



**NATIONAL SECURITY  
AND CORE VALUES  
IN AMERICAN HISTORY**

**WILLIAM O.  
WALKER III**

**CAMBRIDGE**

**CAMBRIDGE**

[www.cambridge.org/9780521518598](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521518598)

This page intentionally left blank

## National Security and Core Values in American History

There is no book quite like *National Security and Core Values in American History*. Drawing on themes from the whole of the nation's past, William O. Walker III presents a new interpretation of the history of American exceptionalism; that is, of the basic values and liberties that have given the United States its very identity. He argues that a political economy of expansion and the quest for security led American leaders after 1890 to equate prosperity and safety with global engagement. In so doing, they developed and clung to what Walker calls the "security ethos."

Expressed in successive grand strategies – Wilsonian internationalism, global containment, and strategic globalism – the security ethos ultimately damaged the values citizens cherish most and impaired popular participation in public affairs. Most important, it led to the abuse of executive authority after September 11, 2001, by the administration of President George W. Bush.

William O. Walker III has taught at California State University, Sacramento; Ohio Wesleyan University; Florida International University; and the University of Toronto. He lives in Houston, Texas. Walker is the author of *Drug Control in the Americas* (1981, revised edition 1989) and *Opium and Foreign Policy: The Anglo-American Search for Order in Asia, 1912–1954* (1991). He has also edited or co-edited several books, including *Drugs in the Western Hemisphere: An Odyssey of Cultures in Conflict* (1996), and his articles have appeared in *Pacific Historical Review*, the *Journal of American History*, *Diplomatic History*, and *NACLA Report on the Americas*.



# National Security and Core Values in American History

WILLIAM O. WALKER III



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521518598](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521518598)

© William O. Walker III 2009

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provision of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published in print format 2007

ISBN-13 978-0-511-53077-7 eBook (Adobe Reader)

ISBN-13 978-0-521-51859-8 hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-74010-4 paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of urls for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

*To the memory of  
Charles A. Beard  
and  
William Appleman Williams  
and for  
Joan Hoff  
Students of history, practitioners of civic virtue*

The leaders of the New World Order would seem to be married to Fear . . . As a result they become unfamiliar with reality, whilst continuing to dream about, and of course to exercise, power.

John Berger, *Hold Everything Dear*



# Contents

<i>Preface and Acknowledgments</i>	page ix
Introduction: “A City upon a Hill”	I
PART ONE: THE ORIGINS OF THE SECURITY ETHOS, 1688–1919	
1 Commerce, Expansion, and Republican Virtue	13
2 The First National Security State	45
PART TWO: INTERNATIONALISM AND CONTAINMENT, 1919–1973	
3 The Postwar Era and American Values	75
4 The Construction of Global Containment	102
5 Civic Virtue in Richard Nixon’s America	131
PART THREE: THE AGE OF STRATEGIC GLOBALISM, 1973–2001	
6 Core Values and Strategic Globalism through 1988	167
7 The False Promise of a New World Order	203
8 Globalization and Militarism	227
PART FOUR: THE BUSH DOCTRINE	
9 The War on Terror and Core Values	259
Conclusion: The Security Ethos and Civic Virtue	293
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	309
<i>Index</i>	323



## Preface and Acknowledgments

I unknowingly began this book many years ago as an undergraduate at Ohio State University after reading *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1962) by William Appleman Williams; I continued it as a graduate student when the United States was still deeply involved in Vietnam and I read *Twelve against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists of 1898–1900* (1968) by Robert L. Beisner. Williams's book, whatever its shortcomings, and they are few, remains the seminal study of the foreign policy of the United States as a world power. *Tragedy* emphasizes the existence of a coherent worldview among policymakers and demonstrates that such a perspective fundamentally derives from an economic base. The conduct of American diplomacy has therefore served to protect and advance a market-based political economy. Beisner's book, by recreating the fears and anxieties of the anti-imperialists of the late nineteenth century, helped me understand that a republic, let alone a democracy, was only as strong as those who would defend its basic values against what Walter Millis, in his classic 1931 account of the war with Spain, called "the martial spirit."<sup>1</sup> Both the Williams and Beisner studies broached what then became for me the crucial, troubling question: Could the American republic truly exist as an imperial power?<sup>2</sup>

In search of an answer, this book asks whether the demands of national security undermine the integrity of liberty and weaken, perhaps irreparably, the values associated with it. The dependence of liberty on security policy became a matter of intense public debate in the late 1890s as the

<sup>1</sup> Walter Millis, *The Martial Spirit: A Study of Our War with Spain* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1931).

<sup>2</sup> William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 2d rev. and enlarged ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1972); Robert L. Beisner, *Twelve against Empire: The Anti-Imperialists, 1898–1900* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968). My introduction to Williams came with the 1962 edition of his book, first published in 1959.

United States engaged in its first imperial exploits outside the boundaries of North America. Symbolically arrayed on the opposite sides of the issue were two of the more formidable personalities of the day: the arch-expansionist Theodore Roosevelt and the avowed anti-imperialist Mark Twain. At the center of that heated struggle over empire was the question of how, or perhaps whether, traditional American values fit into a modernizing society that was increasingly global in its material ambitions. The emergence at that time of a novel, ultimately ingrained way of thinking about security – herein termed an ethos – among authorities and, increasingly, a public attuned to international affairs gave the question its vitality. Within two generations, this security ethos was taking precedence over individual rights and liberties whenever real or perceived threats to the nation appeared.<sup>3</sup> The extent to which American distinctiveness – cast throughout the nation’s history as “American exceptionalism” – did or did not survive these various crises into the twenty-first century is an underlying concern of my study.

From the outset of my career, I realized that it was impossible for the United States to revert to a time when it was not yet a world power. Could it retain its distinctiveness if it continued acting as an imperial state as it was then doing in Southeast Asia and Latin America? For some years thereafter, other subjects of inquiry held my immediate interest, even though I viewed them as windows on larger matters of U.S. foreign relations and American history more generally. Finally, after reading Michael J. Hogan’s *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945–1954* (1998) and reviewing for publication the second edition of Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson, eds., *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* (2005), I knew it was time to grapple with the questions I had earlier pondered.<sup>4</sup> In addition to Williams’s *Tragedy*, another book examining the roots of modern American foreign policy that has influenced my thinking is Michael H. Hunt’s *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (1987).<sup>5</sup> Hunt presents a typology identifying a national mission to promote liberty, the conundrum of race as a factor in the making of foreign policy, and a profound aversion to revolution as the most crucial determinants of policy. He has recently explored America’s swift rise to global dominance, hegemony rather than empire in his telling, finding that a “union of wealth, confidence, and leadership provides the basis for sustained international

<sup>3</sup> Influential for framing the idea of a security ethos was Richard J. Barnett, *Roots of War: The Men and Institutions behind U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Atheneum, 1972); Barnett’s concern was the mindset of U.S. policymakers in the early Cold War.

<sup>4</sup> Michael J. Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945–1954* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson, eds., *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 2d. ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

success.”<sup>6</sup> The present study is meant to be something of a complement to those of Hunt and Williams.

