankind
is to make their interest coincide with their duty.” 240

According to one important group of scholars, the Founders of
the Constitution concluded that individuals inevitably pursued eco-

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236 Braudy, supra note 224, at 455-56.
237 Adams, Davila, supra note 232, at 234.
238 Id. at 262-63.
239 Id. at 262-63.
240 The Federalist No. 72, supra note 225, at 488 (Alexander Hamilton).
nomadic self-interest, and therefore the Founders sought to create a system of governance that would channel that drive in a beneficial fashion and contain it when it posed a harm to the polity.\textsuperscript{241} In \textit{Creation of the American Republic}, the most influential work of this school of thought, Gordon Wood contended that this acceptance of the pursuit of economic self-interest as legitimate (or at least as an unavoidable aspect of human nature) marked a sharp departure from the republicanism that had been the dominant mode of thought at the start of the Revolutionary Era.\textsuperscript{242} In republicanism, a principal, and perhaps the principal, purpose of the polity was to inculcate virtue—the sacrifice of individual interest to the commonweal.\textsuperscript{243} According to Wood, the Framers decisively rejected this view and accepted liberalism.\textsuperscript{244} Similarly, in \textit{Democracy and The Federalist}, a classic explication of the view that the Founders accepted self-interest as part of the constitutional system, Martin Diamond argued that Madison saw "the real problem in popular government . . . [as] the majority faction, i.e., the great mass of the little propertied and unpropertied."\textsuperscript{245} \textit{Federalist} No. 10, according to Diamond, is premised on the view that this threat could not be resolved by an appeal to "'moral and religious motives' whose efficacy [Madison] deprecated."\textsuperscript{246} Rather, it was to be mastered by pitting economic interest against economic interest. "[T]he struggle of interests is a safe, even energizing, struggle which is compatible with, or even promotes, the safety and stability of society."\textsuperscript{247} Thus, the Founders solved "the problem posed by the dangerous passions and interests of the many . . . primarily by a reliance upon passion and interest themselves."\textsuperscript{248}

More recent scholarship—including new work by Wood\textsuperscript{249}—has indicated that the story of ideological transformation that Wood depicted in \textit{Creation of the American Republic} was too stark and that, while


\textsuperscript{243} See Wood, \textit{supra} note 165, at 65-70, 413-20.

\textsuperscript{244} See id. at 606-15.


\textsuperscript{246} Id. at 66 (quoting \textit{Federalist No. 10}).

\textsuperscript{247} Id.

\textsuperscript{248} \textit{Id.} See also Albert Hirschman, \textit{The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before its Triumph} (1977); McCoy, \textit{supra} note 241.

republicanism grew less influential, it was still important at the time of
the framing. For example, Isaac Kramnick has written:

Federalists and Antifederalists . . . tapped several languages of poli-
tics . . . . None dominated the field, and the use of one was compat­
ible with the use of another by the same writer or speaker. There
was a profusion and confusion of political tongues among the foun­
ders. They lived easily with that clatter; it is we, two hundred and
more years later, who chafe at their inconsistency.250

There is currently a broad (although not universal) acceptance
among historians of the view that, at the time of the founding, both
republican and liberal ideas were widely held and that both affected
constitutional discourse.251 Thus, the Framers were concerned both
with harnessing self-interest and with promoting virtue.252

The Founders' comments about fame and glory are in accord
with this account, suggesting parallels between the Constitution's
treatment of economic self-interest and its treatment of the desire for
fame. In the classical republican vision, the desire for fame was an
unmitigated good: "the noblest of the passions."253 The attitude of
the Founders towards fame represents a tempering—but not a rejec­
tion—of this initial vision through the collective experience of a fa­
mous generation. Thus, the Founders had a complex view of fame,
seeing it as an impetus for great deeds and as an impetus for great
harm; fame was both a manifestation of virtue and a possible threat
to the polity. The Constitution the Founders created reflects this
complexity. It seeks to facilitate the pursuit of fame, to harness
the pursuit of fame and to check the pursuit of fame—all at the same
time.

The Constitution reflects this strategy in a number of different
ways. For example, Hamilton invoked the love of fame as a reason not
to bar presidential re-election. The bar would "deter" the President
from beginning large-scale enterprises "when he foresaw that he must
quit the scene, before he could accomplish the work, and must com­
mit that, together with his own reputation, to hands which might be
unequal or unfriendly to the task."254 Morris also invoked the love of

251 See, e.g., JOYCE APPLEBY, LIBERALISM AND REPUBLICANISM IN THE HISTORICAL IMAGINATION 322-39 (1992); LIENESCH, supra note 224, at 78; JENNIFER NEDELSKY, PRIVATE PROPERTY AND THE LIMITS OF AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONALISM 177-83 (1990); WOOD, supra note 249, at
252 See, e.g., MCDONALD, supra note 164, at 188-90; WOOD, supra note 249, at 243-70.
253 MCDONALD, supra note 164, at 190.
254 THE FEDERALIST NO. 72, supra note 225, at 488 (Alexander Hamilton).
fame as he urged the convention to permit presidential re-election, and his argument was more dramatic than Hamilton's. By denying the President the continued opportunity for fame, the term limitation would "give a dangerous turn to one of the strongest passions in the human breast... Shut the Civil road to Glory & he [the President] may be compelled to seek it by the sword."255

Similarly, the open-ended texture of the Constitution may reflect, in part, the Founders' view of the desire for fame and its perils. Antifederalists criticized the Constitution for not being specific enough and for not putting adequately precise limits on federal governmental powers; they were comfortable with the idea that if a Constitution of the type they proposed was enacted, it would soon need to be replaced.256 The Framers, in contrast, celebrated the timelessness of their creation. "Constitutions of civil Government," Hamilton declared, "are not to be framed upon a calculation of existing exigencies; but upon a combination of these, with the probable exigencies of ages."257 Such assertions, however, raise the question of why the Framers thought it so important that the system they were building last forever. Professor Paul Rahe suggests an answer:

In order that "no manner of Food might be left unto ambition," most of [the Founders] even tried what George Washington, like Harrington's Lord Archon, actually accomplished: to contrive affairs so that "the minds of men were firme in the opinion, that he could be no seeker of himselfe, in the way of earthly Pompe and Glory."258

Thus, the Framers' conception of fame makes their desire for constitutional flexibility understandable. As creators of a nation, the Founders knew how powerful and how dangerous the lust for fame could be; they sought to enact a constitution flexible enough to prevent tempting future generations of fame-seekers to overturn the polity.

On a less grand level, the Opinions Clause—empowering the President to "require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the executive Departments, upon any Subject relating to the Duties of their respective Offices"259—sought to harness individual concern for fame. James Iredell wrote that the Clause would lead

255 2 Farrand, supra note 27, at 53.
256 See LIENESCH, supra note 224, at 145-50.
257 THE FEDERALIST No. 34, at 210 (Alexander Hamilton) (Jacob E. Cooke ed., 1961). See also Treanor & Sperling, supra note 5, at 1942-43 (discussing Framers' conscious choice of an open-ended constitution).
258 RAHE, supra note 224, at 571 (quoting Harrington). See also LIENESCH, supra note 224, at 181 ("Under the new system, Americans were never again to undertake extraordinary political actions, because from that time there were, at least in theory, no more revolutions to be fought and no more constitutions to be founded. Above all, from that time there was no more fame to be won...").
259 U.S. CONST. art. II, § 2, cl. 1.
the Cabinet to weigh the courses of action that they recommended with care: "[A written opinion] must for ever afterwards speak for itself, and commit the character of the writer, in lasting colors, either of fame or infamy, or neutral insignificance, to future ages, as well as the present."\textsuperscript{260} Recognition of the importance of the desire for fame also lies behind Adams's attempt to create titles for the holders of national office. For example, he proposed to the Senate that the President be referred to as "His most benign highness."\textsuperscript{261} Although Adams's effort met with abuse—it was suggested that Adams be styled "His Rotundity"—it was consistent with his belief that, unless the desire for distinction was used to attract people to the public life, they would wholly abandon it for the private realm.\textsuperscript{262}

Finally, the Founders' conception of the desire for fame also provides an explanation for the constitutional provisions concerning the military. As the Founders reflected on fame and its significance for constitutional government, the desire for military glory became a particular focus of concern. The Revolution had made only one individual a world figure: the nation's military leader, George Washington.\textsuperscript{263} And Washington had devoutly sought that fame. Richard Brookhiser has recently written that Washington "hoped his reputation would be honored in later years by the country he had made and celebrated by its poets."\textsuperscript{264} His contemporaries acknowledged his preeminent fame, although not all thought it just. Writing about the fact that Washington was treated as the greatest leader of the Revolutionary War, Adams sarcastically observed to Benjamin Rush that "mankind bow down with [the most] reverence" to "bloody battles and splendid victories."\textsuperscript{265} "The French and American Revolutions differed from each other in many things," Rush wrote Adams, "but they were alike in one particular—the former gave all its power to a single man, the latter all its fame."\textsuperscript{266} While Rush and Adams deplored this state of affairs, Jefferson celebrated it. In his \textit{Notes on the State of Virginia}, Jefferson argued for America's capacity to produce great individuals and listed Washington first: "In war we have pro-


\textsuperscript{261} Miroff, supra note 224, at 124.

\textsuperscript{262} Id.

\textsuperscript{263} See \textit{Wills}, supra note 224, at 109-32. The other American to achieve a similar level of renown, Benjamin Franklin, had become world famous before the Revolution. See id. at 199-200.

\textsuperscript{264} Brookhiser, supra note 224, at 135.

