

## **God and American expansionism.**

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Although the United States constitutionally is a secular state, God always has been an integral part of policy. This can be traced back to colonial times when some of the earliest colonies were established for religious reasons. And because the very establishment of those colonies constituted expansion by Europeans into the New World, God therefore became the basis for expansion both before and after independence.

In modern, more cynical times, we might see it simply as using God as a justification for conquest, subjugation and exploitation. (1) Certainly these were integral parts of expansion. Nevertheless, religion of itself was co-equal to conquest, subjugation and exploitation in the belief that the American people have something unique to offer the world. As late as 2003, a Pew Center poll showed that 71 percent of evangelical Christians, 40 percent of "mainline Christians" (i.e. mainstream Protestant), and 39 percent of Roman Catholics feel the United States has the "special protection of God." (2) When one considers that 75 percent of all Americans consider themselves Christian, these figures show how deeply this view of a special relationship with God permeates American society, no matter how illogical it may seem to some outsiders.

It is not the purpose of this paper to defend or condemn the policies of the United States since its initial settlement by non-Indians. That would be imposing the values of the present onto the past. Every nation with any pretensions of power--including those no longer identified with expansion such as Sweden, Poland and Cambodia--has tried to impose itself outside its borders. It is rather to explain the role of religion in the shaping of American policy, and more importantly, the development of the vision that Americans have of themselves and their mission in the world.

Even before the establishment of permanent English colonies in the New World, Spain already considered the role of religion. Part of the charges given to Columbus was that he was to propagate the faith in any lands he might encounter on his voyage. It was a role he took very seriously, to the point that he signed his given name in the Latin "Christo Ferens," the bearer of Christ. The role of God was given additional strength in 1537, when Pope Paul III issued the Bull *Sublimis Deo*, declaring the American Indians to be children of God and worthy of salvation. Henceforth, Spanish policy required evangelism to accompany colonial expansion. Consequently, the later religious-based communities established by the Separatists, or Pilgrims, and the Puritans in what is now New England simply reflected an already existing condition farther south in New Spain.

New England is most often cited in this paper, because these colonies were religious in origin, and have had the most far-reaching influence on American outlook. Yet even in Virginia, where commerce and wealth were primary motivations for settlement, the English viewed the Indians as candidates for salvation. In 1610, a full decade before the first New England colony, the governing council of Virginia reported that settlers used trade as a means of leading the Indians to "the pearles of heaven." The Word of God, then, accompanied trade goods and weaponry as the Virginia colonists moved out from the immediate Chesapeake area, and deeper into the interior. (3)

[Here it should be said that one reason the New England influence has been so all pervasive is that New Englanders followed the frontier as it progressed beyond the Hudson River, into the Ohio Valley, and even as far as Oregon. During the first eighty years of national existence, much of the nation had no particular quarrel with New England values, even if there was not total agreement. The only region openly and actively hostile to New England was the South, and this opposition was removed with secession in late 1860 and early 1861. During the subsequent Civil War, the federal government's war aim

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gradually shifted from the official position of preserving the Union to the abolition of slavery championed by the New England states, giving the region even more stature.] (4)

In New England, one of the stated purposes for the establishment of the Separatist colony at Plymouth, in what is now Massachusetts was, in the words of William Bradford, one of their leaders, "the propagating and advancing of the gospel of the Kingdom of Christ in those remote parts of the world..." (5)

The Separatists, and the Puritans who established the Bay Colony around Boston and Salem farther north, were Calvinists. A fundamental theme of Calvinism was the basic evil of humanity. The terrible things common in Europe--famine, epidemics, religious strife, Turkish invasions--were all signs of God's wrath against the wicked. In their eyes, the New World was God's means of giving an undeserving humanity a second chance. They were to build a Godly society, away from and free of the iniquities of Europe. Indeed, the cherished American view that these people came to the New World to be free of religious persecution in reality applied only to the Separatists. The Puritans, already a major political and economic force in England by the 1620s, were merely expanding. Puritan leader John Winthrop, crossing the Atlantic to the Bay Colony in 1630, summed up their goal when he wrote, "Men shall say of succeeding plantations: the lord make it like that of New England: for we shall be as a City set upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us." (6)

This idea not only held up through succeeding generations, but gained strength. A century after Winthrop, as the Age of Exploration came to a close, the great New England preacher Jonathan Edwards wrote, "This new world is probably now discovered, that the new and most glorious state of God's church on earth might commence there, that God might in it begin a new world in a spiritual respect, when he creates the new heavens and new earth." (7)

One of the curious things about the British colonial period in America was the distinction that the English drew between American Indians and blacks, a distinction in part due to the evangelical nature of English colonialism in North America. Spaniards drew a distinction between the races as far as legal status. For example, under the New Laws promulgated by Charles V in 1542, Indians were considered Spanish subjects and could not--legally at least--be enslaved, whereas blacks could. (8) Nevertheless, both races were equal candidates for evangelism and conversion. The English, however, viewed Indians as potential converts whereas blacks were not necessarily so. As Winthrop D. Jordan noted in his monumental study, *White Over Black*, "the Indians assumed a special significance in the minds of those actively engaged in a program of bringing civilization to the American wilderness. The case with the African was different: the English errand into Africa was not a new or perfect community but a business trip." (9)