It is my contention that too many books concerning the early Cold War and U.S. foreign relations suffer from a debilitating liability: They are surprisingly ahistorical in both concept and exposition.<sup>7</sup> According to these books, the world and thus history, too, essentially began anew after World War II. As a result, an emphasis on state-to-state relations trumps other plausible ways of conceptualizing and writing history. That is, I submit, like calling oneself a geologist without examining anything more revealing than topographical maps; one has a general idea about what the earth looks like, but knows scarcely anything about its complex subsoil composition. The past therefore nearly becomes anathema to the present, in this case to informed scrutiny of the roots of American foreign policy.

A number of questions lie at the heart of my critique of Cold War scholarship and its uneasy relationship with the past. Could modern history be understood only through a so-called realist lens focused on a presumptive Soviet challenge to American national interests? What precisely were those interests? Had they sprung from nothing? Or did U.S. policy reflect the contours of American history, to borrow a phrase from Williams?<sup>8</sup> Melvyn P. Leffler, some of whose work I have criticized, has written that the Truman administration formulated national security policy with an eye to protecting America’s core values.<sup>9</sup> How could it be otherwise if the study of history is to have any utility for an informed citizenry? Yet, what were those values or principles? In his superb book about Soviet-American relations, *For the Soul of Mankind* (2007), Leffler with little elaboration identifies them as “liberty, individual opportunity, and free enterprise.”<sup>10</sup> How had they influenced the shaping of the national interest throughout history? And in that process, did American core values remain intact? About those questions, Leffler, Hogan to an extent, and other leading American scholars of the period commonly referred to as the Cold War, including John Lewis Gaddis

<sup>6</sup> Michael H. Hunt, *The American Ascendancy: How the United States Gained and Wielded Global Dominance* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007). For a postmodern perspective on America’s global presence, see Walter Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy: National Identity and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

<sup>7</sup> My thoughts about this issue are similar to those of Michael H. Hunt, “Ideology,” in Hogan and Paterson, eds., *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 221–40.

<sup>8</sup> William Appleman Williams, *The Contours of American History*, paper ed. (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1966).

<sup>9</sup> Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); William O. Walker III, “Melvyn P. Leffler, Ideology, and American Foreign Policy,” *Diplomatic History* 20 (Fall 1996): 663–73.

<sup>10</sup> Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 39.

(with partial exception in *The Cold War: A New History* [2005]), Bruce Cumings, Carolyn Eisenberg, and Walter LaFeber, remain essentially silent.<sup>11</sup> A curious example of this genre is Wilson D. Miscamble's *From Roosevelt to Truman: Potsdam, Hiroshima, and the Cold War* (2006). Miscamble, a native of Australia, mentions core values in passing while contending that Harry Truman was hamstrung by both the untrustworthy Soviets and his predecessor's naïveté.<sup>12</sup>

One cogent exception to this general pattern, written by a non-American, is Odd Arne Westad's prize-winning volume, *The Global Cold War* (2005).<sup>13</sup> Westad's notable contribution to historiography of the Cold War is his locating in Soviet-American rivalry an unbridgeable divide about what it means to be modern. That is, should modernity for the Third World – a lamentably inelegant and demeaning appellation – in the post-1945 period emanate from America's Jeffersonian empire of liberty or what he calls the Soviet empire of justice? Values nourished in American history and spawned by the Bolshevik experiment are reflected in the antithetical imperial pretensions at play in the global struggle Westad describes. Whereas Westad implicitly addresses the problem that ethical behavior and values pose for the making of foreign policy, Joan Hoff places the matter at the center of her analysis in *A Faustian Foreign Policy from Woodrow Wilson to George W. Bush: Dreams of Perfectibility* (2008).<sup>14</sup> Hoff writes that “the United States was born in a fit of self-determination.” That did not necessarily make for a responsible foreign policy. She briefly surveys American diplomacy since independence, noting that the fact of “[s]elf-determined, but not necessarily democratic, self-government . . . lay at the heart of its . . . drive to become the example for how the rest of the world should operate.”<sup>15</sup> Woodrow Wilson transformed the ideal of self-determination into a universal guiding principle in foreign policy. Whether it actually fostered democracy was another matter.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); idem, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005); Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945–2006*, 10th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2007); Bruce Cumings, *Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 1: *Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945–1947* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Carolyn Eisenberg, *Drawing the Line: The American Decision to Divide Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>12</sup> Wilson D. Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman: Potsdam, Hiroshima, and the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>14</sup> Joan Hoff, *A Faustian Foreign Policy from Woodrow Wilson to George W. Bush: Dreams of Perfectibility* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>16</sup> Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

My rather disappointing encounter with Cold War scholarship has led me to pose the questions asked previously and raise others about values, interests, and American history that inform this study: What, for instance, has been the relationship between American core values and U.S. security policy? Did the republic, in becoming an imperial power in the 1890s, retain a capacity to protect the principles that made it distinctive commencing in the colonial era? Did the many individuals who presided over the growth of America's global power incorporate core values into their understanding of the nation's security? Can basic values, rights, and liberties, having been compromised in the name of security throughout modern American history, endure in the twenty-first century? Finding answers for these questions traces back to the colonial era.

A project of this scope, particularly one so long in the making, owes a lot to many people – some for their inspiration, others for the assistance they gave in a variety of ways. At Cambridge University Press, Lew Bateman, with whom I have worked for years, and especially Eric Crahan and Emily Spangler, who saw the book to publication, were marvelous editors. I thank, too, the readers for the Press; their splendid efforts helped make the book what it now is.

There are many others to thank. Father Robert Luchi showed me in high school at St. Charles in Columbus, Ohio, how passionate the study of history could be. At Ohio State University, no one was more helpful than John C. Rule; with a few kind words, he rescued me from law school. I would never have studied American foreign relations were it not for David Green and Marvin Zahniser. To this day, I recall with fondness the long conversations about history and the state of the world with Mark Rose and Mel Leffler. And thanks to Marvin, I did my doctoral work with Alexander DeConde at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Alex always supported the breadth of my interests, and I deeply thank him for that.

I was fortunate to have a somewhat peripatetic career. At California State University, Sacramento, one of the first persons I met was the now-eminent historian of the American West, Al Hurtado, then an MA student. At Rancho Ben Ali, in Rio Linda, or on camping trips high in the Sierra mountains, we talked endlessly about history. Those conversations continue to this day. Working as one of two American historians for sixteen years at Ohio Wesleyan University allowed me to continue to read and teach broadly as my research became more specialized. Two of my students there, Bob Buzzanco and Peter Hahn, were a joy to work with; they have my admiration for the ways in which they took on the study of history as their life's work. In my time at Florida International University in Miami, we had a marvelous, young department. The hours spent talking history and politics with Alex Lichtenstein and Clarence Taylor influenced portions of this book. At the University of Toronto, I would not have had the rewarding teaching experiences I did without the efforts of Bob Bothwell, Carol Chin,

and Ron Pruessen. To thank them is not sufficient, though it will have to do. Also, *abrazos* for my “brothers,” Rick Halpern and Ken Mills; what a time we had. Thanks to Bill Colgate and Joan Bendon, Cam and Lana MacInnes, Stephen Bright, Joe Gaitanis, Bruce Moffet, and Shiraz Tayyeb. What great sounds: the paradise of Saturday afternoons at the Dominion. You kept me sane and were nice enough to ask about the book. And a special thanks to Khris Harrold, for enduring friendship and a place to visit near the Rockies.