\textsuperscript{265} Letter from John Adams to Benjamin Rush (Nov. 11, 1807), in \textit{Spur}, supra note 235, at 97.

duced a Washington, whose memory will be adored while liberty shall have votaries, whose name will triumph over time, and will in future ages assume its just station among the most celebrated worthies of the world . . . ."²⁶⁷

Although the Founders disagreed about whether Washington deserved preeminence, all believed that he was remarkable for having been in a position to pursue greater fame and power and for not yielding to the temptation. As George Mason declared, "So disinterested and amiable a character as General Washington might never command again."²⁶⁸ Patrick Henry, as well, stressed the nation's rare fortune in having found such a man:

In great dangers [dictatorial] power has been given.—Rome had furnished us with an illustrious example.—America found a person worthy of that trust: She looked to Virginia for him. We gave a dictatorial power to hands that used it gloriously; and which were rendered more glorious by surrendering it up. Where is there a breed of such Dictators? Shall we find a set of American Presidents of such a breed? Will the American President come and prostrate at the feet of Congress his laurels? I fear there are few men who can be trusted on that head.²⁶⁹

Few would have Washington's ability to forsake the opportunity to gather the laurels of war. Indeed, the memorial given at Washington's death suggests that the Senate feared that even he might have been tempted to overreach:

With patriotic pride, we review the life of our Washington, and compare him with those of other countries, who have been pre-eminent in fame. Ancient and modern names are diminished before him. Greatness and guilt have too often been allied; but his fame is whiter than it is brilliant. . . . The scene is closed, and we are no longer anxious lest misfortune should sully his glory. . . . Favored of heaven, he departed without exhibiting the weakness of humanity.²⁷⁰

Given the Founders' conception of the lure of military fame, the President was a logical choice to head the military because his desire for fame would motivate him to win any wars that the nation waged. At the same time, as the next Part will argue, this same desire for military glory meant that the President could not be trusted to decide when to start war.

²⁶⁹ 9 id. at 1058.
²⁷⁰ ANNALS OF CONG., 6th Cong. 17 (Dec. 1799).
As previously discussed, at the time the Constitution was drafted and ratified, there was little discussion about what the War Powers Clause meant. But analysis of the ratification debates about war, fame, and the Executive reveal a fear of Executive desire to lead the nation into war in order to achieve personal glory. These statements thus provide the missing link in the argument made by pro-Congress scholars; they suggest the motivation for giving Congress alone the power to start war. After surveying evidence from the ratification debates, this Part turns to a discussion of the new nation's first foreign policy crisis—the Neutrality Crisis of 1793—and focuses on Madison's Helvidius letters. In these letters, Madison made explicit the previously implicit link between concerns about the dangers of the desire for fame and the decision to vest the war power in Congress. The Part will then turn to John Adams's analysis of Alexander Hamilton's role in the Quasi-War of 1798-1800 and the Federalist attacks on the War of 1812 as further examples of the early view that an individual's desire for glory could lead him to push the nation into battle.

A. Constitutional Debates

As supporters and opponents of the Constitution debated the resolution of military questions, they revealed a common belief that kings and other individuals with the power to lead their nation into war were likely to do so in order to gain personal glory. In other words, Adams's observation that "the man of spirit and ambition . . . looks forward with satisfaction to the prospect of foreign war . . . in which he may draw upon himself the attention and admiration of mankind" operated with particular force when the person in question was a leader who would reap the lion's share of fame from victory.271

In Federalist No. 4, John Jay argued that a united country was necessary, among other reasons, to protect against unjust wars initiated by European powers. In explaining why European nations were prone to initiate such conflicts, he wrote:

[A]bsolute monarchs will often make war when their nations are to get nothing by it, but for purposes and objects merely personal, such as, a thirst for military glory . . . . These and a variety of motives, which affect only the mind of the Sovereign, often lead him to engage in wars not sanctified by justice, or the voice and interests of his people.272

271 Adams, Davila, supra note 232, at 260. See also supra text accompanying note 232.
Thus, the “absolute monarch[...] thirst[ing] for military glory,” will start wars that “the voice . . . of his people” would counsel against starting. In defending the federal taxing power, Hamilton in Federalist No. 34 relied on similar assumptions. He contended that the new nation’s military needs would be modest, and contrasted them with Great Britain’s. “[T]he expences incurred in the prosecution of the ambitious enterprizes and vain-glorious pursuits of a Monarchy, are not a proper standard by which to judge of those which might be necessary in a republic . . . .”273 Paralleling Jay, Hamilton took the position that the “ambiti[on]” and “vain-glor[y]” of the monarch would cause him to begin wars that would not have been begun by a republic.274 Significantly, although ambition today is most commonly the love of power or wealth, its most common usage in the late eighteenth century was, “[t]he desire of preferment or honour.”275

A Federalist writing under the pen name “Foreign Spectator” also suggested that the desire for military glory caused leaders to make war:

[M]ilitary honor . . . is indeed very dazzling . . . . Yet this honor is not sufficient for republics, because it regards war rather as a theatre of glory, than a trial of patriotic virtue, and values a Caesar [who] . . . to astonish the world by his talents, became its conqueror, and the master of his own country.276

It is, then, the desire for glory, to “astonish the world by his talents,” that motivates a Caesar to conquer. To offer one final Federalist example, in the Virginia ratifying convention, Federalist leader George Nicholas favorably compared the Constitution, which gave Congress the power to call out the militia, with the English system, in which the monarch held that power. “[The] Prince[’s] decision would be] governed by . . . ambition, or mere motives of personal interest,” while Congress “will be actuated by motives of fellow-feeling.”277

The Antifederalists, in fact, shared the Federalists’ belief that an individual, entrusted with control over the military, would use it to gain glory. Patrick Henry proclaimed:

A republic has this advantage over a monarchy, that its wars are generally founded on more just grounds. A republic can never enter into a war, unless it be a national war—unless it be approved of, or desired by the whole community. . . . I call also for an example, when a republic has been engaged in a war contrary to the wishes of its people. There are thousands of examples, where the ambition of

273 THE FEDERALIST No. 34, supra note 257, at 213 (Alexander Hamilton).
274 Id.
275 SAMUEL JOHNSON, A DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE 44 (reprint ed. 1877).
276 “Foreign Spectator,” Letter to INDEPENDENT GAZETTEER (Sept. 8, 1787), in DOCUMENTARY HISTORY, supra note 268, at microfiche supplement 308.
277 10 id. at 1282.
its Prince [has] precipitated a nation into the most destructive war.\textsuperscript{278}

Henry’s concern was not simply the narrow one that kings should not be given the power to lead a nation to war, but the broader one that any one individual—king or not—entrusted with the power to start war would use it to achieve personal glory. Thus, commenting on recent Dutch history, he stated: “The glorious republic of Holland has erected monuments of her warlike intrepidity and valor: Yet she is now totally ruined by a Stadtholder—a Dutch President. The destructive wars into which that nation has been plunged, has since involved her in ambition.”\textsuperscript{279} An Antifederalist writing as “American Citizen” took a similar view: “There is a wide difference between the troops of such a commonwealth as ours, founded on equal and unalterable principles, and those of a regal government, where ambition and oppression are the profession of the king.”\textsuperscript{280}

Antifederalist Melancton Smith contrasted the American situation with the European situation: “The European governments are almost all of them framed, and administered with a view to arms, and war, as that in which their chief glory consists . . . .”\textsuperscript{281} According to Smith, personal reasons motivated the monarchs of Europe to declare war. He wrote, “Let the monarchs in Europe, share among them the glory of depopulating countries . . . . I envy them not the honor, and I pray heaven this country may never be ambitious of it.”\textsuperscript{282} Smith contrasted the illusory glory which European monarchs pursued with the real glory of substantial achievement: “The czar Peter the great, acquired great glory by his arms; but all this was nothing, compared with the true glory which he obtained, by civilizing his rude and barbarous subjects, diffusing among them knowledge, and establishing, and cultivating the arts of life . . . .”\textsuperscript{283}

The various examples of ambition and glory-seeking cited above do not directly involve Congress or a democratically-selected President. But neither Antifederalists nor Federalists thought that Americans were immune from the fame-seeking and glory-seeking that affected Europeans. I have previously discussed the Federalist belief that a proper constitution needed to account for the desire for fame. Antifederalists were at least as vociferous on this point, with the significant difference being that while the Federalists believed that the Con-

\textsuperscript{278} 9 id. at 1068 (alteration in original).
\textsuperscript{279} Id. at 1058.
\textsuperscript{280} 13 id. at 435.
\textsuperscript{281} 15 id. at 236.
\textsuperscript{282} Id.
\textsuperscript{283} Id.
stitution controlled glory-seeking, the Antifederalists did not. An Antifederalist writing as "Denatus" observed:

[F]or purposes best known to this almighty sovereign of pure goodness and order, we are subject to many jarring propensities. Among these, vanity, ambition, and the love of riches are not the least. — While reason and conscience can confine the passions, their action and re-action on each other, constitute human happiness. But, when they overcome reason and conscience, they produce our misery. To guard against this misfortune, as much as human foresight could discover, ought to have been the chief business of the late foederal [sic] convention.284

In arguing against a standing army, Melancton Smith asked: "Are we so much better than the people of other ages and of other countries, that the same allurements of power and greatness, which led them aside from their duty, will have no influence upon men in our country?"285 The answer was obvious: "[T]he passion for pomp, power and greatness, works as powerfully in the hearts of many of our better sort, as it ever did in any country under heaven."286

Antifederalist "Candidus" made a similar argument against entrusting the national government with the war power. As he did, he strikingly described the rarity of selfless leaders who refused to misuse their power:

To trust this [war] power in the hands of a few men delegated for two, four and six years, is complimenting the ambition of human nature too highly, to risque the tranquility of these States on their absolute determination. Certain characters now on the stage, we have reason to venerate, but though this country is now blessed with a Washington, Frnaklin [sic], Hancock and Adams, yet posterity may have reason to rue the day when their political welfare depends on the decision of men who may fill the places of these worthies.287

As historian Forrest McDonald has explained, "[I]t was a cliche that in public affairs the ruling passions of most men were avarice and ambition, the love of money and the love of power or popular applause."288 Governmental actors were all prone to ambition. But it was the individual who acted alone—who had special power, responsibility, and visibility—who was most likely to pursue fame because he had the greatest opportunity to achieve it. The legislator did not fall into this category. As Madison wrote in Federalist No. 10, "moral . . . motives"—among which Madison considered concerns about reputa-

284 10 id. at 1602-03.
285 15 id. at 463.
286 15 id. at 463.
288 McDonald, supra note 164, at 163-64.
tion—"lose their efficacy in proportion to the number combined together." But the President, as a lone actor, was likely to be driven by fame. Significantly, when Hamilton and Morris spoke about the love of fame and what it meant for the American constitutional system, their sole focus was on how it would affect presidential action.