The evangelical foundations of New England were strengthened during the Great Awakening of the mid-18th century. Although the movement spread into the Mid-Atlantic colonies, New England, with its essentially homogenous culture, its relative isolation from the rest of British America, weaker economy, and close proximity to the religious and political enmity of French Canada was swept up by religion as a counter to communal insecurities. As frequently happens, a sense of victimization converted into a feeling of exceptionalism and uniqueness, in this case with the additional impetus of religion. (10) From the very beginning of their colonization efforts, New England Calvinists were faced with almost insurmountable odds, not the least of which were famine and disease, and later Indian warfare. Their success against these difficulties only reinforced their vision of themselves as the elect of God. (11)

Thus, the Puritan "City set upon a Hill" in New England worked together with the evangelical English expansion of the Southern colonies into their wilderness to give later Americans a sense of being God's elect. Indeed, Woodrow Wilson, the supreme architect of modern American foreign policy, was influenced by an almost mystical Presbyterianism and an absolute conviction of the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race. The American branch of that race, he believed, was particularly chosen to reform the

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world and save it from its own wickedness. (12)

The barrier of the Atlantic Ocean also played a role in the American attitude. God had seen fit to remove British North America, and its successor the United States, from the mainstream of the world's troubles. Although events in the colonial New World often were dictated by wars and political changes in Europe, the end of the immediate French threat, and the reduction of Spain to a second-rate power at the end of the Seven Years' War set the Atlantic colonies apart. Once they became independent of Great Britain, marvelous things began to happen, not the least of which was the doubling of the nation's size by the Louisiana Purchase, and the rising of the Latin American nations against their own European rulers. Certainly there were disruptions, including the undeclared war with Revolutionary France, the Barbary Wars, and a second war with Great Britain. Despite the devastation of the latter, which included the destruction of the City of Washington, a more tolerant relationship developed between Great Britain and the United States, leaving the Americans free to acquire even more territory--in this case Florida--and concentrate all the more on internal development. The War of 1812 with Great Britain also boosted a sense of nationalism among the diverse regions which reaffirmed the conviction of divine mission. Thus, isolation, position as the first independent (and therefore preeminent) nation in the Western Hemisphere, and rapid territorial expansion strengthened the Americans' tendency to see themselves as having a unique historical mission. (13)

For the first 125 years of its national existence, the United States practiced a foreign policy that Foster Rhea Dulles called "de facto recognition of any established government, without inquiring too closely how it might have come into power." (14) The official position was set forth in 1793, when George Washington proclaimed strict neutrality in the wars between the European powers and Revolutionary France. Three years later, in his Farewell Address, Washington warned, "Excessive partiality for one foreign nation and excessive dislike of another cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other." He advised establishing commercial relations with foreign countries while maintaining as little political involvement as possible. (15)

Except during crises, like the Napoleonic era and the American Civil War, little thought was given to diplomacy compared to the on-going effort to expand and develop the nation's interior. The primary thrust of foreign policy was hemispheric and even then, territorial expansion remained a consideration. The Louisiana Purchase which, as previously stated doubled the size of the United States, whetted the American appetite for more. Although Louisiana was purchased from France, and Texas was a Spanish province, the scope of the purchase grew in Thomas Jefferson's mind until he and many other Americans convinced themselves that somehow they had allowed Texas to slip through their fingers and into the hands of Spain. The fact that Spanish authority had been fully established and functional in the province since 1718 appears to have been a minor issue, as far as the Americans were concerned. The subsequent American seizure of the area north of Lake Pontchartrain, legally part of the Spanish province of West Florida, followed within a decade by the acquisition of all of Spanish Florida, strengthened the conviction that the United States had special position in hemispheric affairs. (16)

Given its success so far, in 1823 the United States issued its first major foreign policy declaration, the Monroe Doctrine, which has remained a cornerstone of hemispheric and overseas relations ever since. The doctrine, essentially the work of Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, declared there would be no further European colonization of the Western Hemisphere, European powers would not interfere nor seek to extend their systems anywhere in the Western Hemisphere, no attempts would be made by European powers to interfere with the political systems of Western Hemisphere nations, and that the United States would likewise refrain from involving itself in European affairs that did not directly affect it. Adams declined an offer by Great Britain to make this a bilateral declaration. Although the offer reflected Britain's distrust of the Holy Alliance, a bilateral declaration might have interfered with the Americans'

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own hemispheric ambitions, whereas a unilateral statement would give the United States essentially a free hand. (17)