In writing this book, I have drawn on the work of many scholars. I thank Carol C. Chin and Jonathan Rosenberg, who provided help with several sources. For the example of their own work or the encouragement they gave this project, I thank Bruce M. Bagley, John M. Belohlavek, Robert Bothwell, Robert Buzzanco, Carol C. Chin, Frank Costigliola, Paul Gootenberg, Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, Rick Halpern, Walter Hixson, Joan Hoff, Michael J. Hogan, Michael H. Hunt, Albert L. Hurtado, Susan Kellogg, Stephanie Kelly, Walter LaFeber, Melvyn P. Leffler, Robert McMahon, Dennis Merrill, Thomas F. O’Brien, Stephen G. Rabe, Donald M. Rodgers, and Emily S. Rosenberg.

Two other groups deserve special mention. Years of reading U.S. History Advanced Placement exams were made memorable by the good times and discussions with, among others, John Belohlavek, Carol Berkin, Betty Dessants, Jim Giglio, Cheryl Greenberg, Nat Jobe, Tammie McDaniel, Mary McDuffie, Ted Morse, Linda Murdock, Berky Nelson, Lynn Rainard, Eric Rothschild, and Tom Zoumaras. Woody, Michael Woodward, knows how much our friendship and hours on hours of conversation mean to me. At the University of Toronto, a number of students in HIS 344 and TRN 410 improved the book with their love of learning, their questions, and their ideas, including Ohad Abrahami, Wendell Adjetey, Rahul Bhat, Sean Fear, Maria Felix Fernandez, Alison Jenkins, Mike Lawrence, Wynne Lawrence, Victor MacDiarmid, Steven Masson, Igor Puzevich, Stephanie J. Silverman, and Vinka Woldarsky. They were remarkable.

The dedication needs some elaboration. A fellow MA student at Ohio State introduced me to Charles Beard’s work. The more I read, the more I understood that truly being a student of history is a lifelong endeavor, in which not everyone succeeds. I met Bill Williams once, some years after he moved to Oregon. The legendary fire for teaching and public engagement still burned bright. Fortunately, as it turned out, my first job was as a temporary replacement for Joan Hoff. Her kindness then and our friendship over the years are a gift I hold dear.



# Introduction

## “A City upon a Hill”

We now have just cause to destroy [the Indians] by all means possible.

John Smith, 1622

The West has been a constructive force of the highest significance in our life.

Frederick Jackson Turner, 1896

“We shall be as a city upon a hill,” Puritan leader John Winthrop told his fellow voyagers aboard the *Arbella* in 1630 as they were preparing to land on the Massachusetts shore. Winthrop and the other Puritan saints believed that the civilized, or European, world was holding its collective breath to see whether their godly venture would succeed. What is noteworthy is that Winthrop did not concoct his prediction out of nothing. Europeans had for years persuaded themselves that the Americas truly might be a special, if not utopian, place.<sup>1</sup> Although experience altered that exotic perception of the New World, the conviction that the land across the Atlantic Ocean was a promising locale for exploration and development never really disappeared.

Winthrop’s words would later come to be seen, particularly during the twentieth century, as a declaration of exceptionalism that set England’s American colonies apart from the old European world. As historian Jack P. Greene observes, “The concept of American exceptionalism with its positive connotations was present at the very creation of America.”<sup>2</sup> In America, there would be freedom from the culture of corruption and from tyranny endemic to the English political system and religious establishment. Were their efforts at achieving reform through flight to be successful, the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay imagined themselves as offering hope to like-minded people.

<sup>1</sup> Jack P. Greene, *The Intellectual Construction of America: Exceptionalism and Identity from 1492 to 1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 8–33.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

Power in Massachusetts Bay was exercised in the pursuit of specific political and religious objectives. Within a decade of the arrival of the colonists, expansion south and west became common practice under the supervision of the General Court. The ruling bodies of new towns, some of which would soon form the colony of Connecticut, strictly controlled public affairs. Government in New England was oligarchic, yet democratic – but only for those freemen who embraced Puritanism in its different forms. To sustain the commonwealth in its mission, a local and oceanic commerce rapidly developed. In a theme that serves as a prelude to the heart of this study, landed expansion and commercial growth became crucial guardians of the basic values for which the Puritans stood, thereby anticipating to an extent one aspect of the frontier thesis of the influential historian, Frederick Jackson Turner. “The West has been a constructive force of the highest significance in our life,” Turner wrote for the *Atlantic Monthly* in his 1896 essay, “The Problem of the West.” The fundamental task for people living on the frontier, he asserted, had been that of “conserving and developing what was original and valuable in this new country.”<sup>3</sup>

Colonization outside of New England failed to create settlements that were as emblematic of future assumptions about American identity and character as those emerging from the Massachusetts Bay experience. If citizens and scholars have mainly dwelled on the endeavors of the Puritans, it is because religious overtones contained in the cultural fabric of the nation reflect a sense of providential chosenness that many Americans embrace.<sup>4</sup> The Dutch colony of New Amsterdam, which became New York in 1664 after being seized by English forces, and the Quaker colony of Pennsylvania, for all their potential as hubs of commerce and western expansion, never found a place in the public memory as progenitors of national character or a divinely inspired mission. And however central Jamestown and the growth of Virginia were to American history, the advent of slavery in 1619 limited the role Virginia would play in producing the belief that America should serve as a model for people seeking freedom from oppression. The irony is that freedom in considerable measure owes the promise it has long extended to many others to the nation’s wrenching experience with enslaved labor.<sup>5</sup>

Although it is tempting to read the future into the past, doing so has the potential to rob history of its contingency. The uniqueness of the Puritan experiment argues against the inevitability of Massachusetts Bay making common cause with England’s other North American colonies. Separatists

<sup>3</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Problem of the West,” *The Atlantic Monthly*, September, 1896, pp. 289–97; quoted words, 289, 292.

<sup>4</sup> On the central place of providential chosenness in American history, see Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995).

<sup>5</sup> Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1975).

were unflinchingly expelled from the Bay colony. And the Navigation Acts of the 1650s and 1660s – contemporaneous with England's civil wars and the Stuart Restoration – could not drive the colonies together, even though those acts curtailed the commercial freedom of action of colonies in the Chesapeake region and the West Indies, a lesson not lost on other, less affected colonies. Nevertheless, the rise of English mercantilism was a manifest success for homeland and colonies alike, with the result that the bonds of empire were greatly, if briefly, enhanced – at least in economic terms.<sup>6</sup> And yet, this development did not lead settlers soon to identify more closely with each other, let alone strengthen the real and sentimental ties with their home country.<sup>7</sup>

It took the imposition of what colonists denounced as arbitrary imperial rule, carried out under the authority given by James II to Edmund Andros and the Dominion of New England in 1685, to initiate the process by which some of them perceived important commonalities in their individual experiences. Americans also believed that their country did beckon others, as evidenced by the numbers of Europeans who reached America's shores throughout the eighteenth century, and especially after the French and Indian War.<sup>8</sup> A shared sense of history became all the more apparent in the decade immediately before the Revolution when Parliament used its power – as seen, for example in the Proclamation of 1763, the Sugar Act of 1764, the Stamp Act of 1765, the Townshend Act of 1767, and the Tea Act of 1773 – to limit colonial expansion and reassert London's economic supremacy. These developments led many Americans to rethink their identity as British subjects and increasingly to defend existing patterns of self-government, which in turn strengthened the rationale for independence.