In discussing the desire to be known and remembered and the consequences of that desire, Adams put the point more broadly: "In proportion as men rise higher in the world, whether by election, descent, or appointment, and are exposed to the observation of greater numbers of people, the effects of their own passions and of the affections of others for them become more serious, interesting, and dangerous." It is not the mode by which the individual comes to lead a nation that matters—whether, for example, he is an hereditary king or an elected president—it is the simple fact that he leads a nation that makes his passions "serious, interesting and dangerous."

In Federalist No. 6, Hamilton made a related point in discussing the origins of war. Some wars, he wrote:

> take their origin intirely in private passions; in the attachments, enmities, interests, hopes and fears of leading individuals in the communities of which they are members. Men of this class, whether the favourites of a king or of a people, have in too many instances abused the confidence they possessed; and assuming the pretext of some public motive, have not scrupled to sacrifice the national tranquility to personal advantage, or personal gratification.

Hamilton offered Pericles as his example of a popular favorite who had embroiled his nation in conflict for reasons stemming from "private passions," the consequence of which was "the ruin of the Athenian commonwealth." In short, the "leading individuals in the communit[y]" are likely to use their power to lead their nation into war for personal reasons. This is true regardless of whether they derive their power from being "the favourites of a king or of a people." Either way, the consequences are disastrous.

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290 The Federalist No. 10, at 61 (James Madison) (Jacob E. Cooke ed., 1961). See also The Federalist No. 63, at 423 (James Madison) (Jacob E. Cooke ed., 1961) (one of the advantages of the Senate over the House was that "a sense of national character ... can only be found in a number so small, that a sensible degree of the praise and blame of public measures may be the portion of each individual.").
291 See supra text accompanying notes 254-55.
292 Adams, Davila, supra note 232, at 254.
293 Id.
294 Id.
296 Id.
297 Id.
Combined, these statements about fame and war strongly suggest why the Framers gave Congress the power to declare war. First, these statements are evidence of a widely-held belief among Federalists and Antifederalists that kings—the "executive" that they knew—had frequently led their nations into war solely to achieve glory. Second, they reveal a widespread conviction that the passions that influenced leaders of a monarchy would also hold sway over leaders of a republic. Third, the statements reflect an understanding that the President, the head of the new executive branch, was the governmental official most likely to pursue fame. These statements lead to the logical, if unexpressed, conclusion that the President could not be trusted with the power to declare war because, in order to achieve glory, he would lead the nation into war when it was not in the national interest.

Admittedly, this sentiment was not directly expressed in Philadelphia or during the ratification debates. However, there was also little discussion of any kind concerning why the power to declare war was given to Congress. Moreover, in the course of the first prominent post-ratification debate about the War Powers Clause, James Madison clearly stated that the President's inclination to war because of his desire for fame justified the Framers' grant of the power to declare war to Congress.

B. The Helvidius Letters

In April 1793, President Washington proclaimed American neutrality in the war between France and Britain. Hamilton, then Secretary of the Treasury, defended both the wisdom of Washington's decision and his constitutional power to issue the proclamation in a series of letters written under the pen name "Pacificus." Hamilton grounded his constitutional claims in the contention that foreign policy was an Executive function and that congressional powers under the Constitution in the foreign policy area were therefore "to be construed strictly—and ought to be extended no further than is essential to their execution." He acknowledged that Executive actions could "affect the ... exercise of the Power of the Legislature to declare war," but argued that this did not prevent the President from exercising powers granted him under the Constitution. According to Hamilton,

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298 See supra Part I.C. (discussing the ratification debates).
299 See infra text accompanying notes 305-18.
300 See infra text accompanying notes 305-18.
303 Id.
ton, "[T]he division of the Executive Power [in the Constitution creates] ... a concurrent authority, in the distributed cases." 304

Madison was troubled by Washington's proclamation. A letter that he wrote Jefferson on June 13, 1793 indicates that he viewed Congress as having the sole power to initiate war, and that he thought the Neutrality Proclamation represented an indirect but significant Executive intrusion on congressional power:

The right to decide the question whether the duty & interest of the U.S. require war or peace under any circumstances, and whether their disposition be towards the one or the other seems to be essentially & exclusively involved in the right vested in the Legislature, of declaring war in time of peace; and in the P. & S. [President and Senate] of making peace in time of war. 305

As Hamilton's Pacificus Letters appeared in print, Jefferson forwarded them to Madison and urged him to write a response: "[T]ake up your pen, select the most striking heresies, and cut him to pieces [sic] in the face of the public. There is nobody else who can & will enter the lists with him." 306

Complying with Jefferson's request, Madison wrote five letters under the nom de plume "Helvidius." 307 Madison's focus was on Hamilton's constitutional argument, rather than on the substantive merit of the proclamation. He attacked the notion of concurrent jurisdiction and proclaimed the importance "of a rigid adherence to the simple, the received and the fundamental doctrine of the constitution, that the power to declare war including the power of judging of the causes of war is fully and exclusively vested in the legislature." 308 Again, Madison here clearly equates the power to declare war with the power to initiate conflict.

Although Madison's argument against concurrent jurisdiction has often been criticized, 309 and Madison himself had limited enthusi-

304 Id.
305 Letter from James Madison to Thomas Jefferson (June 13, 1793), in 15 MADISON PAPERS, supra note 35, at 29.
306 Letter from Thomas Jefferson to James Madison (July 7, 1793), in 15 MADISON PAPERS, supra note 35, at 43.
308 Madison, "Helvidius" Number 4, supra note 35, at 108.
309 Professor Corwin, for example, criticized Madison for failing to offer an alternative constitutional vision. See Edwin Corwin, The President's Control of Foreign Relations 28 (1917). Professor Schlesinger has stated that Madison's "sketch of the constitutional situation did not really explain how, if the executive were to be so constrained, foreign affairs were after all to be conducted." Schlesinger, supra note 13, at 20. Professor Sofaer wrote that Madison's position was inconsistent with the concept of "mixing" that he ad-
asm for the project, the letters merit close attention, not just because they reflect a pro-Congress understanding of the War Powers Clause, but because of their discussion of why the Framers gave Congress the power to declare war. As he concluded the fourth Helvidius letter, having articulated and defended his personal understanding of the War Powers Clause, Madison sought to strengthen his case by setting forth the concerns which prompted the Framers' decision to assign to Congress the power to declare war:

In no part of the constitution is more wisdom to be found than in the clause which confides the question of war or peace to the legislature, and not to the executive department. Beside the objection to such a mixture of heterogeneous powers: the trust and the temptation would be too great for any one man: not such as nature may offer as the prodigy of many centuries, but such as may be expected in the ordinary successions of magistracy. War is in fact the true nurse of executive aggrandizement. In war a physical force is to be created, and it is the executive will which is to direct it. In war the public treasures are to be unlocked, and it is the executive hand which is to dispense them. In war the honors and emoluments of office are to be multiplied; and it is the executive patronage under which they are to be enjoyed. It is in war, finally, that laurels are to be gathered, and it is the executive brow they are to encircle. The strongest passions, and most dangerous weaknesses of the human breast; ambition, avarice, vanity, the honorable or venial love of fame, are all in conspiracy against the desire and duty of peace.

Hence it has grown into an axiom that the executive is the department of power most distinguished by its propensity to war: hence it is the practice of all states, in proportion as they are free, to disarm the propensity of its influence.

Here, in short compass, Madison pulled together the previously unspoken arguments for assigning to Congress the power to declare war. The power of his passions, Madison contends, makes the individual an unsuitable repository for the power to declare war. Perhaps "the prodigy of many centuries" will be able to triumph over these passions, but the ordinary individual—"such as may be expected in the ordinary successions of magistracy"—will not, because the lures are so compelling. The President simply has too much to gain by leading
the nation into war and then leading the nation during war. He increases his power in a very tangible way: he “direct[s]” the “physical force. . . . created.”313 He increases his control of money: he “dis­pense[s]” “public treasures.”314 He solidifies his power: the opportunities for “executive patronage” are “multiplied.”315 What is most striking is the conclusion to which Madison builds. The culminating passion is “love of fame.”316 The President will be inclined toward war because he will hope to wear the “laurels” of victory.317 As a result, “the executive is the department of power most distinguished by its propensity to war.”318

Implicitly, Madison is also arguing that the legislator will not be affected by these passions (or at least not powerfully), and that he will therefore act disinterestedly in deciding whether he favors war. His passions will not be engaged, in part, because the legislature has only limited control of the instruments of war, and, in part, because any benefits from war that flow to the legislature will flow to a group, rather than to a single individual. Because the legislator does not control army operations or the actual dispersion of funds or the patronage generated by war, he will not seek war in order to increase his power or the wealth under his direction. The fame of a great triumph will not go to the legislator who votes in favor of a successful war, for he is but one of many and the fruits of victory will be diminished by being shared. Because he is not in control of the military, he will not be hailed as the conqueror. The laurels will not be his.

The Helvidius letters are critical evidence concerning the meaning of the War Powers Clause and the motives which led the Founders to give Congress the sole power to initiate war. The letters are roughly contemporaneous with the founding. They are the work of an individual who played a central role in drafting the War Powers Clause, as well as a central role—perhaps the central role—in drafting the Constitution as a whole. The fact that they emerge from a political conflict and are partisan documents does not decrease their evidentiary significance. Madison, a shrewd politician, was clearly trying to make his case against Hamilton by appealing to broadly held notions about government and war. In doing so, he laid special stress on the lure of fame.