Only two years later, when Adams himself was president, the United States showed its hand by offering to buy Texas from Mexico, although Mexico had never indicated any interest in selling. The proposal reflected not only the notion that Texas should have been part of the Louisiana Purchase, but also the prevailing American view that Mexico was incapable of appreciating or developing the province. Adams' successor, Andrew Jackson, was even more adamant. The establishment of the Republic of Texas after a successful revolution by American settlers in 1836 seemed to confirm this view. (18)

Although the question of Texas remained unsettled for the next nine years, many Americans already had set their sights all the way to the Pacific. Boston attorney Richard Henry Dana Jr., who as a young man visited Mexican California as crewman on a hide-and-tallow ship, wrote with undisguised contempt of what is considered the indolence of the local Spanish-Mexican population. "In the hands of an enterprising people, what a country this might be!" he trumpeted. Yet he tempered his enthusiasm with the fear that if Americans attempted to develop the country, prolonged exposure to the locals would cause them to be equally "lazy." (19) Although he did not invoke God or the virtues of New England Protestantism in this specific passage, they do appear many places elsewhere in the book and the implication is clear. Dana's published account of his voyage created new interest in California, along with the view that its resources essentially were of no benefit to anyone as long as it remained under Mexico. (20)

Attractive though it was, Texas seemingly placed the United States in an awkward situation, as did Oregon, which was in the process of being colonized by New Englanders. Mexico repudiated the Treaty of Velasco, which recognized the independence of Texas, and proclaimed the country to be a province in rebellion. Control of Oregon was contested by Great Britain. California cut off access to the Pacific, and Britain controlled all of Canada. Heightening the sense of national paranoia, a financially strapped Texas, having been rebuffed in its initial effort at annexation to the United States, began cultivating closer ties with Great Britain and France, including financial assistance. Many Americans had a very real fear of encirclement, whether or not this fear had any basis in fact. (21)

The fear was stated by President James K. Polk, in his inaugural address on March 2, 1845. "None can fail to see the danger to our safety and future peace if Texas remains an independent state or becomes an ally or dependency of some foreign nation stronger than herself," Polk declared. As for Oregon, he said, "Our title to the country of the Oregon is 'clear and unquestionable,' and already our people are preparing to perfect that title by occupying it with their wives and children." (22)

Polk's words were echoed four months later in an editorial in the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, which accused Great Britain and France of "the avowed object of thwarting our policy and hampering our power, limiting our greatness and checking the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions." (23) Part of this was retrospective, because the United States and Texas already were finalizing negotiations for annexation. Oregon, however, remained disputed, and on December 27, 1845, the *New York Morning News* picked up the refrain, demanding that country "by the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and possess the whole of the continent." (24) American expansionism now was clearly defined, and had a name--Manifest Destiny.

The Oregon question ultimately was settled amicably, but the problem of Texas and the region that ultimately became the American Southwest and State of California could only be resolved by war. The war itself was unintentional, at least on the part of the United States. In an attitude that in some ways presaged Woodrow Wilson (and they both were devout Presbyterians with a firm belief in the

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righteousness of their causes), President Polk believed that territorial ambitions could be realized without war. At best, Mexico's hold on New Mexico and California was tenuous. The Americans already made up the middle class in California, and American settlers, businessmen, and adventurers were pouring into New Mexico. With patience, the United States would have acquired them by numbers, and by Mexico's basic political instability. But Polk was impatient. He had campaigned on expansion, and he had to deliver. He assumed the Mexicans would be logical and realize the hopelessness of their position. But just as Wilson would be caught up in events he did not understand and were beyond his control, so Polk failed to realize that the ordinary Mexican would resent any effort to carve up his country, regardless of he thought of his own leaders, and would fight desperately to prevent it. (25)

The Mexican War of 1846-48 unleashed all of the old prejudices inherited from Great Britain, as well as homegrown grievances generated by the Americans' own culture. The Black Legend exercised its evil influence, the odium of Spain, Inquisition, and Armada being transferred to Spain's successors in Mexico. Religion became a critical factor that only heightened the animosity. Although the United States Regular Army contained a substantial number of Roman Catholics, the vast majority of the troops serving in Mexico were members of State Volunteer units. The Volunteers were overwhelmingly Protestant, viewing Roman Catholicism as corrupt and idolatrous. Abuse of Roman Catholic citizens and clergy, and the desecration of churches in the occupied territories were commonplace. Even President Polk's innocuous appointment of two Jesuits to serve as chaplains to Roman Catholic soldiers was taken by many as a personal affront. "The idea of associating our government with any seat of the church especially one of the most despotic and monarchistic; I regard as encroaching on our Constitutional liberty," one Ohio Volunteer commented in his diary. The fact that most Mexicans tended to be darker featured reinforced the belief that they were, perhaps, a lesser people, perhaps even the accursed descendants of Cain. (26) The impact of the Mexican War would last until the present day, and would set the standard for U.S. relations with Latin America that was at times paternalistic and interventionist.