The growth of a common identity occurred in another, less edifying and indirect way, one that foreshadowed the limits of American distinctiveness. Well into the seventeenth century, colonies protected the privileges of the founders and those who exercised political and economic power. By and large, oligarchy remained the political order of the day, yet there was usually room in the political process for those who acquired large tracts of land. The privileged also constructed legal walls to safeguard their status against challenges from disaffected, less advantaged colonists.

In the first fifty years or so after settlement, the prospects for democratic politics were at best nominal in English North America. Puritan Massachusetts and its New England offspring were only the most visible in how they sought to remain true to their original mission. The Half-Way

<sup>6</sup> Alan Taylor, *American Colonies* (New York: Viking, 2001), 257–9.

<sup>7</sup> Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Background of the American Revolution*, rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), 5–9.

<sup>8</sup> Bernard Bailyn with the assistance of Barbara DeWolfe, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986).

Covenant, begun in the 1660s, was the first indication that the Puritans could not hold back the tides of religious and, ultimately, political change.<sup>9</sup> Settlers in the Roman Catholic proprietary colony of Maryland, for their part, had to turn a profit not for the King of England, as was the case in royal colonies, but for the Calvert family. The efforts of the Calverts to reproduce a semi-feudal, manorial system in their vast realms failed. The growing attractiveness of Maryland to largely Protestant settlers, especially from Virginia, helped bring into being a colony in which political and legal structures were heavily biased in favor of the Calverts and their wealthy friends. The volatility of politics in Maryland by the mid-1600s, however, showed the reach of privilege to be long, though not absolute.<sup>10</sup>

The colonists of Virginia, originally a charter colony, owed their fealty to the English Crown after a disastrous encounter with native people in the early 1620s. Thereafter a royal colony, Virginia remained a contentious place dominated by the governor, his council, and the county courts. Abundant land seemed there for the taking, thereby enhancing the status of the privileged classes. At the same time, labor remained in short supply – an unhappy fact with two momentous consequences. Black slavery developed, albeit gradually, almost as a matter of course in Virginia and then spread throughout the Chesapeake and southern colonies. In addition, fierce disputes over land led to conflicts within Virginia, the most famous being Bacon's Rebellion, which in 1676 degenerated into a bloody civil war. Poor aspiring landowners on the colony's frontier, a number of whom had formerly been indentured servants, rejected Governor Sir William Berkeley's conservative land policies and domination of the Indian trade. Around the same time, well-connected tobacco planters claimed tracts of fertile land, leaving small or poor farmers with the prospect of becoming tenants. Nathaniel Bacon, himself a wealthy planter who coveted Indian land on the colony's frontier, promised freedom and arable land to those who fought with him against the governor and his allies. After a brief success, including Bacon's seizure of power and Berkeley's exile, England crushed the rebellion. Modest reductions in tax rates and increased access to land ensued. Virginia politics nevertheless remained foremost in service to the interests of the colony's aristocrats.<sup>11</sup>

In justifying their hold on power and privileged status before the Glorious Revolution of 1688, colonial elites anticipated how subsequent leaders would act to protect their understanding of American identity. They isolated suspected dissenters and branded them as radicals unworthy of the benefits of citizenship; they also restricted access to political power by extending patronage to their friends. And, importantly, elites depended on

<sup>9</sup> Taylor, *American Colonies*, 180–1.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 136–7, 140.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 125–31, 139–40, 149–51.

free or low-paid laborers – at least 150,000 indentured servants reached England's mainland colonies in the course of the seventeenth century – to build the very society that excluded them or lessened their opportunity for mobility.<sup>12</sup> Regeneration of privilege by social custom or political marginalization became common. If that tactic did not succeed, the powerful could fall back on the use of force against those who challenged their elevated status.

Paradoxically, the self-referential belief that America could serve as a beacon for oppressed peoples – “a shining city” as President Ronald Reagan put it – strengthened over time. It became a fundamental part of national identity in the twentieth century when, contrary to its tradition of disengagement from foreign political affairs, the United States became the world's greatest power. The relative absence of formal involvement in world politics until December 1941, excepting President Woodrow Wilson's quixotic diplomacy at the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919, did not prevent the United States from becoming supreme in global finance and dominant in international trade during the Great War. That era's incipient internationalism would be transformed into a thoroughgoing globalism on the eve of American entry into World War II.

How had so great a transformation come about? What effect did it have on that greatest of American traditions, freedom? By the twentieth century, freedom, which had been commonly referred to as liberty early in American history, symbolized what American citizens revered most. Core values, which were first given explicit expression in the Declaration of Independence and subsequently the Constitution and Bill of Rights, were more than abstract ideas. They were tangible principles about republican governance that, protected by the rule of law, offered the prospect of a common identity to all citizens, even if that identity was not truly democratic. These principles, as they emerged and evolved over time, encompassed what individual Americans deemed to be their inherent rights, including, and essential for present purposes, freedom of speech and assembly; freedom of the press; right to trial by a jury of one's peers; protection from unreasonable search and seizure, which essentially became synonymous with a right to privacy; and freedom from self-incrimination. Moreover, many citizens who were not among the ruling elite understood core values as guiding precepts that bolstered their abiding faith in democracy, however limited it actually was. It was in this sense that the popular classes shared with the privileged a preference for limited government; that is, one held in check by distinct separation of powers among three branches of government. The presumption of a common heritage turned the beacon of liberty into a powerful symbol, confirming for Americans the exceptional nature of their national

<sup>12</sup> Bernard Bailyn, *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 60–1.

experience. With some trepidation, the founding generation left to its successors the daunting task of sustaining the nation's devotion to republican principles. If the very idea of America suggested the existence of a distinctive character, that quality needed constant care and nurturing to safeguard it in an arguably hostile world. By the late nineteenth century, Americans who imagined their country in a prominent position on the world stage thought about the protection of liberty in tandem with the pursuit of security. The United States therefore selectively promoted abroad as part of its foreign policy these core values: the right of some to self-determination, the universal appeal of democracy, and the ideal of human rights. Did efforts to export core values enhance the nation's security? Critics thought not, charging especially after 1945 that values lost their salience when put in the service of grand strategy.

Providing for security had long entailed risks. John Winthrop's initial plans for the establishment of an exemplary colony never envisioned Massachusetts Bay as the harbinger of an idyllic utopia. His fabled city would metaphorically rest on a hill for good reason; it was from the vantage point of height that the Puritan community would be kept safe from its adversaries. To build a strong city upon a hill was therefore sound defensive strategy in that era of European colonization, which settlers in New England doubtless knew.<sup>13</sup> Winthrop's words embodied hopes and fears found throughout early America, even though how security would be achieved differed from colony to colony.

A common understanding of what constituted danger made freedom seem all the more uncertain almost from the first years of settlement. English colonists responded to the non-Europeans in their environs as a matter necessitating self-defense against those whom they were displacing. In viewing Indians as enemies, colonists developed a sense of entitlement about deciding whether others should live or perhaps perish because their mere presence threatened the work of the new settlers. Employing preemptive action, they also began to justify their treatment of native people as a means of forestalling the dire consequences that might accompany delay in acting decisively. Preemption, whether by legal means when possible or by military means when deemed necessary, assisted the development of colonial identity and contributed to the quest for security.<sup>14</sup>

Indians did not conceive of land as private property, nor did the exchange of goods make them proto-capitalists. Colonists abhorred these and other

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, John Childs, "The Military Revolution, I: The Transition to Modern Warfare," in Charles Townshend, ed., *The Oxford History of Modern Warfare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 20–39.