313 Id.
314 Id.
315 Id.
316 Id.
317 Id.
318 Id. at 109.
C. Hamilton and the Quasi-War

Further evidence of the founding generation’s belief that an individual’s desire for glory could recklessly lead a nation to war comes, ironically, from the pen of a former President, John Adams who, in narrating the history of his administration, discussed his refusal to lead the nation into a full-scale war. In 1809, as tensions between the United States and Great Britain threatened to end in war, Adams wrote a series of letters to the Boston Patriot explaining why he had opposed declaring war against France and had instead worked for peace during his presidency.319

As previously noted, the undeclared naval war with France—the “Quasi-War”—lasted from 1798-1800 and marked the new nation’s first sustained military conflict with a European power.320 It also marked an exception to the “axiom” that Madison enunciated in the Helvidius letters. That is, during much of the conflict, Congress took a more aggressive stance than the President.321 Adams took great pride in this fact, subsequently writing: “I desire no other inscription on my gravestone than: ‘here lies John Adams, who took upon himself the responsibility of the peace with France in the year 1800.’ ”322 Those unsympathetic to Adams had a ready explanation for why he was not as aggressive as others and the answer had to do with his inability to obtain glory from a war. Noting that “no part of [the Government] was more averse to war than the Executive,” Congressman Rutledge opined: “[Adams] is no warrior, and, consequently, war has no laurels in store for him.”323 A very similar explanation for Adams’s moderate behavior came from a far more sympathetic quarter, his wife. Abigail Adams wrote her friend Mary Cranch: “What benefit can war be to him? He has no ambition for military Glory.”324

The champion of the forces pushing for an aggressive stance against France was Hamilton.325 He sought not only the creation of a revitalized army, but he also engineered a campaign to be designated its Commander in Chief.326 When Secretary of State Timothy Pickering proposed naming Hamilton, Adams immediately dismissed the possibility of awarding the position to his antagonist. To crush the

319 See Boston Patriot, supra note 185.
320 For a general history, see DeConde, supra note 185. See also supra text accompanying note 180.
321 See Schlesinger, supra note 13, at 21.
322 Letter from John Adams to James Lloyd (Jan. 1815), in 10 Adams Works, supra note 185, at 108, 119. Adams’s moderation during the critical period in the conflict is described in DeConde, supra note 185, at 181-222.
326 See id. at 475.
Hamilton boomlet, Adams sent Washington a letter requesting that he serve as Commander in Chief, and then precipitously forwarded Washington's name to the Senate as his nominee for the post without waiting for the former President's reply. Adams's haste angered Washington. Hamilton, now aware that he would not be Commander in Chief, convinced the offended former President to accept the post and then to name him as his second in command. Adams balked, insisting that former Secretary of War Henry Knox serve as Washington's deputy. Washington informed the President that he would resign his commission if Hamilton were not awarded the position. A bitter Adams complied with Washington's demand, afterwards writing that he had been forced to name "the most restless, impatient, artful, indefatigable and unprincipled intriguer in the United States, if not the world, to be second in command." Perhaps not coincidentally, at approximately this time, Adams's enthusiasm for war with France began to diminish.

As he recounted the events of the "Quasi-War" a decade later, Adams made clear that Hamilton had been the principal force behind the movement for war. "Such was the influence of Mr. Hamilton in Congress, that, without any recommendation from the President, they passed a bill to raise an army, not a large one, indeed, but enough to overturn the then Federal government." And just as Congressman Rutledge had contended that Adams was reluctant to go to war because he was unlikely to win fame, Adams suggested that behind Hamilton's push for war was his desire for personal glory. "The army of fifty thousand men," Adams wrote, "appeared to me to be one of the wildest extravagances of a knight-errant." At another point, Adams observed that Hamilton schemed of "ensuring a war with France, and enabling him to mount his hobby-horse, the command of an army of fifty thousand, ten thousand of them to be horse[s]." Peace was "[p]ernicious . . . to his [Hamilton's] views of ambition and domination. It extinguished his hopes of being at the head of a victorious army of fifty thousand men, without which, he used to say, he had no idea of having a head upon his shoulders for four years longer."

327 See id.
328 See id.
329 See id. at 475-76.
330 See id.
332 Letter from John Adams to James Lloyd (Feb. 17, 1815), in 10 Adams Works, supra note 185, at 124.
333 See Miller, supra note 325, at 482.
334 Boston Patriot, supra note 185, at 290.
335 Id.
336 Id. at 306.
337 Id. at 309-10.
According to Adams, "Hamilton hoped [for] . . . an irreconcilable breach and a declaration of war. He was disappointed, and lost the command of his army." In a personal letter written shortly before his public letters to the Boston Patriot, Adams drew together many of these themes in a sentence, stating: "‘Hamilton's hobby horse was troops! troops! . . . With all of the vanity and timidity of Cicero, all the debauchery of Marc Anthony [sic] and all the ambition of Julius Caesar, . . . his object was the command of fifty thousand men.'

As his personal letter suggests, Adams's public denunciation of Hamilton was consistent with his private thoughts about the man, and the public attack was, indeed, more temperate than many of Adams's private observations. For example, Adams wrote in a letter to Benjamin Rush that Hamilton was "a bastard brat of a Scotch pedlar," and a "creature . . . in a delirium of ambition . . . [who] hated every man, young or old, who stood in his way or could in any manner eclipse his laurels or rival his pretensions." Agreeing with Adams's assessment that Hamilton was motivated by a desire for "laurels," some historians have concluded that in urging war with France, Hamilton was "undoubtedly motivated by his ambition and quest for military fame." Even some of Hamilton's friends thought this the case. For example, one wrote him that during the Revolutionary War, Hamilton had "devoted his talents to enhanc[ing] another's glory," and suggested that it was now his turn to obtain such glory. Indeed, earlier in his life Hamilton himself had voiced his longing for war. The first surviving letter we have of Hamilton's is a letter that he wrote as a teen-age clerk in a St. Croix counting house to Edward Stevens, his childhood friend. Stevens had departed the island to attend King's College in New York City. Left behind, Hamilton sadly wrote, "Ned, my Ambition is prevalent that I contemn the grov'ling and condition of a Clerk or the like, to which my Fortune &c. condemns me and would willingly risk my life tho' not my Character to exalt my Station." He closed, "My Folly makes me ashamed and beg you'll Conceal it, yet

338 Id. at 280.
339 DeConde, supra note 185, at 112 (quoting letter from Adams to Adrian Van der Kemp (Apr. 25, 1808)).
341 Editorial Note, in 22 HAMILTON PAPERS, supra note 302, at 5. See also MILLER, supra note 325, at 475. But see FORREST McDoNALD, ALEXANDER HAMILTON 443 n.21 (1979) (rejecting view that Hamilton was driven by desire for fame during the Quasi-War).
343 See MILLER, supra note 325, at 5.
344 See id.
345 Letter from Alexander Hamilton to Edward Stevens (Nov. 11, 1769), in 1 HAMILTON PAPERS, supra note 302, at 4.
Neddy we have seen such Schemes successfull when the Projector is Constant I shall Conclude saying I wish there was a War."

Therefore, when in Adams's letters to the *Boston Patriot* he described Hamilton's campaign against France as "one of the wildest extravagances of a knight-errant," and said that the would-be Commander-in-Chief sought to use the army as his "hobby-horse," he was simply giving public expression to his private beliefs. He may even have been correct, at least in part, that Hamilton sought to provoke a war in order to gain personal glory. But the critical point to be made here does not concern whether Adams was right or wrong about Hamilton. It is, rather, that the world that the Framers inhabited was one in which it was possible for a national leader of the first rank to believe honestly and to state publicly—not in the heat of the moment, but in a considered way after a decade of reflection—that another national leader of the first rank sought to precipitate a war simply in order to achieve personal glory by leading the nation's troops in combat.

Adams's statements do not directly concern the War Powers Clause. The individual whom he saw pushing for war was not the President, and the branch of government over which that individual exerted power was legislative, not executive. But, in a larger way, these statements bear directly on our understanding of how the Clause came to take the form it did. Like the Helvidius letters, Adams's letters reflect the view that an individual who is in a position to gain military glory will be tempted to do so by pushing the nation to war, regardless of whether or not war is in the national interest. Adams's letters thus provide further evidence that members of the framing generation believed that, even in a republic, the desire for glory was so profound that the individual who controlled the military could not be trusted with the decision whether to go to war. Of course, both Adams and Madison believed that some could resist that temptation. Madison believed that "the prodigy of many centuries" would be able to master his passions. And, Adams had faith in Adams. But the necessity of a rule framed to govern the ordinary case was clear. Alternatively, to view the matter from Congressman Rutledge's cynical perspective, the nation could not count on always having a president who, being "no warrior," would avoid war out of the fear that it had "no laurels in store for him."
D. The War of 1812

Ironically, it was Madison—the individual who had cautioned that Presidents' love of fame would lead them to favor war—who served as President during the nation's first declared war, the War of 1812. When it was over, his supporters applauded him for not having sacrificed the good of the nation to the pursuit of glory. For example, the day he left office, a committee of Washington, D.C. citizens paid tribute to him, stating: "Power and national glory, Sir, have often before, been acquired by the sword; but rarely without the sacrifice of civil or political liberty."\(^{350}\) They lauded his "vigilance" in "restrain[ing] the sword within its proper limits, ... wield[ing] an armed force of fifty thousand men, aided by an annual disbursement of many millions, without infringing a political, civil, or religious right."\(^{351}\)

But, during the course of the war, Federalist opponents painted a very different picture, suggesting that Madison's desire for glory and personal motives had drawn the nation into a disastrous war. Congressman Potter proclaimed Madison "an ambitious military chief"\(^{352}\) and suggested that his ambition knew no limits:

\[\text{[I]f an Administration like the present, without money, without an army, or navy, would plunge this country so unprepared into a war . . . the next thing they would want colonies, as other nations had done, and that Bermuda and New Providence would be in our way; and we must have Jamaica to get good rum and sugar. And instead of this country enjoying peace, which is above all things the most desirable, we should be involved like other nations in perpetual war.}^{353}\]

Congressman Miller called the war a "war of conquest" and suggested that President Madison had started it in the hope of quieting opposition: "[A] weak and wicked administration . . . finding the confidence of the people withdrawn, and their power about to pass into other hands, have nothing to do but to declare war, and instantly all opposition must cease . . . ."\(^{354}\) Senator Goldsborough agreed. He observed that "[t]he President himself is the father and patron of this war,"\(^{355}\) and suggested that the war had been declared to secure support for the Administration. "Thus," he said, "the tottering edifice is saved from the tempest of public opinion . . . ."\(^{356}\)


\(^{351}\) Id. (alteration in original).