The Civil War was a turning point in American history. The federal victory freed the government from the secular concerns that previously had hampered internal development, and allowed rapid expansion and occupation of regions, that until then, had been American more in name than in fact. The development of the interior would preoccupy the federal government for the next twenty-five years, and created new problems with the large, militant Indian tribes of the Great Plains. Heretofore, the dispute had been about transit: large numbers of emigrants disrupting the Indian way of life by traveling through their territory en route to California, Nevada, and Oregon. The post-war era, however, brought accelerated development to the plains themselves, with settlers and Indians vying for the same land. The problem was exacerbated by massive corruption in the federal government's Indian Bureau. These two conditions, together with the warrior tradition of the plains, led to raids by Indians and retaliation by the military.

With the end of slavery, various religious and reform groups turned their attention from abolition to Indian improvement. One of these was the Orthodox Society of Friends, which appointed a committee to study the problem. In December 1868, the Friends Committee petitioned congress to give it jurisdiction over the agencies of the Indian Territory (modern Oklahoma). They found an ally in General U.S. Grant, who assumed the presidency on March 2, 1869.

Grant was equally concerned about corruption. Initially, he took advantage of reductions in the army to appoint demobilized officers to replace politically appointed Indian agents. The, however, was unacceptable to congress, which viewed agency appointments as part of its patronage. Accordingly, it passed a law vacating the commission of any army officer who accepted a civilian post. Grant responded by accepting and expanding the Quaker recommendation. The various superintendencies were divided among the Quakers, Methodists, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Presbyterians and other denominations.

The theory behind the Quaker proposal was that William Penn's honest dealings with the Pennsylvania

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tribes had maintained peace in the white settlements there. They believed that a pacific approach to the plains tribes would lead to peace by example. (27) Unfortunately, the policy was successful mainly among the tribes that already were peaceful and friendly toward the federal government. In the Indian Territory, Dakotas, and Wyoming, where the conflicts were ongoing and the tribes more militant, the religious agents were unable to prevent the Red River War of 1874-75, or the Great Sioux War of 1876-77, which led to these reservations being put under military rule. The religious continued to operate the agencies among the peaceful tribes until the civil service reforms of the late 1870s and early 1880s allowed the appointment of qualified civil agents.

If the United States did not concern itself to a large degree with European or African affairs during the nineteenth century, it was heavily involved in East Asia and the Pacific. Indeed, one of the unstated goals of manifest destiny and control of the West Coast was to obtain more convenient access to the markets beyond. The initial interest may have been commercial, but religion soon became an equally influential factor. A case in point is the Hawaiian Islands. Although Hawaii had been a stopover for whalers from the beginning of the nineteenth century, the most profound American impact came with the arrival of American missionaries in the 1820s. They quickly established themselves as key factors in island government, economy and society. Samuel L. Clemens, better known as Mark Twain, visited Hawaii in 1866, and observed the impact in Honolulu, which he called a "notable missionary, whaling and governmental centre." He noted that in earlier times, Saturday had been a "grand gala" with the country people coming into town, and everyone enjoying a day off with dancing and celebrating.

"This weekly stampede of the native interfered too much with labor and the interests of the white folks," Twain wrote, "and by sticking in a law here, and a preaching a sermon there, and by various other means, they gradually broke it up" even to the point of banning the hula. He grudgingly acknowledged that missionary schools had made the Hawaiians almost universally literate, but lamented that they were paying the penalty with a loss of their culture, and perhaps even their own extinction. (28)

American involvement in the Pacific became irrevocable with the Spanish American War and the annexation of Hawaii in 1898. Besides Puerto Rico and--temporarily--Cuba in the Western Hemisphere, the United States also acquired Guam and the Philippines. Cuba had been a sore point between the United States and Spain for more than forty years; eventually it was given nominal independence although in fact it remained a protectorate until 1959. The reason for acquiring Puerto Rico was quite simple; it guarded the approaches to the soon-to-be-built Panama Canal. The annexation of Hawaii, the seizure of the Philippines, and efforts to stamp out Filipino resistance were based on a three-legged rationale of missionary zeal, economic interest, and military necessity, the latter being in part due to fear that if the United States did not occupy these island groups, Japan would. This overseas expansion also helped resolve a national identity crisis that had set in about 1890, when the frontier was declared officially closed, and the American people needed a new sense of purpose. Manifest Destiny simply expanded beyond the seas. As President Theodore Roosevelt commented in 1905, "Our future history will be more determined by our position on the Pacific facing China than by our position on the Atlantic facing Europe." (29)

It was in China, perhaps, that the religious influence on U.S. government policy was most profound and long-lasting. Historian Barbara Tuchman, who spent several years as a correspondent in China in the 1930s, wrote, "China's vastness excited the missionary impulse; it appeared as the land of the future whose masses, when converted, offered promise of Christian and even English-speaking dominion of the world." The missionaries were uninterested in the Chinese social and ethical structure that was the product of more than two thousand years of development. Instead, they wished to replace it with one that was individualistic and democratic, even if these ideas were alien to Chinese culture. Solid New Englanders of the Puritan strain, they believed the Chinese could rise above all other Asians--but only if they abandoned their heathen ways and adopted the civilizing influence of Western Christianity. The