<sup>14</sup> The French also had the occasion to employ force when, for example, relations with the Natchez Indians in the lower Mississippi region turned violent; Robert Bothwell, *The Penguin History of Canada* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2006), 72–3.

presumed cultural deficiencies and distrusted the people whose lands they were seizing. The case of Powhatan, the most powerful chief in the Virginia region, and its aftermath is instructive. Powhatan tried to establish and maintain cordial trading relations with the English people. Pushed to the limit almost from the moment of Jamestown's founding, Powhatan's allies pushed back. The rapaciousness for arable land of a people in thrall to the tobacco plant meant trouble. With no middle ground separating the two sides, bloody conflict ensued in Virginia. Provocation followed on provocation until March 1622 when almost one-third of the colonists perished in an attack. John Smith, then in England, welcomed the slaughter: "We now have just cause to destroy [the Indians] by all means possible." Warfare continued intermittently and, with the help of diseases against which Indians were not immune, gradually reduced their numbers in Virginia from 24,000 in 1607 to about 2,000 sixty years later. Survivors who remained in the environs of the colony were regarded as threats to security. Colonial law in fact allowed landholders to shoot Indians who were found trespassing on their lands, an action that might be characterized as a kind of preemptive self-defense.<sup>15</sup>

Early white-Indian interactions were scarcely better in New England. William Bradford, soon to become governor of Plymouth Colony, imagined the new land to be "a hideous and desolate wilderness full of wild beasts and wild men." After settlement, he found confirmation for his views: Indians killed the livestock of settlers because their pigs and cattle ranged widely, thus destroying Indian customs of land usage. To limited effect, colonists endeavored to use legal instruments, deeds, to turn Indian land into private property. By the 1630s, the killing of livestock led to attempts to bring Indians to justice in Massachusetts for violating the property rights of white settlers. Justice remained elusive because fines levied for the offenses financed further expansion into native lands.

Tensions rose in southeastern Connecticut between settlers and the Pequot, who refused to pay tribute or submit to the white legal system. Aided by rivals of the Pequot, the English launched an attack in May 1637, killing some four hundred natives. Military and settlement leaders alike praised their God for blessing this effort. Four decades later in 1675, the Puritans provoked a confrontation with the Wampanoag Metacom, or King Philip as he was known, that lasted into the spring of 1676 when Indian resistance began to collapse. Survivors, especially chiefs, were executed and others were sold into slavery. An explanation for this brutality should focus, first, on fears the colonists had long held about the nonwhite people in the colonies and, second, on the unforeseen appeal of Indian culture in the structured Puritan world. In the words of Reverend Increase Mather, "Christians in this Land have become too like unto the Indians." Were that condition to

<sup>15</sup> Taylor, *American Colonies*, 125, 131–6; quoted words, 135.

spread, the political, religious, and economic rationales behind settlement and expansion would be jeopardized.<sup>16</sup>

Fear therefore became closely linked to the quest for freedom in early American history. To a considerable extent, the fears that European settlers experienced in their new environment were self-generated, the result of restrictive ideas about governance, the law, economic pursuits, and the Indians so close at hand. Despite its original contingency, this legacy of fear accompanying freedom in the colonial era would recur – particularly when Americans debated the need for a dynamic security policy after 1890. In the process, it became hard to distinguish between fear and nonclinical paranoia. Furthermore, a kind of apprehension has influenced the writing of history about national security. Historians are hardly immune from adopting as their own the assumptions and biases held by the individuals about whom they write. However purposeful or inadvertent that development, it is difficult to resist when thinking about the defense of cherished core values. It does not necessarily make for good history.

Three factors provide a framework for explaining the problematic nexus between basic rights and values and security policy: political economy, military power, and fear. The readiness to use preemptive force in the name of safety, whether perceived threats are imminent or not, from the earliest years of settlement and the role of fear in initiating the resort to armed force have already been addressed. Yet, there is much more to the matter of fear than its relationship to force. Fear often mobilizes people to give their support to policies of dubious provenance, such as global containment as we see later in the book, and can prevent the dispassionate assessment of presumed threats to the nation's security. The issue of political economy, particularly in regard to the structural demands of an expansive, marketplace capitalism and a reflexive attachment to foreign trade by elites and the general public, is addressed more fully in due course. Suffice it to note here that Americans typically have intimately linked commerce and freedom.

This introduction has presented a brief look not only at the origins of American exceptionalism but also at the disconcerting ways in which that distinctiveness was nurtured during the seventeenth century. Four parts comprise the remainder of the book. The first traces the origins of the security ethos, as set forth in the preface. Chapter 1, beginning after the Glorious Revolution, surveys the emergence of core values and examines how patterns of trade and continental expansion sustained those values and the Founders' commitment to republican virtue during the first century of nationhood. Regenerating the republican ideal was never an easy task. Republicanism had exclusionary aspects that the popular classes challenged with limited success throughout the 1800s. Chapter 2 revisits debates over expansion and empire in the 1890s, which lasted until about 1920, by which time a

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 188–203; quoted words, 188, 202.



proto-national security state had taken shape. By the end of World War I, the meaning of liberty had become unclear because the boundaries of individual rights, such as freedom of speech and assembly, had perceptibly narrowed from what they had been when those debates began. And, Woodrow Wilson's promise of self-determination as a consequence of war unwittingly invited discussions within America about who benefited most from the values extolled in a republic. That is, why did not basic freedoms and the right to self-determination apply equally to African Americans, to offer only the most obvious example?

Next, Part II surveys Wilsonian internationalism and its transformation into global containment. Chapter 3 considers whether Republican foreign policy during the 1920s and early years of the Great Depression protected core values from what numerous Americans believed was the contagion of internationalism. Chapter 4, which covers the 1930s and 1940s, assesses Franklin D. Roosevelt's persistent struggle to maintain his internationalist impulse amid waves of economic nationalism, the allure of isolationism, and a revival of militarism abroad. He linked America's future to global engagement without asking how that course of action might affect the nation's values. For Roosevelt, this humanistic globalism was the only viable option for the United States. The onset of the Cold War, followed by the establishment of a formal national security state during the Truman presidency, brought the integrity of founding principles into question. Chapter 5 scrutinizes the period from 1950 through 1973 – the era of Richard Nixon – and reveals an increasing incompatibility between U.S. security policy and core values like freedom of speech and assembly and also the longing for self-determination by postcolonial and oppressed peoples around the world.

Part III analyzes the age of strategic globalism, the years from 1973 to 2001, in which limits on the deployment of American power stand out as a defining characteristic. Chapter 6 examines the years encompassing Nixonian détente and the Reagan presidency and portrays them as a time in which the pursuit of presumed national interests markedly circumscribed the role of core values in deliberations over security policy. Of special importance in that respect is the intrusion of human rights considerations into the policy process. Chapters 7 and 8 then contend that American exceptionalism and the principles on which it had historically been based declined appreciably by the end of the Cold War and during the presidencies of George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton. What emerged along with globalization after the Soviet Union faded from the scene were a new militarism and a pronounced unilateralism in the conduct of foreign policy.