\(^{352}\) ANNALS OF CONG., 12th Cong., 2d Sess. 449 (Dec. 1812).

\(^{353}\) Id. at 448-49.

\(^{354}\) ANNALS OF CONG., 13th Cong., 1st Sess. 956 (Jan. 1814).

\(^{355}\) Id. at 579.

\(^{356}\) Id. at 580.
Webster attacked the war as one begun to obtain "the harvest of greatness and glory."\textsuperscript{357} Congressman Law similarly attacked the war as one fought "for glory,"\textsuperscript{358} adding that he could not "consent to involve the country in carnage, distress and ruin, for that phantom."\textsuperscript{359} Congressman Brigham invoked the individual who many Americans of the day would have offered as the principal example of a man whose pursuit of greatness and glory had come at tragic cost: "[T]here is no right [in Canada] but a Napoleon right, and that right is power, and not that which reason approves."\textsuperscript{360}

Early in the war, the link between the desire for glory and the decision to go to war received its fullest exploration in a speech by Massachusetts Congressmen Josiah Quincy, a leading Federalist and future President of Harvard University.\textsuperscript{361} Quincy argued that the motivation for war lay in personal interest, specifically "the personal or local ambition of the members of the American Cabinet."\textsuperscript{362} "Whoever plants the American standard on the walls of Quebec," he stated, "conquers it for himself, and not for the people of the United States."\textsuperscript{363} He ascribed to President Madison and Secretary of State James Monroe ambitions that had a monarchical cast:

To secure the succession, and keep it in the destined line, has been, is, and will continue to be, the main object of the policy of these men [Madison and his Secretary of State James Monroe]. This is the point on which the projects of the Cabinet, for the three years past, have been brought to bear—that James the First [James Madison] should be made to continue four years longer. And this is the point on which the projects of the Cabinet will be brought to bear for the three years to come—that James the Second [James Monroe] shall be made to succeed, according to the fundamental rescripts of the Monticellian dynasty.\textsuperscript{364}

The desire to remain in power was joined with a desire for a kind of glory that Quincy pronounced ignoble, and, like Brigham, he invoked the example of Napoleon.

What glory [will victory bring]? Is it the glory of the tiger which lifts his jaws, all foul and bloody, from the bowels of his victim, and roars for his companions of the wood to come and witness his prowess and his spoils? Such is the glory of Ginghis Khan, and of Bonaparte.

\textsuperscript{357} Id. at 942.
\textsuperscript{358} \textit{Annals of Cong.}, 12th Cong., 2d Sess. 540 (Jan. 1813).
\textsuperscript{359} Id.
\textsuperscript{360} Id. at 514. For a discussion of Napoleon, his desire for greatness, and popular perceptions, see Braudy, \textit{supra} note 224, at 408-16.
\textsuperscript{361} For a discussion of Congressman Quincy and the prominence of this speech, see Donald R. Hickey, The War of 1812, at 109 (1989).
\textsuperscript{362} \textit{Annals of Cong.}, 12th Cong., 2d Sess. 561 (Jan. 1813).
\textsuperscript{363} Id. at 549.
\textsuperscript{364} Id. at 564.
Be such glory far, very far, from my country. Never, never may it be accursed with such fame.\textsuperscript{365}

"A giant obtain[s] glory by crushing a pigmy!" Quincy exclaimed.\textsuperscript{366} "That giant must have a pigmy's spirit who could reap, or hope, glory from such an achievement."\textsuperscript{367} He called on the nation to pursue instead a different kind of fame:

"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistening foil
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumor lies,
But lives and spreads aloft, by those pure eyes,
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove,
As he pronounces lastly on each deed."
May such fame as this be my country's meed!\textsuperscript{368}

In January 1814, one year after Quincy's speech, the American offensive in Canada had proven a failure, and it was the British who had taken the offensive.\textsuperscript{369} In that month, Congressman Miller gave a speech that, like Quincy's, highlighted the relationship between war and the desire for glory, although the warning about the relationship now came from a different perspective. Miller suggested that Madison had started the war in order to achieve glory, mistakenly believing that the Canadians would surrender rather than fight: "The American commander was to gain his laurels, with 'rapier unstained, and sword unhacked,' and in honor of his bloodless victory, was to have an 'ovation' decreed him."\textsuperscript{370} This was an enormous miscalculation. The navy had won victories, but Madison could not properly take credit for them: "The Administration ought not to rob the individuals concerned of their well-earned laurels."\textsuperscript{371} Discussing Commander Perry's naval triumphs, Miller observed: "[T]here is no glory without danger—and the fame acquired may be in proportion to the disparity of force. The Administration, however, is not justified in omitting to place our naval force on Lake Erie on a more respectable footing . . . ."\textsuperscript{372} But the Executive could fairly be assigned responsibility for what the army had done. Miller sarcastically stated: "I deny this Administration any credit on account of the Navy; but I am content they should be decorated with all the laurels their army has gained. It is their army; let them monopolize its glory."\textsuperscript{373} After listing a series of

\textsuperscript{365} Id. at 548.
\textsuperscript{366} Id. at 547.
\textsuperscript{367} Id.
\textsuperscript{368} Id. at 548.
\textsuperscript{369} See Hickey, supra note 361, at 158.
\textsuperscript{370} Annals of Cong., 13th Cong., 1st Sess. 965 (Jan. 1814).
\textsuperscript{371} Id. at 971.
\textsuperscript{372} Id. at 971-72.
\textsuperscript{373} Id. at 963.
disasters, Miller highlighted one incident involving the army through which a kind of fame had been won: "Your commanding officer [General McClure] had determined to cross the Niagara, and yet with cold-blooded insensibility he burnt Newark, 'the loveliest village of the plain.' If General McClure panted for immortality he has obtained it; so did the miscreant who fired the temple of Ephesus." McClure was thus the modern Herostratus, the man who had burned the temple of Ephesus; each had destroyed something beautiful to be remembered forever. And that was Madison's fame as well, for having led the nation to war. He could "monopolize" the fame of a Herostratus.

IV
CURRENT SIGNIFICANCE

To this point, this Article has principally been an attempt at recovery—at unearthing a forgotten concern. It has shown that the Founders and political leaders of the early republic feared that the lure of fame would lead individuals, in general, and Presidents, in particular, to favor war, even when it was not in the national interest. The Article has argued that, because of this fear, the Founders gave Congress alone the power to start war. This Part explores the significance of this concern about fame to modern interpretations of the War Powers Clause, both from originalist and nonoriginalist perspectives.

A. Traditional Originalist

The greatest weakness of the pro-Congress originalist reading of the War Powers Clause is that pro-Congress scholars have been unable to offer an explanation for why the Founders thought that the power to initiate conflict should be exclusively vested in Congress. Pro-Executive scholars, in contrast, have been able to offer a range of reasons why the Founders would have likely given this power to the Executive. In particular, precedent and the Founders' views on the strengths of the President suggest that the Founders would have given the President the power to start wars. Moreover, the terms used in the Constitution—declare war, letters of marque and reprisal—were terms with a fixed and narrow meaning in international law. As a result of this evidence, Pro-Executive scholars argue that the warrmaking power is vested in the President, despite relevant statements from

374 Id. at 972.
375 For a discussion of Herostratus and the use of his actions as a cautionary tale, see supra text accompanying notes 231-33.
376 See supra text accompanying notes 69-81.
377 See supra text accompanying notes 152-57.
378 See supra text accompanying notes 70-79.
the founding generation indicating that Congress alone had the power to initiate conflict.

By highlighting the Founders' concern with the lure of military fame, this Article has offered a reason why the Founders would have taken the power to start war away from the President. Madison's Helvidius letters make the point explicitly: "[T]he question of war" is confided to the legislature because "[i]t is in war . . . that laurels are to be gathered, and it is the executive brow they are to encircle." The Helvidius letters thus clarify both that Madison understood Congress alone as having the power to start war, and that, because of his concern with fame, he thought this allocation of power appropriate. Moreover, additional evidence offered in the previous section indicates that the concern about the lure of military fame was widely shared. Given such concern, the Founders would have wanted to give Congress alone the power to start war. Thus, this Article has served to remedy the principal weakness in the pro-Congress argument. It dramatically strengthens the position that the War Powers Clause—in giving Congress the power to declare war and issue letters of marque and reprisal—was not intended to be read by reference to the usages of international law. Rather, what the Founders intended was to give Congress the power to decide in all instances, except those of sudden attacks, whether the United States should go to war.

The evidence presented above also suggests that the dominant original understanding was that the President could not veto declarations of war. Scholars have previously argued on textual grounds that the President lacks the veto power, but no one has made that argument on originalist grounds. The failure to do so is understandable because the conceptions of the War Powers Clause previously advanced by both pro-Executive and pro-Congress scholars indicate that the Founders would have wanted to give the President a veto. Whether the original understanding was that the President should be at the center of decisions on war and peace—as pro-Executive scholars maintain—or that as many barriers as possible to war should be imposed—as pro-Congress scholars maintain—presumably both ends are advanced by giving the President a veto. But if the President's desire for military fame will consistently push him towards war, then a veto is pointless because it will not be exercised. Moreover, because the President's decisionmaking in this area will be hopelessly corrupted by self-interest, it is reasonable to wholly exclude him from the warmaking process. There is, then, a simple reason why the Founders

379 Madison, "Helvidius" Number 4, supra note 35, at 108.
380 See supra text accompanying notes 189-99.
381 See supra text accompanying notes 186-200.
consistently described the decision to declare war as exclusively a legislative decision: they understood it to be an exclusively legislative decision.

For the traditional originalist, then, the inquiry about the meaning of the War Powers Clause is at an end. Traditional originalists believe that judges should construe constitutional text as it was understood at the time of its adoption. The leading champion of this approach—although he has forsaken it in the war powers area—is Robert Bork, and he has described it in the following fashion: “What is the meaning of a rule that judges should not change? It is the meaning understood at the time of the law’s enactment.” But there is another school of originalism, the translation school. The translator seeks to identify the ends that the Constitution’s Framers sought to advance, and then interprets the Constitution in the way that best advances those ends in today’s world, while altering the original reading as little as possible. Having established the concrete understanding of the founding generation, the translator must still answer a threshold question: Has the world changed in such a way so that the concrete understanding of the constitutional text should change? In other words, the Founders gave Congress, rather than the Executive, the power to decide whether to start wars because they wanted the warmaking decision to be disinterested, and they feared that Presidents would lead the nation into war in order to achieve a place in history. The translator must answer whether it continues to be true that the Executive is the branch of government most likely to have self-interested reasons to wage war.