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chaotic conditions that developed in China as the foreign spheres of influence were established convinced the missionaries that the Chinese were incapable of governing themselves without Western guidance. The effort to save the Chinese from themselves required tremendous and ongoing financial support. Consequently, the missionaries had to make a strong case, and had to be convincing. The returned missionary, describing China as a vast reservoir of potential Christians, became a feature of congregational meetings throughout the United States. (30) This was boosted by pleas from Chinese Christians themselves, some of whom converted from conviction, and others for political or economic gain.

The evangelical view of China reached its apex in the 1930s, when publishing magnate Henry Luce, born in China to American missionaries, used his vast resources to cast Chiang Kaishek as a "missionary-warlord" in the mould of a medieval Crusading knight. Luce had happy memories of his childhood in China, where he had been sheltered from the country's true squalor and misery, and on return visits as an adult, apparently developed a mental block against anything that conflicted with those memories. He was easily influenced by Chiang, who recently had converted to Christianity to please his powerful Methodist in-laws, the Soong family, as he was influenced by the Soongs themselves. The American people and their successive governments, already conditioned to unquestioning belief in their nation's destiny in China, readily accepted Luce's vision as projected through his eloquence and his magazines with their weekly circulation in the hundreds of thousands. These influences would pervade U.S. Asian policy to a disproportionate extent until 1978, when the United States withdrew formal recognition of the Nationalist government, now exiled to Taiwan, and established diplomatic relations with the Peoples Republic of China. (31)

It goes without saying that in an evangelical world, good must always have evil to guard itself against. In East Asia, the good missionaries and their fair damsel, China, found themselves threatened by the villain, Japan. In a single generation, Japan had thrust herself from a closed, medieval society to a modern industrial and military power with aspirations of making a place for herself on the world stage. By the time she participated in putting down the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, Japan had seized Korea and Formosa. In 1904 and 1905, she stunned the world with her defeat of Russia, which gave her a large portion of Manchuria. Although the war ended in a negotiated peace (Japan was exhausted, near bankruptcy, and unable to force the Russians to a decisive conclusion), it established Japan as a power to be reckoned with. To the Japanese, territorial expansion was an economic imperative. Just as Britain is an island nation of limited resources, which was forced by circumstances to secure her markets and sources of raw materials by empire building, so is Japan. Yet the emergence of an Asian nation demanding equal status and a share of the imperial spoils upset the Western powers. Not only was race a factor, but also the very real possibility that other Orientals, dominated by spheres of influence or outright colonial rule, might see the Japanese as an indication of heights to which they themselves might aspire. (32)

During the first fifty years of their association, relations between the United States and Japan were cordial. Once the Japanese had opened themselves to the outside world, Americans tended to view them as an extension of China, where they could trade, spread the Gospel, and instill the ideals of American democracy. The Japanese, in turn, viewed Americans--official and unofficial--as teachers who would lead them from feudalism to modernity. But as the United States expanded into the Pacific, and its attitude toward Japan remained condescending, the Japanese became increasingly annoyed. There comes a point when the teacher must release the student to make his own way in the world, and Japan was ready. For their part, the Americans, unaccustomed to another race standing up to the Western world and demanding treatment as an equal, considered their erstwhile student to be ungrateful and obnoxious.<sup>33</sup> China was much more to their liking.

China, meanwhile, was learning to play the game. They saw the great American weaknesses as religion and money, as exemplified by missionaries and Standard Oil, and exploited it for all it was worth. Chiang

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Kai-shek's brother-in-law, financier T.V. Soong, used his American contacts to put together a well-financed, highly-organized "China Lobby," which exercised a disproportionate influence on President Franklin D. Roosevelt and others responsible for formulating U.S. Far Eastern policy. The American people, conditioned by two generations of glowing reports from missionaries, business interests, and the inspiring, all-is-well-in-the-end China novels of Pearl S. Buck, readily accepted this vision of a Chinese Utopia, downplaying or ignoring the massacres, riots, banditry, and warlord rivalry that permeated the country. China remained a country with 700 million souls to save, and 700 million potential customers for American goods. Lost was the fact that it would be the dawn of another century before 700 million Chinese would purchase more American manufactured goods than 70 million Japanese already were buying in the 1930s. (34)

For all its involvement in Asia, the United States did not ignore its traditional sphere of influence in the Western Hemisphere, most particularly in Mexico and the Caribbean Basin. Already there had been a showdown with Great Britain over a boundary dispute between British Guiana and Venezuela. Here, however, there were critical interests at stake. As the United States prepared to construct an inter-ocean canal cross Panama, the need to safeguard the Caribbean from outside interference was all the more acute. Although it is fashionable now among the nations of that region to blame the United States for their problems, much of the trouble that ultimately required American intervention was self-inflicted. Years of unpaid foreign debt by irresponsible governments, together with destruction of foreign property and loss of life in the interminable revolutions had worn down the patience of the European powers. The threat of intervention was real, Great Britain, Germany and Italy already having blockaded Venezuela to force payment of defaulted loans.