Finally, Part IV examines the adverse influence of the Bush Doctrine on core values. Chapter 9 assesses the damage done to values in the name of security by George W. Bush. It also evaluates how the war on terror in the Persian Gulf region and beyond begat not only a remarkable accretion of presidential powers but also a palpable rejection of the rule of law by the

executive branch. The conclusion engages the debate over the relationship between values and national security as carried on by prominent intellectuals. At length, after considering whether the government at the highest levels had fallen into the hands of right-wing authoritarians – a position put forward by John W. Dean, a White House counsel in the Nixon administration – it is no surprise to find that the war on terror in the first decade of the twenty-first century was waged by a government antithetical to individual rights and liberties. Whether there is a way out of this dilemma so as to restore some of the vitality of core values is then considered briefly.

At this juncture, several words are in order about the Second Amendment to the Constitution. The freedom that numerous Americans cherish most, the right to bear arms, looms large in the background of this study. Unlike federal courts, which have traditionally held the Second Amendment to mean a collective right to bear arms, many citizens have argued for the amendment's application as an individual right. By mid-2007, liberal lawyers and constitutional scholars were helping make the case for this broader interpretation, which the Supreme Court essentially accepted in a landmark ruling in June 2008.<sup>17</sup> To a remarkable degree, this development reflects changes in the ways Americans have thought about national security since the end of the Cold War. The paradoxical militarization of security discourse after the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, and even more so since 2001, insinuates that advocacy of almost any guise of gun control equates with tyranny and oppression and, hence, must be resisted.

Ultimately, this book is concerned with security and foreign policy. Of necessity, it also constitutes an extended essay about the course of American history. Based on the work of many other scholars and on my own research, it reflects the considerations and reconsiderations of more than three decades of thinking, teaching, and writing about the United States, especially about why and how the nation has engaged the outside world. The costs of that engagement for America's place in the world, and for the rights and liberties of its citizens, have historically been great and will remain so far into the future, as the imbroglio that is the occupation of Iraq unfortunately demonstrates. It is my intent in writing this book to provide an explanation why.

<sup>17</sup> *New York Times*, May 7, 2007 and June 27, 2008. The case is *District of Columbia v. Heller*.

PART ONE

THE ORIGINS OF THE SECURITY ETHOS, 1688–1919



## Commerce, Expansion, and Republican Virtue

Those who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety.

Benjamin Franklin, 1755

I am persuaded that no constitution was ever before so well calculated as ours for extensive empire and self government. . . . Nothing should ever be accepted which would require a navy to defend it.

Thomas Jefferson, 1809

Armed shipping must follow the peaceful vessels of commerce.

Alfred Thayer Mahan, 1890

For more than a century following the Glorious Revolution, England and France vied for mastery of European affairs and until 1763 engaged in a struggle for imperial dominance across the Atlantic. The latter contest, fought mainly in Canada and the Great Lakes region of British America, produced a level of indebtedness that London could ill afford. Believing the American colonies to be the prime beneficiaries of France's defeat in the French and Indian War in 1763, Parliament enacted several laws intended to ease Britain's financial burden. Raising revenue through either direct or indirect taxation was a crucial way of paying for the security that would be required when France was ready to do battle again, as it doubtless would be.

Unfortunately for Great Britain, the wages of empire became burdensome at a time when the idea of a common past was taking hold in its colonies south of Canada. Broad cultural similarities existed across the colonies, despite their lack of political cohesion. The Protestant ethic, a belief in hard work in service to the Almighty, became deeply rooted because opportunities for individual enrichment seemed abundant. Class differences did not vanish, although enterprising free men found ways to transcend them by dint of their "activity and industry," as the *Columbian Magazine* put it in

1787.<sup>1</sup> The prospect of a prosperous life appealed to those thousands of people who emigrated from Europe to America after about 1725. The political developments that followed from migration would help ingrain what Americans considered their distinctive identity.

A growing sense of separation and autonomy set in as colonies coped with their own need for revenue and with the demands for order and protection brought on by expansion into territory previously unsettled by whites. In *A Mighty Empire*, Marc Egnal explains the sweeping effect of self-reliance: “[I]n each colony the revolutionary movement was led by an upper-class faction whose fervent commitment to fostering America’s rise to greatness was evident well before 1763.”<sup>2</sup> Expansion reflected not simply physical movement but also the conceptual underpinning for an American empire. Alone or with their families, men poured into backcountry lands, protecting themselves with guns, and thereby continuing the practice of preemptive self-defense begun in the first years of settlement. Historian Edmund S. Morgan puts the matter concisely: “The westerner in our history has always been a man with a gun.”<sup>3</sup>

By the 1770s, the impact of recent immigration, patterns of economic growth and territorial expansion, and the exercise of power by popularly elected officials, together with the growing imposition of British authority, combined to spark a revolution while also shaping a common identity that encompassed all classes of free men and free women. Opposition to the right of Parliament to rule did more to finalize the break between the colonies and the Crown than to cause it. For present purposes, the most telling outcome of the American Revolution, after the fact of independence, was a determination to perpetuate America’s distinctiveness. The people who fought against the British and participated in the making of a federal government in 1787 at Philadelphia believed they were a chosen, indeed a virtuous, people. Their example, wrote physician David Ramsay of South Carolina, had “enlightened mankind in the art of government.”<sup>4</sup> One dilemma confronting the founding generation, however, like that of the Puritans before them, was how best to preserve for future generations the nation’s faith in America’s own unique attribute – its republican virtue.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Jack P. Greene, *The Intellectual Construction of America: Exceptionalism and Identity from 1492 to 1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 176.

<sup>2</sup> Marc Egnal, *A Mighty Empire: The Origins of the American Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Edmund S. Morgan, “Conflict and Consensus in the American Revolution,” in Stephen G. Kurtz and James H. Hutson, eds., *Essays on the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 305; John Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for Independence*, rev. ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Greene, *The Intellectual Construction of America*, 194.

*Federalist* No. 10, written by James Madison in support of the Constitution and its checks and balances on the arbitrary use of power, conveyed the doubts of the Founders that this virtue could be sustained over time.

A major obstacle to the furtherance of republican virtue, sectional differences over slavery, formally arose with the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and proved to be insurmountable short of civil war. The moral and economic implications of pro-slavery and anti-slavery stances were not wholly antithetical, though; after all, what was produced in the South was a vital part of the nation's economy. Nevertheless, the paradox of slavery in a land espousing freedom at the heart of its identity could not be sustained.<sup>5</sup> The Civil War left basic values relatively unscathed in the abstract, fixing even more firmly in American lore the ideals of freedom and liberty.

Expansion also raised questions about the prospect of sustaining virtue over time and in new places. The West was not necessarily a congenial place in which to implant values that depended on the rule of law. From Texas to the Great Plains to California, conflict often accompanied the expansion of white America into lands possessed by others. If the ultimate outcome of conflict – statehood – was in some sense a victory for republican ideals, how it came about was hardly exemplary. In addition, the forays of adventurers, known as filibusterers, beyond the continental confines of the United States into Central America in the 1840s and 1850s can hardly be portrayed as attempts, however misguided, to extend the blessings of representative governance.