There are, of course, nonoriginalist approaches to constitutional law, although it is rare for constitutional scholars to ignore history wholly. In the war powers area, the writings that have accorded the least weight to the original understanding have been, as previously noted, the work of pro-Executive scholars, and the focus of this scholarship has been on evolving constitutional structure and pragmatic concerns. Scholars such as Bork, Rostow, and W. Michael Reisman

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384 See Lessig, Fidelity in Translation, supra note 383, at 1263; Treanor, Takings Clause, supra note 5, at 856-57.
385 Ronald Dworkin, for example, is the paradigmatic example of a constitutional philosopher who advances a moral reading of the document, but nonetheless draws on history and tradition as guides to constitutional decisionmaking through his concept of “fit.” See RONALD DWORIN, FREEDOM'S LAW: THE MORAL READING OF THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION 3-18 (1996); RONALD DWORIN, LAW'S EMPIRE 227-28 (1986). For further discussion of the role of history in constitutional interpretation, even among nonoriginalists, see Flaherty, supra note 51, at 1745-47.
have argued that because the President can move more rapidly, forcefully, and secretly than Congress, he should have the power to start war.\textsuperscript{386} If the thesis of this Article is to have any significance for the nonoriginalist, it must be shown, not that the Framers feared that the President would lead the nation into war in order to achieve fame, but that such concern is a pressing one today.

In short, although their constitutional theories are different, both the translator and the nonoriginalist are concerned with the relationship between the Founders' insights and modern circumstance. This topic is the subject of the next section.

B. Fame, the Presidency, and War

Unlike the Founders, we no longer tend to perceive the desire to be remembered by history as a fundamental human drive. Writing in 1840, Tocqueville precisely captured the decline in the interest in fame in its traditional sense and offered a cogent explanation for that decline. He observed that one of the first thing[s] that strikes a traveler in the United States is ... the rarity of lofty ambition to be observed in the midst of the universally ambitious stir of society. No Americans are devoid of a yearning desire to rise, but hardly any appear to entertain hopes of great magnitude or to pursue very lofty aims.\textsuperscript{387}

Tocqueville noted that this was a relatively recent phenomenon and that Americans of the revolutionary era had harbored such ambitions:

All revolutions enlarge the ambition of men.... When the former barriers that kept back the multitude from fame and power are suddenly thrown down, a violent and universal movement takes place towards that eminence so long coveted and at length to be enjoyed....

Ambition is therefore always extremely great as long as a democratic revolution lasts, and it will remain so for some time after the revolution is consummated.\textsuperscript{388}

According to Tocqueville, the establishment of a constitutional and social order had led people to lower their goals:

A democratic nation, arrived at this permanent and regular state of things, will present a very different spectacle from that which I have just described, and we may readily conclude that if ambition becomes great while the conditions of society are growing equal, it loses that quality when they have grown so.

\textsuperscript{386} See supra notes 93-94 and accompanying text.
\textsuperscript{388} Id. at 243-44.
I believe that ambitious men in democracies are less engrossed than any others with the interests and the judgment of posterity; the present moment alone engages and absorbs them. They are more apt to complete a number of undertakings with rapidity than to raise lasting monuments of their achievements, and they care much more for success than for fame.389

In accordance with Tocqueville's insight, soon after the founding many Americans came to believe that "there was no more fame to be won."390 The young John Quincy Adams, for example, declared: "The field is extensive; it is fruitful ... but the copious treasures of its fragrance have already been gathered by the hands of genius; and there now remains for the gleaning of mental indigence, nought but the thinly scattered sweets which have escaped the vigilance of their industry."391 The passing of the Founders' world can be marked, in part, by a linguistic change that may explain why their concerns about fame have been obscured. When the Founders spoke of fame, they meant a desire to leave a mark on history for having done great things; for us, to be famous is simply to be widely-known.392

This might suggest that the Framers' fear that a President's desire for fame or glory would lead him to initiate wars was a time-bound one. The argument against the original understanding would thus be that, despite grounds for fearing that a President's desire for glory would make him favor war in 1789 or in 1812, we no longer live in a society where individuals are obsessed with their place in history. Accordingly, the Framers' distrust of a President with the power to start war no longer has any relevance, and, to the extent that constitutional law can move beyond a rigid application of the original understanding, it should do so in this case. Moreover, we need not fear that Presidents will lead the nation into war in order to achieve fame as we now understand the word; Presidents are already as "famous" as they can be.

However, the fact that our societal norms and concerns have changed does not necessarily mean that Presidents will behave differently than the Founders predicted. Systematic analysis of the continuing accuracy of the Framers' view is beyond the scope of this Article. There is, however, good evidence that, despite cultural changes, they were right about the way in which a desire for a place in history would affect the occupants of the Executive office.

389 Id. at 244-47.
390 LIENESCH, supra note 224, at 181.
391 Id. (quoting John Quincy Adams, An Oration Pronounced July 4, 1793).
392 See ADAIR, supra note 32, at 8-13.
In describing his life's goals, Woodrow Wilson wrote that he had "a longing to do immortal work." He has not been alone in his desire for immortality. A concern with how they would be remembered has driven many Presidents. It is significant that Adair offers one example of a modern American who had a passion for fame in the eighteenth century sense. Urging a revival of the largely lost tradition, Adair concluded his essay:

Who can doubt that this obsessive concern with the judgment of posterity was not one of the ingredients that made the late John Kennedy something more than just another Irish politician from Boston. Who can doubt that it was his concern with his fame—his concern with the judgment of posterity—that made him respond, as Arthur Schlesinger has told us, to those lovely lines of Stephen Spender's poem:

I think continually of those who are truly great . . .
The names of those who in their lives fought for life,
Who wore at their hearts the fire's center.
Born of the sun they travelled a short while towards the sun,
And left the vivid air signed with their honor.

One need not agree with Adair's view that Kennedy "respond[ed] to Spender's poem" to accept the underlying point that Kennedy was obsessed with history's judgment. Richard Reeves's recent biography of Kennedy provides further evidence of this concern:

There was no question in Kennedy's mind, and little argument from anyone else, that the struggle with communism would be the focus of the history of his times. As 1961 ended, he had begun an address to historians meeting in Washington by quoting Churchill's prediction that history would be kind to his role in World War II: "Because I intend to write it!"

And Kennedy intended to do the same, with the help of Sorensen and Schlesinger. He had invited one of the historians, David Donald of Princeton, an expert on Abraham Lincoln, to the White House and asked him: "How do you go down in the history books as a great president?"
Ironically, at almost the exact time that Tocqueville was writing, one American who would later make his mark on history gave evidence that, despite the age in which he lived, he had dreams of the greatest glory. In 1838, Abraham Lincoln, a young state legislator, gave a speech to the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois. He saluted the Founders and the fame they had won. According to Lincoln, the Founders had desired to prove the capability of a people to govern themselves. If they succeeded, they were to be immortalized; their names were to be transferred to counties and cities, and rivers and mountains; and to be revered and sung, and toasted through all time. If they failed, they were to be called knaves and fools, and fanatics for a fleeting hour; then to sink and be forgotten. They succeeded. The experiment is successful; and thousands have won their deathless names in making it so.396

Echoing Adams, Lincoln wrote that it seemed that “[t]his field of glory is harvested, and the crop is already appropriated.”397 But, unlike Adams, he did not accept the view that glory was no longer attainable: “[N]ew reapers will arise, and they, too, will seek a field.”398 He continued:

Towering genius disdains a beaten path. It seeks regions hitherto unexplored. It sees no distinction in adding story to story, upon the monuments of fame, erected to the memory of others. It denies that it is glory enough to serve under any chief. It scorns to tread in the footsteps of any predecessor, however illustrious. It thirsts and burns for distinction; and, if possible, it will have it, whether at the expense of emancipating slaves, or enslaving freemen.399

formation that came across his desk, and learned why he made his decisions.”


397 Id.

398 Id. (emphasis omitted).

399 Id. at 114 (emphasis omitted). This speech has inspired extensive scholarly commentary since Edmund Wilson first focused attention on it. See Edmund Wilson, Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War 106-08 (1962) (arguing that Lincoln envisioned himself as the individual who threatened the constitutional order). In particular, Lincoln psychobiographers have argued that the speech offers a key to understanding the former President. See Dwight G. Anderson, Abraham Lincoln; The Quest for Immortality 68-78 (1982); George B. Forgie, Patricide in the House Divided: A Psychological Interpretation of Lincoln and His Age 83-86, 249-70 (1979); Charles B. Strozier, Lincoln's Quest for Union: Public and Private Meanings 61 (1982). Garry Wills has recently criticized the psychobiographers' argument that the speech reflects "hostility to 'the fathers.'" Garry Wills, Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words that Remade America 79 (1992). My claim here, however, is not that Lincoln was hostile to the Founders. Rather, it is that he envied the fame they had achieved and hoped to achieve a similar immortality. My interpretation accords with, and was influenced by,
Moreover, it is not simply that the presidency attracts those interested in establishing an important historical reputation. Instead, once attained, the presidency—and all of its trappings—strengthen its occupants' concern for their place in history. As scholar Forrest McDonald observed:

[What presidents do in office, or try to do, is powerfully influenced by a unique conception of history. The president lives in a museum of the history of the presidency. When walking along the halls of the White House, the president is constantly reminded that Jefferson walked the same halls as he waited for news of negotiations with Napoleon, that Lincoln walked them when waiting for news of Antietam. When dining, the president never entirely escapes the realization that he is using the same silver that Madison and both Roosevelts used. The president understands that he is a member of a mystical fraternity, representing an unbroken chain of history and mythology, and knows that far into the future presidents will be aware that he was a link in that chain, and cannot avoid wondering what his place will be in their memory and in the nation's memory.]