In his annual message to congress in 1904, Theodore Roosevelt wrote: Chronic wrongdoing, or any impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power. (35)

This statement, known as the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, almost immediately became policy. In the two decades that followed, U.S. troops at various times intervened in Haiti, Santo Domingo, and Nicaragua to restore order. The corollary was applied again as late as 1965, when a bilateral force of U.S. and Brazilian troops intervened in Santo Domingo, as well as the interventions by Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush in Grenada and Panama, respectively.

There is no question that Woodrow Wilson is the father of modern American foreign policy, but Theodore Roosevelt engineered the genetics. For although Roosevelt's foreign policy generally is remembered in terms of Latin America, it also paved the way for future activities beyond the erstwhile protective oceans. This became evident in the Algeciras Conference of 1906, convened to settle a dispute between France and Germany over Morocco, and to which the United States was invited. While the official role was that of observer, Roosevelt privately instructed the American representative, Henry White, to quietly make certain the balance of power in Europe was maintained, and that the Germans received no particular advantage. (36) Roosevelt realized that in the modern world, conflicts originating in Europe might have global results, but this actually had been a given during the previous four centuries of colonial rule, when colonies changed flags because of wars half a world away. More to the point in this dawning awareness was Henry Cabot Lodge's assertion in defense of Roosevelt, that the United States always had exerted all its moral influence for the sake of world peace. (37)

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Beginning with the Wilson administration, the United States abandoned the time-honored policy of de facto recognition, in favor of the moral validity of the government in question. The son of a Presbyterian minister, and imbued with a Calvinist worldview that would have done the Puritans proud, Woodrow Wilson did a 180-degree about face, making morality the key issue of whether a government deserved American friendship or support. Just as a person should try to transcend sin, he felt nations should try and transcend traditional self-interest in favor of a better world for all. "The idea of America," he said, "is to serve humanity." (38) The emphasis on morality--real or "lesser of evils"--has carried on ever since, reaching the heights of absurdity under Jimmy Carter, and nearly so under George W. Bush. (39)

The first test of Wilson's policy came with the Mexican Revolution, on-going at the time he took office. In 1911, the 30-odd-year dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz collapsed, and his idealistic rival, Francisco I. Madero, assumed a provisional presidency. Madero, unfortunately for the nation and himself, chose ideals over the immediate needs of the nation. Rather than consolidate his power and restore the country to a stable footing, he spent six months campaigning to legitimize himself in a truly free election. Meanwhile, Mexico descended deeper into chaos. In February 1913, one month before Wilson took office, General Victoriano Huerta staged a coup. Madero and his vice-president were murdered, as was anyone else who showed any indication of opposing the regime. (40)

Throughout the spring and summer of 1913, Wilson wavered over the situation. Meanwhile opposition grew, fighting spread, and the Mexican Congress formed a solid front against Huerta. Ultimately, Huerta dissolved Congress; 110 members of the Chamber of Deputies were imprisoned. Others were made to disappear. Huerta now was a military dictator. An offer by Wilson to mediate was rejected on all sides. Quite simply, no one trusted him, and his "teacher-pupil" attitude toward the Mexicans--collectively among the most nationalistic people on earth--did nothing to enhance his image. Frustrated, Wilson is supposed to have said, "I will go down there and make them elect good men!" (41) Recognition of the Huerta government was now out of the question.

Wilson's efforts failed because he did not understand Mexican nationalism. Far from being welcomed as a savior, he was rejected as a meddler. Subsequent American military and naval interventions--in Tampico, Veracruz, and Chihuahua--infuriated all the Mexican factions, and permanently negated any influence the United States hoped to wield. Unable to accept his own inadequacies, he blamed Huerta's continuation in power on the connivance to European economic interests, particularly those of Great Britain. Ironically, events in Europe combined with Mexican hostility to force the United States to devote most of its attention to Europe.

The events leading up to the American entry into the First World War, and the often disgraceful conduct of the war, where morality and patriotism were allowed to trample over both Constitution and military expediency, are too well known to cover again here. Instead, Wilson's approach to peace must be examined for its long-term impact on American policy.