Moreover, Reconstruction and its aftermath ushered in decades of uncertainty for many working poor, newly arrived immigrants, and nonwhite people. During the Gilded Age, a term coined by Mark Twain, the powerful controlled the means by which the government responded to the basic needs of citizens and new immigrants. Prospects for economic opportunity, central to how Americans thought about their past, diminished in the face of labor strife, the visible chaos of urban life, and cyclical recession. Indeed, the statement in the 1890 federal census that the frontier had closed brought into question the future of American exceptionalism. How and where would new opportunities arise? Had the idea of republican virtue become obsolete? And how would the nation's core values fare in the nascent corporate age? This chapter surveys the intersection of ideas about liberty, the values attendant to it, and the meaning of security over two centuries to provide context for understanding the tensions between liberty and security that have existed since the end of the nineteenth century.

<sup>5</sup> On the tensions between slavery and freedom, see Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

### Political Economy, Security, and Identity in Eighteenth-Century America

Britain and France fought seven wars between 1690 and 1815, during which time an American identity became fully formed. However loyal the colonists nominally were to the Crown after William of Orange overthrew James II, they were not averse to turning England's tribulations to their own advantage. King William's War, known in Europe as the War of the League of Augsburg, revitalized the authority of Parliament at home and emphasized the importance of empire abroad. Neither development could have occurred without the founding of the Bank of England in 1694.<sup>6</sup> Access to capital made success in conflict more likely because the Bank enabled the Crown to provide for the security of the realm. Funds would become available for building a fleet to protect the British Isles, which also could be dispatched to safeguard vital imperial interests in the West Indies or along the Atlantic seaboard.<sup>7</sup>

While British attention was understandably focused more on European than on colonial affairs in the decades following William's seizure of power, dramatic signs of economic growth appeared in America. Colonists linked this vibrant political economy of trade and development with their security. Around 1700, more than 250,000 white people lived in the colonies; that number increased to more than 630,000 by 1730 and exceeded 2 million by 1776. Only a thriving economy could sustain such an expanding population, all the more so because of the surge in immigration after 1760. At the turn of the eighteenth century, ships brought 20 percent of Britain's total imports from the transatlantic colonies, including the West Indies. By 1773, that figure had climbed to nearly 40 percent of all imports; the percentages for British exports were comparable.<sup>8</sup>

The colonies had become an economic safety valve for the mother country. In that mercantilist age, law made colonies dependent on markets in the homeland by generally precluding trade outside the British orbit. Almost imperceptibly, however, Britain was also becoming economically reliant on its colonies. The Iron Act of 1750 illustrated the economic challenge that the colonies might pose to the suzerainty of Britain. It allowed the smelting of iron ore into pig iron, but reserved further processing for British mills. Were Americans to find that restriction too onerous, a clash between

<sup>6</sup> Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987), 80.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), *passim*.

<sup>8</sup> Bernard Bailyn with the assistance of Barbara DeWolf, *Voyages to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 24–6; Jack P. Greene, "An Uneasy Connection: An Analysis of the Preconditions of the American Revolution," in Kurtz and Hutson, eds., *Essays on the American Revolution*, 43–4.



mercantile philosophy and American assumptions about security would be inevitable.<sup>9</sup>

Numbers tell only part of the story of economic growth in the eighteenth century. Qualitative data suggest a link between diversification and development of an American identity. To be sure, agriculture remained the mainstay of the economy. Just the same, mercantilism guaranteed the shipping of a greater volume of British goods to the colonies as population increased. The results of a dependable commerce were several. Port cities grew at a fast rate. The presence of immigrants from Ireland and Scotland and more than 100,000 Germans from the Rhine valley created a burgeoning demand for a variety of goods. Artisans and common laborers were drawn to American cities in search of a prosperous and better life; demand for their goods gave rise to a competitive, expanding market. America's export trade enabled the New England shipping industry to thrive so much that it comprised as much as one-third of the empire's commercial fleet. By mid-century, therefore, the quality of life of free colonists may have been unsurpassed in Europe or the Atlantic world, which colonists attributed to the copious opportunities they judged to be unique to America.

During the ministry of Robert Walpole in the 1720s and 1730s, colonists got a taste of political autonomy as Parliament enacted few laws that directly affected their interests. Out of this experience there arose a belief that the rights of colonists as English subjects were quite secure, that they could govern themselves through the lower houses of assembly in their individual colonies. The Stamp Act imbroglio of the mid-1760s brought the problematic nature of the transatlantic relationship to light, although the foundation for that confrontation over authority had been laid years earlier. The Glorious Revolution had not settled precisely who was represented in Parliament.<sup>10</sup> In 1748, as the War of the Austrian Succession ended, Parliament displayed renewed resolve to assert imperial prerogatives. This change quickly resulted in an increase of administrative authority for the Board of Trade.<sup>11</sup> That development reflected a mounting concern that colonies might go their own way economically, if not politically, as they matured.

The proximate cause of this change in policy was a series of disturbances within several colonies that erupted in the late 1740s and early 1750s, coinciding with the resumption of war in Europe. This turmoil led governors throughout North America to complain about their inability to govern and

<sup>9</sup> On the tensions inherent in a mercantile economy, see Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Background of the American Revolution*, rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), 69–118. On the Iron Act, see T. O. Lloyd, *The British Empire, 1558–1983* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 68.

<sup>10</sup> On the intellectual and governing dilemmas occasioned by the idea of representation, see J. R. Pole, *Political Representation in England and the Origins of the American Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 3–26.

<sup>11</sup> Greene, "An Uneasy Connection," 68–71.

to criticize what they deemed the excessive power of the lower houses. The Glorious Revolution had served as a catalyst for the activities of elite factions in several colonies, including Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and South Carolina, who imagined that a policy of expansion, broadly conceived, would further their own interests.<sup>12</sup> These elites shared an organic worldview, derived in part from their understanding of the history of colonial growth and their plans for future expansion. They believed that the intoxicating process of expansion, once underway, would inevitably take on a life of its own. Their sense of entitlement to subdue the environment with people and institutions resembled the motives underlying nineteenth-century continentalism in the form of “manifest destiny,” as we see later.

In 1754, Benjamin Franklin envisioned the founding of two large colonies beyond the Appalachian Mountains, then the western frontier. The natural advantages accruing to the West, where “all can have full employ, and there is Room and Business for Millions yet unborn,” would attract a population whose objective would be to extend the glory of America.<sup>13</sup> The wily Pennsylvanian had also advocated a policy of expansion three years earlier in his “Observations concerning the Increase of Mankind.”<sup>14</sup> He understood that his vision of American grandeur guaranteed trouble with the French and Indians; it would also elicit grave concern in London. The French had a sparse presence in North America, numbering around 70,000, stretching from the lower Mississippi River region to the Mississippi and Ohio valleys and across the Great Lakes into Canada. They ruled this vast expanse of territory more by guile and diplomacy than by any visible and forceful administrative presence.

Colonial relations with native people had been relatively tranquil since the early 1700s compared to the seemingly incessant bloody clashes of the previous century. The likelihood of conflict remained a distinct possibility, however, as the French and Indians found it convenient to rely on one another to curb American incursions into their lands. In fact, Indians held the balance of power between France and Britain in North America because of their strategic location between the two empires and their military prowess. Alarmed by the aggressive patterns of British settlement, many Indians preferred to deal with the French, whose lesser numbers arguably made them more manageable and more inclined to deal with tribes on a reciprocal basis through diplomacy instead of deadly force. Should a conflict arise, time, numbers, and resources would favor the British, however.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> This discussion is based on Egnal, *A Mighty Empire*.