The topic of how Presidents confront, and try to surpass, the legacy of their predecessors is an understudied one. William Leuchtenberg, the author of In the Shadow of FDR, observed in 1983 that no previous book or article had focused on "the influence of a head of state on those who succeeded him." Leuchtenberg's study suggests how powerfully a predecessor's legacy can haunt Presidents. Leuchtenberg wrote:

[The men who succeeded him [FDR] found one question inescapable: How did they measure up to FDR? They were expected to tread in the rows that he had furrowed, even, like those who sought a sign of grace from a Chinese emperor, to exhibit the quality of hsiaotao, of filial piety. Little wonder that they sometimes felt much like the Athenian who voted to exile Aristides because he had wearied of hearing him called "the Just."
There is also evidence that suggests that Presidents are well aware of the link between leading a nation to military triumph and historical immortality and, conversely, of the link between military disaster and infamy. The fear of the reputational consequences of military disaster is evidenced by what White House Butler Alonzo Fields reports was FDR’s reaction to first hearing the news of Pearl Harbor. According to Fields, he put his head in his hands and said, “My God, my God, how did it happen? How did it happen? Now I’ll go down in history disgraced.”\footnote{Interview with Alonzo Fields, White House Butler, American Experience: FDR (PBS television broadcast, Oct. 12, 1994) (Journal Graphics Transcripts #702, on file with author). It should be noted that other accounts of Roosevelt’s reaction to the bombing of Pearl Harbor are different. For example, relying on Sumner Welles’s and Eleanor Roosevelt’s statements, historian Doris Kearns Goodwin describes Roosevelt’s “imperturbable demeanor.” Doris Kearns Goodwin, No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II 289 (1994).} Lyndon Johnson’s explanation for why he would not end the war in Vietnam manifests a similar fear. He declared, “I will not be the first President to lose a war.”\footnote{James Reston, Private Behavior, Public Responsibility, N.Y. Times, Dec. 25, 1987, at A27.} 

On the other hand, perhaps because of his heightened sensitivity to the desire for fame, Lincoln saw in Polk’s support for war with Mexico a desire for “military glory—that attractive rainbow, that rises in showers of blood—that serpent’s eye, that charms to destroy.”\footnote{Abraham Lincoln, Speech in United States House of Representatives: The War with Mexico (Jan. 12, 1848), in 1 The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, supra note 396, at 439. For an analysis of this passage, see Donald, supra note 395, at 124.} Numerous individuals have suggested similar links between modern presidents’ desire for glory or concern with their place in history and war-like foreign policy. Historian Alan Brinkley has observed of Theodore Roosevelt:

Theodore Roosevelt complained frequently that his times had denied him the greatness to which he aspired and of which he considered himself capable. “A man has to take advantage of his opportunities,” he said in 1910 after leaving office, “but the opportunities have to come. If there is not the war, you don’t get the great general; if there is not the great occasion, you don’t get the great statesman; if Lincoln had lived in times of peace, no one would know his name now.” The great disappointment of Roosevelt’s life was that World War I came after he had left office, that, as he saw it, Woodrow Wilson and not he had the real opportunity for greatness.\footnote{Alan Brinkley, The 43% President, N.Y. Times, July 4, 1993, § 6, at 22.} 

The previously quoted excerpt from biographer Richard Reeves’s book on John Kennedy suggests that Kennedy recognized Churchill’s commanding place in history and wanted to win a parallel place for
himself through the struggle with communism.\footnote{See Reeves, supra note 395, at 278. See also Michael S. Sherry, In the Shadow of War, The United States Since the 1930s, at 244 (1995) (asserting that Kennedy hoped his presidency would witness a "climax" to history "yield[ing] winners and losers."); supra text accompanying note 395.} In describing the path to Vietnam, historian and Johnson presidential aide Eric Goldman wrote:

Intertwined with all aspects of his foreign policy was the President's ambition. Much as [Johnson] wished that international affairs could be de-emphasized, he was too seasoned a political leader not to know that they were certain to play an important part in the overall judgment of his Administration. He was determined that when he did have to deal with them, he would do so with effectiveness and splash. Lyndon Johnson was going to be a great President, a very great President, in all ways.\footnote{ERIC F. GOLDMAN, THE TRAGEDY OF LYNDON JOHNSON 384 (1969).}

Leuchtenburg's account draws upon and parallels Goldman's account. Johnson, he writes:

was not satisfied to go down in the history books merely as a successful president in the Roosevelt tradition. He aimed instead to be "the greatest of them all, the whole bunch of them." And to be the greatest president in history, he needed not just to match Roosevelt's performance but to surpass it.\footnote{LEUCHTENBURG, supra note 401, at 142 (quoting Goldman, supra note 409, at 20).}

According to Leuchtenburg, this determination drove Johnson to Vietnam and to disaster: "In his determination to outdo Roosevelt, [Johnson] carried everything to excess—the overladen apparatus of the Great Society; the insistence on having both guns and butter, which had calamitous inflationary repercussions; and, most of all, the body counts and the napalm and the saturation bombing."\footnote{Id. at 160.} Doris Kearns Goodwin puts the matter succinctly:

Lyndon Johnson had wanted to surpass Franklin Roosevelt; and Roosevelt, after all, had not only won the reforms Johnson envied, he had also waged a war. But there was a critical difference: Roosevelt did not attempt the New Deal and World War II at the same time. Only Johnson among the Presidents sought to be simultaneously first in peace and first in war; and even Johnson was bound to fail.\footnote{DORIS KEARNS, LYNDON JOHNSON AND THE AMERICAN DREAM 285 (1976).}

The 1970 Senate Foreign Relations Committee report calling for the repeal of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution also reflected the view that concern for their place in history led Presidents to favor war.\footnote{See Committee on Foreign Relations, Termination of Middle East and Southeast Asia Resolutions, S. Rep. No. 91-834, at 6-8 (1970).}
As background for its recommendation, the Committee analyzed the rise of presidential power in the war powers area in the years following the Second World War. It offered one explanation for why Presidents had led the nation into war without securing congressional approval. That explanation was the Presidents' desire for greatness—"[the] notion that great Presidents are those who act effectively to strengthen the office of the Presidency as distinguished from strengthening the constitutional system as a whole." 414

Richard Nixon's writings and his personal statements reveal that he considered military triumphs and, more generally, foreign policy triumphs, as the key to greatness. War was, for Nixon, the truest crucible. He wrote: "It is a tragic reality that war, the most destructive activity of man, also calls forth his highest nature and greatest qualities." 415 According to Nixon, through "[h]is brilliant leadership in World War II," 416 Winston Churchill had become the greatest leader of the modern era. Churchill was "a mythical hero who belongs to legend as much as to reality, the largest human being of our time." 417

More prosaically, Nixon told his aide Monica Crowley shortly before he died that President Clinton should focus on foreign affairs because "history will not remember him for anything he does domestically. The economy will recover; it's all short-term and, let's face it, very boring." 418

William Crowe, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, suggested that President Bush's concern with his place in history was part of the reason why he initiated the Gulf War: "To be a great president you have to have a war. All the great presidents have had their wars." 419 Even more recently, it has been suggested that regard for "his place in history" influenced President Clinton to be militarily aggressive in Bosnia. 420

414 Id. at 8. The Committee called on future Presidents to embrace, instead, the view of presidential greatness offered by the historian Thomas Bailey in his book Presidential Greatness:

"The bare fact that a President was a strong one, or a domineering one, does not necessarily mean that he was a great one or even a good one. The crucial questions arise: Was he strong in the right direction? Was he a dignified, fair, constitutional ruler, serving the ends of democracy in a democratic and ethical manner?"

415 Id. (quoting THOMAS A. BAILEY, PRESIDENTIAL GREATNESS 227 (1966)).

416 Id. at 27.

417 Id. (quoting with approval Isaiah Berlin).


420 See R.W. Apple, Jr., Why the Choice of '96 Will Remain a Bafflement, N.Y. TIMES, Aug. 18, 1996, § 4, at 1. It should be noted that, just as Presidents are concerned with their
If Presidents equate military victories with historical greatness, they are correct—or, at least, their views are in accord with what historians regard as greatness. Admiral Crowe’s observation about great Presidents is remarkably accurate. Washington, Lincoln, and Franklin Roosevelt—the trio that historians have consistently rated as our three greatest presidents—each led the nation to victory in war, Lincoln and Roosevelt as Presidents, and Washington as Commander in Chief at a time when there was no President. The link between fame and war is not limited to this group. Of the four Presidents who are typically ranked next on the lists of presidential greatness—Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, Wilson, and Truman—two led the nation in a major war, Wilson during World War I, and Truman during World War II and the Korean War.

In the most detailed study on the topic of why historians view particular Presidents as great, Dean Keith Simonton used a regression analysis to examine the various presidential rankings compiled by historians. He explored how over 200 variables—including factors such as number of bills signed, number of bills vetoed, percentage of
judicial nominees confirmed, and number of books published—corresponded with ranking. Supra note 421, at 544, 546. In other words, the more years in which the nation was at war during his presidency, the higher the President's rating was likely to be. Nothing any President did while in office had as great a positive effect as leading the nation in war. Surveying the relevant data, a range of other studies has also reached the conclusion that war years correlate with presidential greatness, as historians judge greatness.

This evidence suggests that the insight underlying the Founders' assignment of the power to start war to Congress, rather than the President, is at least as valid today as it was in 1787. Presidents' concern with their place in history still makes them likely to lead the nation to war. This explains, at least in part, why throughout the foreign affair crises in our history, in all but one case, Presidents have been more pro-war than Congress.

From the vantage point of constitutional law, the question becomes what effect should the continuing accuracy of the Framers' insight have. For an originalist of the translation school, the current reality of the Framers' fear that Presidents are particularly likely to lead the nation to war means that the concrete original understanding—that Congress alone should have the power to start war except in cases where it is necessary to repel sudden attacks—must be given effect. In other words, no changed circumstance warrants a re-allocation of power between the Executive and Congress.