By late 1917, Wilson was becoming an anachronism. His moral and intellectual values, permanently locked in during the 19th century, were no longer applicable to the modern world. His position required him to confront events that, as time passed, were increasingly beyond his comprehension. His Fourteen Points, an idealistic view accepted by the Germans as the basis for the armistice, were less acceptable to the Allies. And his notion of "peace without victors" was totally unacceptable. France had lost what amounted to an entire generation, and was beside herself with grief. Great Britain, besides losses and four years of public privation, was nearly bankrupt. Italy, having been lured from the Central Powers to the Allies by secret agreements giving her more or less a free hand on the eastern shore of the Adriatic, expected payment in full. At home, the 1918 elections had brought the Republicans into power

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in both houses of Congress. Their vision of peace was far more realistic than the president's, and contained very few of his ideals. His pronouncements became increasingly shrill. The war, he contended, had been won by ideals, and ideals alone. A great moral force was stirring throughout the world, and anyone who stood against it would go down in disgrace. The Allies disagreed, and ultimately, so did Congress and citizenry. In the words of Wilson biographer John Morton Blum, "The pace, already faltering, was broken. The President went one way, his Congress, his constituency, indeed his world, another, until he stood at last alone." (42)

Two goals, self-determination of peoples, and a League of Nations, were foremost in his mind. Although the great colonial powers rejected the former out of hand, they nevertheless had to yield following a second great war made their empires untenable. And ultimately it became more or less American official policy, albeit subject to many conditions. The second goal, the League of Nations, was one idea the Allies accepted, but ironically Congress did not. Based on the notion of collective security, it flew in the face of the Monroe Doctrine's "hands-off approach and essentially committed the United States to intervene wherever the League thought necessary. Congress thought differently and rejected the treaty out of hand. Yet internationalism and collective security did ultimately enter the American mindset and become national policy, particularly after the United States became the main instigator and supporter of the League's successor, the United Nations. Gone was the long-held policy of avoiding "entangling alliances," replaced by treaty organizations of nations bound together by common interest. Finally, separate from the League but not from Wilson's character, the moral validity of a foreign government also influences policy, rather than the fact that the government is in power. The United States did not recognize the Soviet Union until 1934 or the Peoples Republic of China until 1978, and has not maintained formal diplomatic relations with Cuba for more than fifty years. It is one of the great ironies of history that Woodrow Wilson's views have prevailed, in spirit at least in the United States, and increasingly in actual practice among the Western European states, and to some extent in South America.

Since the end of the First World War, U.S. expansionism has been centered on prestige and influence (often cited as "moral"), and economics, rather than territory. For better or worse, the movement accelerated after the Second World War. The Philippines and various trust territories in the Pacific were given their independence, and the Canal Zone was turned over to Panama. Pressure was brought on Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium to divest themselves of their colonies, League of Nations mandates, and protectorates. All this has been done in the Wilsonian-Rooseveltian spirit of "self-determination." Yet with the onset of the Cold War, self-determination often became awkward, when an established nation or a newly independent former colony adopted a government or system at odds with our own. Certainly, this was frequently done by takeover, but frequently also it was mandated by a free electorate. Thus there were interventions to retain, reinstate, or establish unpopular governments in nations as diverse as Greece, Chile, Guatemala, South Vietnam, and Iran, generally under the justification of containing communism, or even socialism.

Neutrality also had a bitter taste. Independence could be traumatic, particularly in ethnically and/or socially diverse nations such as India and Indonesia. To allow themselves time to establish stability, they opted for neutrality, rather than alignment with either side in the Cold War. Completely forgetting that Washington and Jefferson had set the United States on the same course for the same reasons, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles called non-aligned nations "immoral," a comment that was long-remembered in these countries, and did little to endear the United States in the eyes of their leaders.

All too often, during the Cold War and subsequent eras, the United States has looked at its own history and drawn the wrong conclusions. Its colonial history was shaped by permanent settlers who displaced the native population, rather than empire builders who ruled over the natives. The relationship with Great Britain was largely one of benign neglect, rather than exploitation. Given those circumstances, and guided by the principles of the Enlightenment, independence represented a transition rather than a disruption.

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Consequently, American policy makers have become convinced that the world only needs our inspirational guidance and all will be well, even as the Americans move into a world where the Enlightenment is alien and little understood. "Nation building" has replaced "big stick" and "manifest destiny" as a statement of policy, as the United States has attempted to turn various peoples into replicated Americans. Lost in the rhetoric is the reality that if those peoples cannot build their own nations without American tutelage, it is highly unlikely they can administer their own nations once the Americans leave. (43)

Joseph Grew, a career diplomat who served as ambassador to Japan from 1932 until the attack on Pearl Harbor, foresaw the problem when he advised the State Department:

We should not lose sight of the fact, deplorable but true, that no practical and effective code of international morality upon which the world can rely has yet been discovered, and that the standards of morality of one nation in given circumstances have little or no relation to the standards of the individuals of the nations in question. To shape our foreign policy on the unsound theory that other nations are guided and bound by our present standards of international ethics would be to court sure disaster. (44)

Unfortunately, the same conditions prevail today, determined and well-meaning efforts notwithstanding. Neither the United States, nor any other Western nation has managed to accept this reality. (45)

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(1) Deetz and Deetz, *Times of Their Lives*, 35.