<sup>13</sup> Bailyn, *Voyages to the West*, 356–7; Leonard W. Labaree et al., eds., *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. III: *January 1, 1745 through June 30, 1750* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 441.

<sup>14</sup> *Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography*, introduction by Dixon Wecter, and Larzer Ziff, ed., *Selected Writings* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1959), 216–25.

<sup>15</sup> Alan Taylor, *American Colonies* (New York: Viking, 2001), 423–8.

The French and Indian War, known in Europe as the Seven Years' War (1756–63), broke out in 1754 when military forces under the leadership of a young George Washington, acting at the behest of a coterie of land speculators with whom he was associated, tried to compel the French to leave the Ohio Valley. This attempt failed. During the next two years, the war went badly for the British and Americans, with combined French and Indian forces seizing forts in northern New York and Indians expelling white settlers from their outposts in western Pennsylvania. Prewar tensions had moved Governor George Clinton of New York to convene a conference on Indian relations in 1751. When this venture did not succeed, in 1754 Franklin drafted the Albany Plan of Union, which proposed the creation of a governing body with the power to levy taxes, address Indian problems, and provide for the common defense.<sup>16</sup>

The Albany Plan failed more because it was premature – representatives of only seven colonies met at Albany – than because of inherent flaws in its underlying logic about autonomy, liberty, and empire. Americans were not then ready to make a united stand politically; economic interests, far more than politics, constituted their common identity. Franklin was certain that war would lead to vigorous attempts to impose the Crown's authority, with negative consequences for American rights and ambitions. His prescience was on display in a 1755 letter to the governor of Pennsylvania, in which he wrote, "Those who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety."<sup>17</sup> If Franklin was then no more than a shrewd purveyor of British imperialism, as Gordon S. Wood would have it,<sup>18</sup> his uncommon insight into the personal and collective travail that empire might bring helped set the stage for his own subsequent Americanization and the growth of patriotism throughout the colonies south of Canada.

Ultimately, the French and their Indian allies could not withstand the power of the combined British and colonial armed and naval forces. By 1760, virtually all of known Canada was in British hands; French forces surrendered to British troops in September of that year.<sup>19</sup> The Peace of Paris in 1763 formally removed French influence from land east of the Mississippi River; Louisiana and territory west of the river became part of Spain's empire. Britain's great expenditure on the war in North America,

<sup>16</sup> The most accessible survey of the war is Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001).

<sup>17</sup> Labaree et al., eds., *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. VI: *April 1, 1755 through September 30, 1756* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 242.

<sup>18</sup> Gordon S. Wood, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004).

<sup>19</sup> Robert Bothwell, *The Penguin History of Canada* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2006), 81–8.

some £4 million, raised the ominous prospect of an irresolvable dispute over the authority of Parliament to impose a share of that burden on the colonies without their express approval.<sup>20</sup>

The impending defeat of France also created a crisis for Indians living at the edges of white settlement. South Carolinians residing in the back-country provoked a conflict with the Cherokees in 1759 and forced them to make peace within two years. Fearing they would experience a similar fate, northern Indians in the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes regions attempted to make common cause against the British and land-hungry Americans. War, known as Pontiac's Rebellion, broke out in May 1763 and lasted until December. Indian successes came quickly in parts of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, but the loose coalition of forces could not take Fort Pitt or fortifications at Detroit and Niagara.<sup>21</sup>

To the extent that a *modus vivendi* had actually existed between native people and white Americans prior to the war with France, any reservoir of good will, as manifested in accommodationist practices, soon disappeared in a sea of racial hatred. British pressure brought Pontiac's Rebellion to a halt, leaving the remaining imperial forces already stationed in the West as the last line of defense against American depredations. Authorities in London issued the Proclamation of 1763 in an effort to retard further encroachment against Indian lands, the result of which was to anger settlers and land speculators alike. One leading member of the Six Nation Iroquois was also not appeased, commenting that the British presence in fortifications on what were then Indian lands "gives our warriors and women the greatest uneasiness, and makes us apt to believe every bad report we hear of your intentions toward us."<sup>22</sup> This assessment was not far off the mark. Washington derided the Proclamation of 1763, deeming it a "temporary expedient to quiet the minds of the Indians... [which] must fall, of course, in a few years." Other Americans would also see the detachments of British soldiers on the frontier in negative terms, depicting their presence as a harbinger of tyranny.<sup>23</sup>

Keeping the colonies secure after the French and Indian War resulted in the further dispossession of Indians from their lands. War nearly eliminated diplomacy as an option, yet armed conflict was not the only means of removal. Disease assisted the cause of the British. One man wrote from Fort Pitt during Pontiac's Rebellion, "We gave them two Blankets and an

<sup>20</sup> Taylor, *American Colonies*, 428–33.

<sup>21</sup> Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 269–314.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 193.

<sup>23</sup> Jared Sparks, ed., *The Writings of George Washington* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1855), vol. II, p. 347.

Handkerchief out of the Smallpox Hospital.”<sup>24</sup> And alcohol, long a staple of trade between whites and Indians, ably served American objectives as new settlements placed added pressure on Indian lands. An economic downturn in the 1760s, precipitated by the scarcity of credit from London because of the expenses of war, also worked to the disadvantage of native people. Tobacco planters in Virginia, who watched their level of indebtedness rise as a result of weak demand for their crop, moved inland in search of new opportunities. Farmers and lumbermen in South Carolina fared better than many people elsewhere; they brought additional backcountry land into production and thus avoided financial ruin. The treaties of Hard Labor and Fort Stanwix, signed in 1768, were efforts in the midst of recession to rebuild frontier diplomacy, respect the spirit of the Proclamation of 1763, and open to settlement land in present-day West Virginia and Kentucky. These attempts to construct separate spheres failed to appease the insatiable interests of squatters and land speculators. Parliament’s imposition of the Townshend duties in 1767, an attempt to pay for the rising costs of security, worsened the situation for Indians when British troops were sent eastward to quell opposition to the duties. Too few troops on the frontier meant instability there, and the presence of redcoats, especially in New York and Massachusetts, further undermined British authority.<sup>25</sup>

When the American Revolution finally began in April 1775, the implications for native people were as clear as they were devastating. Combat for them in what was their own war for independence was already under way; the Revolution in British America produced a new nation in which there would be no secure space for Indians east of the Mississippi.<sup>26</sup> An expansionist ethos had taken hold and would not be denied. In 1780, minister to Spain John Jay instructed a legation secretary to inform Spanish officials about the people of “Virginia and the Western Country near the Mississippi. Recount their achievements against the Savages, their growing numbers, [and] extensive settlements. Let it appear from your Representations that ages will be necessary to settle those extensive Regions.”<sup>27</sup> Indeed, excluding Indians was not achieved as quickly as removing the British; it would take until the mid-1790s for the conflict between native people and

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 4.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763–1789* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 143–73, 192–201.

<sup>26</sup> Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country*, 24.

<sup>27</sup> John Jay’s Instructions to William Carmichael, January 27, 1780, in Mary A. Guinta, ed., *The Emerging Nation: A Documentary History of the Foreign Relations of the United States under the Articles of Confederation, 1780–1789*, 3 vols., vol. 1: *Recognition of Independence, 1780–1784* (Washington, DC: National Historical Publications and Records Commission, 1996), 18.