This insight about presidential self-interest is also relevant to current constitutional discourse because it indicates that courts should not apply the political question doctrine to avoid resolving challenges to the constitutionality of Executive-initiated uses of force. Whether the political question doctrine currently exists at the Supreme Court level is an open question, but the United States District Court for

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424 See id. at 269-71.
425 See id. at 273.
427 See Sidak, supra note 190, at 85-86. The one exception is President Grover Cleveland, who strongly and successfully opposed war with Spain in 1896. See id. at 86. Although President Adams opposed declaring war against France, despite a faction in Congress that wanted war, the clear majority of Congress opposed war—even among the Federalists. See Boston Patriot, supra note 185, at 305 n.2. (noting that Federalist congressional caucus voted against declaration of war).
428 The classic statement of the political question doctrine is found in Baker v. Carr, 369 U.S. 186 (1962).
the District of Columbia and the District of Columbia Circuit court have both invoked the doctrine as the basis of decision in a series of cases in which they have dismissed suits seeking to overturn presidential decisions to send troops into combat.\textsuperscript{429} Courts in these cases have held that they would not resolve the constitutionality of presidential actions because Congress had not affirmatively sought to block such actions. For example, in Lowry v. Reagan,\textsuperscript{430} Judge Revercomb explained that he would not reach the merits of the case because "[a]lthough styled as a dispute between the legislative and executive branches of government, this lawsuit evidences and indeed is a by-product of political disputes within Congress regarding the applicability of the War Powers Resolution to the Persian Gulf situation."\textsuperscript{431}

The Court in Dellums v. Bush\textsuperscript{432} reached a similar result, although it did not rely upon the political question doctrine. There, the district court held that the political question doctrine did not bar a suit challenging the military build-up that preceded Operation Desert Storm.\textsuperscript{433} Nonetheless, the court dismissed the case for reasons of ripeness which reflected concerns similar to those expressed in Lowry: "[U]nless the Congress as a whole, or by a majority, is heard from, the controversy here cannot be deemed ripe; it is only if the majority of the Congress seeks relief from an infringement on its constitutional war-declaration power that it may be entitled to receive it."\textsuperscript{434} These decisions reflect a view that Congress has adequate incentives and adequate tools to protect its power under the War Powers Clause and that, if Congress does not act as a body, courts should not intervene.\textsuperscript{435}

\begin{itemize}
\item coordinate political department; or a lack of judicially discoverable and manageable standards for resolving it; or the impossibility of deciding without an initial policy determination of a kind clearly for nonjudicial discretion; or the impossibility of a court's undertaking independent resolution without expressing lack of the respect due coordinate branches of government; or an unusual need for unquestioning adherence to a political decision already made; or the potentiality of embarrassment from multifarious pronouncements by various departments on one question.
\end{itemize}

\textit{Id.} at 217. For the position that the doctrine is not followed at the Supreme Court level, see ELY, supra note 8, at 55; Louis Henkin, \textit{Is There a "Political Question" Doctrine?}, 85 YALE L.J. 597 (1976).


\textsuperscript{431} \textit{Id.} at 338.


\textsuperscript{433} See \textit{id.} at 1145-46.

\textsuperscript{434} \textit{Id.} at 1151.

\textsuperscript{435} See also JESSE H. CHOPER, JUDICIAL REVIEW AND THE NATIONAL POLITICAL PROCESS: A FUNCTIONAL RECONSIDERATION OF THE ROLE OF THE SUPREME COURT 295-96 (1980) (arguing that separation of powers disputes between the President and Congress should not be addressed by courts since the injured branch can defend itself politically).
The analysis in this Article indicates that this view is wrong. Presidents have a personal motive for starting wars. The Founders gave Congress the power to decide when wars should start, not because Congress has some countervailing and superior motive, but because Congress is, in contrast with the President, disinterested. The Founders believed that congressional representatives are too numerous to reap glory from war and therefore will fairly evaluate national interests in deciding whether to go to war. Moreover, Congress has no motive to try to stop the President from initiating conflict (as the failure of Congress to respond to presidential disregard of the War Powers Resolution illustrates). Thus, a requirement imposed under the political question doctrine that Congress exert itself before courts intervene leads to a result inconsistent with the Founders' vision: the President will assert authority that the Constitution has not given him and Congress will, in general, fail to counter by asserting its prerogative. Congress will fail to assert its power under the War Powers Clause for the same reason that it was given that power—disinterest.

This point leads back to the ultimate question: Did the Founders get it right? If Congress is disinterested, and the Executive, concerned with his place in history, has a motive to bring the nation to war, who should make the decision? For the originalist—either a traditional originalist or a translation originalist—the question has been answered by the Founders. But for someone who views the original understanding as not controlling, the question is more difficult.

As noted, pro-Executive scholars have offered a range of nonoriginalist reasons why the President should have the power to lead the nation into war. In contrast, pro-Congress scholars have not fully fought the battle on these terms. Although they have urged that it is wise to require congressional sanction for combat, they have generally placed primary reliance on Framers' intent. This Article has offered a new rationale justifying the pro-Congress position: that the President's desire for a place in history creates a bias in favor of war. Self-interest in fame improperly skews decisionmaking.

The point can be put even more broadly. Although the Framers' principal concern may have been the influence of the desire for glory, that concern can be generalized and re-framed as a concern that the President's self-interest creates a bias in favor of war. Although the desire for glory is highlighted, Madison's Helvidius letters reflect other factors that would influence a President to initiate war out of self-interest—"ambition, avarice, vanity." In current politics, the

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436 See supra text accompanying notes 65-68.
437 See supra text accompanying notes 91-94.
438 See supra text accompanying notes 95-103.
439 Madison, "Helvidius" Number 4, supra note 35, at 108.
principal concern along these lines is that a President will recklessly bring the nation to war in order to win re-election.\textsuperscript{440} Although this concern may not have specifically worried the Framers, it has a long heritage, as some of the criticisms of the War of 1812 quoted above indicate.\textsuperscript{441} It is reasonable, therefore, to suspect that Presidents are inclined to favor war, and accordingly to withhold from them the power to lead the nation to war.

Not everyone will find this new argument for giving Congress alone the power to initiate conflict compelling. The counter to this argument is as follows: just because Presidents may have personal reasons to lead the nation to war does not mean that power should be withheld from them. It can be argued that Congress, in the absence of a personal motivation to go to war, favors war too rarely. A proponent of this view might point, for example, to World War II and the Gulf War. In both instances, Congress was deeply divided whereas the President strongly favored war. Perhaps, in both instances, the President was right. Perhaps because war is so terrible, those who have no reason to favor it are too risk-averse. Our constitutional system is in large part based on the notion that self-interest can be harnessed for the national interest; this is but another example of how appropriate that approach is. In this regard, it is worth noting that Adair was urging that modern presidents concern themselves with fame, not warning us against such a concern.\textsuperscript{442} The argument would then run that, because Presidents seek to be remembered well by history, they are precisely the individuals who should be making the decision about whether the nation goes to war.

Thus, for a nonoriginalist, this Article will not end the debate over who should have the power to start war. It will, however, bring a new concern and a new focus to that debate.

CONCLUSION

The extensive scholarly debate about the original understanding of the War Powers Clause thus far has been inconclusive. Previous

\textsuperscript{440} See, e.g., Ely, supra note 8, at 8, 146 n.41 (noting fears in 1992 “that the executive might start a war to demonstrate toughness and ‘leadership’ in perilous political times”); Bobbitt, supra note 15, at 1383 (noting existence of belief that President Bush was motivated by electoral concerns to start a war, although dismissing that belief as an “old canard”); Dennis Duggan, Church’s Candle Flickers as Does the Hope for Peace, NEWSDAY, Jan. 10, 1991, at 6 (claiming that Presidents Bush, Reagan, Nixon, and Johnson sought “the kind of war that gets a President re-elected”); Elizabeth Neuffer, Allies Assess the Possible Fallout, BOSTON GLOBE, Sept. 6, 1995, at 11 (“[P]resident Clinton faces a tough re-election campaign—and . . . it is important to his image to be seen as forceful in Bosnia.”); William Safire, Comeback Coming, N.Y. TIMES, Feb. 27, 1992, at A25 (suggesting that a prominent dictator “is going to get zapped” in order to aid Bush re-election campaign).

\textsuperscript{441} See supra Part III.D.

\textsuperscript{442} See Adair, supra note 32, at 26.
writings in favor of the position that the Founders intended to give Congress alone the power to initiate conflict have suffered from a critical weakness: They have failed to offer a convincing explanation for why the Founders would have given that power to Congress when so many factors, including precedent and practical considerations, weighed in favor of giving the war-starting power to the President. This Article has advanced such an explanation: The Founders gave Congress the power to start war because they believed that Presidents, out of a desire for personal glory, would be too prone to war. This Article thus dramatically strengthens the originalist case for a pro-Congress reading of the Clause.

This Article is also significant in that it presents evidence that the Founders did not intend to give the President veto power over declarations of war. Although the argument that the President lacks this power has previously been made on textualist grounds, it has not been made on originalist grounds. Indeed, where the possibility that the Founders did not intend to give the President this power has been raised, it has been rapidly dismissed. Substantial evidence indicates, however, that most of the Founders thought that the decision to go to war was exclusively vested in Congress, and this Article, by highlighting the Founders’ distrust of the President’s decisionmaking in this area, has made this position comprehensible.

The argument presented here also has an important bearing on nonoriginalist debate about the proper meaning of the War Powers Clause. Because of their intellectual heritage, and because of the great glory that Washington achieved during the Revolutionary War, the Founders were particularly sensitive to the possibility that Presidents, motivated by a desire to secure an important place in history, would lead the nation to war. Modern scholars, in debating the meaning of the War Powers Clause, have lost sight of this concern. But strong evidence shows that this concern remains at least as relevant as it was two-hundred years ago. That is, modern presidents still tend to favor war because of their desire to be judged well by history. Recognition of this point indicates that courts err when they invoke the political question doctrine in order to avoid resolving challenges to presidential actions committing troops to combat. More basically, it provides a powerful argument for why Presidents should not have the power to bring the nation to war. Although it is not an argument that everyone will find convincing, it is an argument that forces us to re-examine a fear that animated the Founders, and which we have lost sight of over time. Yet it is a concern that continues to bear directly on the actions of those who occupy the most powerful office the Founders created. Even if we do not embrace the Founders’ conclusions, we should admire their prescience.