(2) Cited in Hoff, *Faustian Foreign Policy*, 3.

(3) Nash, *Race, Class, and Politics*, 48, quote on 43.

(4) Murdock, "Puritan Legacy," 260; Wecter, "Pilgrim Fathers," 253-55.

(5) Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 25.

(6) Qtd. in Schlatter, "The Puritan Strain," 16.

(7) Edwards, "Paradise in America," 161.

(8) Powell, *Tree of Hate*, 33.

(9) Jordan, *White Over Black*, 27.

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- (10) Nash, *Flare, Class, and Politics*, 12.
- (11) Heimert, "Puritanism, the Wilderness, and the Frontier," 176-77.
- (12) Blum, *Woodrow Wilson and the Politics of Morality*, 8-10.
- (13) Bauer, *Mexican War*, 1.
- (14) Dulles, *America's Rise*, 89.
- (15) Washington, Proclamation, April 22, 1793, Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 1:149; Farewell Address, September 17, 1796, *ibid.*, 1:214.
- (16) Clary, *Eagles and Empire*, 10-12.
- (17) Hoff, *A Faustian Foreign Policy*, 24-25.
- (18) Price, *Origins of the Mexican War*, 15-25.
- (19) Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 87.
- (20) Clary, *Eagles and Empire*, 55-56.
- (21) Bauer, *Mexican War*, 2; Robinson, *Texas and the Mexican War*, 4-5; Clary, *Eagles and Empire*, 54-56.
- (22) Polk, Inaugural Address, March 2, 1845. Richardson, *Messages and Papers*, 3:2231.
- (23) *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, July-August, 1845. For many years, the expression "Manifest Destiny" was credited to John L. O'Sullivan, the magazine's publisher. Recent research, however, indicates the editorial actually was written by Jane McManus Storm, employed by O'Sullivan as one of the first woman editors in the United States. See Linda S. Hudson, *Mistress of Manifest Destiny*, Chapter 3.
- (24) Qtd. in Clary, *Eagles and Empire*, 48-49.
- (25) *Ibid.*, 452-53.
- (26) Powell, *Tree of Hale*, 118; Robinson, *Texas and the Mexican War*, 52; quote from Chance, *Mexico Under Fire*, 30.
- (27) Sherman, *Memoirs*, 926-27; Tatum, *Our Red Brothers*, 23-24. In modern times such an arrangement would be considered blatantly unconstitutional. However, the First Amendment was interpreted much more strictly in the nineteenth century, allowing the religious and governmental communities substantial flexibility in their interactions.
- (28) Twain, *Roughing It*, All.
- (29) Hoff, *A Faustian Foreign Policy*, 30-31; Dulles, *America's Rise to World Power*, 46-47; Toland, *Rising Sun*, 1:5859n; Roosevelt qtd. in Tuchman, *Stillwell and the American Experience in China*, 34

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- (30) Seagrave, Soong Dynasty, 5; Tuchman, Stillwell and the American Experience, 31-32.
- (31) Seagrave, Soong Dynasty, 310-15.
- (32) Toland, Rising Sun, 1:8-9, 69-1, 69n, 70n.
- (33) Ibid., 1:68-69.
- (34) Ibid., 1:86n; Tuchman, Stillwell and the American Experience in China, 31.
- (35) Roosevelt, Annual Message, December 6, 1904, Richardson. Messages and Papers, 10:7053.
- (36) Dulles, America's Rise to World Power, 77-78.
- (37) "Ibid., 78-79.
- (38) Ibid., 87-88, quote, 88; Haley, Revolution and Intervention, 4.
- (39) There is no question that Carter's successor, Ronald Reagan, also was a moralist. In Carter's case, however, the morality was based on platitudes and often sounded affected. His more or less acceptance of the Iron Curtain as permanent brought even less credibility. Reagan made certain that the world knew that his moral views were backed by military strength, and his determination to bring substantive and self-induced change into the communist world give him a validity that Carter has never achieved.
- (40) Wilson's role in the Mexican Revolution is discussed in P. Edward Haley, Revolution and Intervention, from which all this information is taken.
- (41) This statement, or others almost identical, are found in almost every work on Wilson and Latin America. Most often it is applied to Mexico, but sometimes to Haiti. I have not been able to locate the original source, so it may be apocryphal. Nevertheless, it is totally in character.
- (42) Quote from Blum, Woodrow Wilson and the Politics of Morality, 159. The material in this section is drawn from Blum, and Thomas J. Knox, To End All Wars.
- (43) A classic example is the Philippines, where the United States had thirty-nine years as an outright colonial power to mandate its form of government and prepare it for independence, and which has consistently failed to live up to American expectations.
- (44) Qtd. in Toland, Rising Sun, 1:71n
- (45) It might be argued that France would be the exception among Western nations, French policy almost always being dictated by its own best interests. The makes acceptance of actual conditions more expedient and less traumatizing to French policy makers and to the French public as a whole.
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