From Nationalism to Internationalism

U. S. Foreign Policy to 1914

Akira Iriye

Foreign Policies of the Great Powers

Volume X

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Preface

In writing this interpretative survey of American foreign policy before the First World War, I have been influenced by several considerations. First, in view of the ready availability of excellent textbooks, I have not felt it necessary or even desirable to recount familiar facts and episodes in a straightforward chronological fashion. Second, I have viewed 'foreign policy' rather broadly and tried to discuss not merely governmental decisions but also people-to-people relations. Third, ideas, assumptions, and images have been stressed so as to give the reader a conceptual tool to analyse specific foreign policy issues. Fourth, in choosing episodes for purposes of illustration, I have sought to avoid repeating well-known events, not because they are unimportant but because many incidents that are hardly mentioned in conventional textbooks often reveal with striking vividness important characteristics of American foreign affairs.

The title of the book is a shorthand to summarize the changes that took place in United States diplomacy between 1776 and 1914. To be more precise, it would have to be entitled 'From Internationalistic Nationalism to Nationalistic Internationalism.' These terms are defined and described in the book. Basically, my view is that it is possible to trace the course of American foreign relations as a story of a nation which initially combined a traditional formulation of national interests with internationalist aspirations, but which, on the eve of First World War, had come to exemplify a major force for the reshaping of the world while at the same time retaining more conventional concerns as a nation-state. Such a transformation must, of course, be related to the country's economic development and domestic politics, as well as

to the external environment of the world community. My purpose in writing the book will have been served if it conveys some idea of the complexity of these various factors as determinants of foreign policy.

As always in the past, I am indebted to my former teachers, friends, colleagues and students for their advice and encouragement over the years. I have benefited particularly from the warm friendship and professional co-operation of diplomatic historians in the United States and abroad. I shall be satisfied if the book contributes in however small degree to their collective efforts to enlighten the past. I must also express my thanks to Harriet Pearl, Kathy Murphy, Marne Deering and Beverly Smith for having typed the manuscript in its various stages.

Chicago A.I.

Chapter 1

Introduction

What were the characteristics of United States foreign relations before World War I? Too often American foreign policy in the nineteenth century has been described in simplistic terms, such as geographical isolation, withdrawal from European politics, continental expansion, and the like. According to such interpretations, American foreign relations were unique because the United States was different from other countries in size, population, and history. By the same token, every country's foreign policy would be distinct. But to stress these intrinsic differences does not help much when one explores the interaction between nations and tries to examine their responses in some comparative perspective. The study of international relations, after all, is a study in comparative history; one analyzes why a nation acts in a particular manner by contrasting it with the ways other countries behave. It is not enough, or even meaningful, to say that American foreign affairs were determined by the country's existential conditions and domestic forces, for the same would be true of all countries.

One must, then, begin by establishing an analytical scheme in terms of which United States foreign policy may be studied in a comparative framework. Several conceptualizations have been proposed for studying the period under consideration, of which two stand out. One stresses a 'realistic' nature of American foreign policy in much of the nineteenth century. The history of United States foreign relations was on the whole a success story; the nation acquired territories and amassed wealth at little cost, and managed to avoid foreign complications of serious magnitude. Such achievements, according to this interpretation, were due to a great extent to the adroit handling of foreign policy by the country's leaders

who had a clear idea of what they wanted and a pragmatic sense of the available means to obtain it. As George F. Kennan has written in his 'Memoirs: 1950-1963' (1972):

> In such casual reading on American diplomatic history as I had had occasion to do while in government, I had been struck by the contrast between the lucid and realistic thinking of early American statesmen of the Federalist period and the cloudy bombast of their successors of later decades ... I was surprised to discover how much of our stock equipment, in the way of the rationale and rhetoric of foreign policy, was what we had inherited from the statesmen of the period from the Civil War to World War II, and how much of this equipment was utopian in its expectations, legalistic in its concept of methodology, moralistic in the demands it seemed to place on others, and self-righteous in the degree of high-mindedness and rectitude it imputed to ourselves. (1)

American foreign policy, in this instance, can be examined in terms of the interaction between realism and idealism, or pragmatism and moralism. Such a dichotomizing scheme has had an enormous impact on the study of the subject.

The second popular interpretation sees continuity and unity, rather than discontinuity and diversity, in the way the United States has related itself to the world. The nineteenth century saw the country expand territorially and commercially, according to this view, and expansion was to be a key theme of twentieth-century American foreign relations. Expansion was not only territorial or economic but also political and ideological; Americans wanted to Americanize the world by disseminating knowledge and reshaping other societies in accordance with democratic principles. Such an interpretation stresses a monolithic thematic unity in the history of the United States foreign policy and is critical of the dichotomizing scheme of Kennan and others. As Bruce Kuklick has noted, in his 'American Policy and the Division of Germany' (1972),

> there is a serious conceptual confusion in the analysis. One must believe that diplomats are a breed of schizophrenic robots who have two alternative centers of motivation, one quasi-Machiavellian ... the other starry-eyed and impractical ... These forms of analysis neglect an elementary psychological and philosophical insight - that human beings normally see the world as a coherent whole and that ideology and interest are inseparable. (2)

Instead of the interplay between two opposite behavior and thought patterns, then, the second interpretation

would emphasize an underlying world-view which was remarkably unchanging throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth. Disparate episodes and events of American diplomacy would become intelligible as aspects of the ethos of economic, political and cultural expansionism. Thus, according to Walter LaFeber's 'America, Russia, and the Cold War' (1972).

> In the middle of the nineteenth century, two events began to reshape American views toward revolutions: the continental conquest was completed, and Americans began emphasizing the commercial aspects of their foreign policy instead of landed expansion. These overseas commercial interests became especially important, for stability, peace, and confidence in the sanctity of contract were essential to any great trading venture. By 1900, the United States had burgeoned into a power which combined the interesting characteristics of being conservative ideologically and expansive economically. (3)

Regardless of the merit or demerit of the dualistic or the monolithic interpretation of American diplomacy, these conceptual schemes do not seem totally adequate as analytical tools when one studies United States foreign relations in a comparative framework and in an international context, which is the aim of this book. Both of the above approaches emphasize the uniqueness of American responses to foreign affairs, and they come close to viewing United States foreign relations as a function of the national character - whether one stresses its proclivity to moralism or systematic urge to expand. But we will never know in what ways the United States may differ in this respect from other countries. After all, neither moralism nor expansionism is a monopoly of the American people, and the question is whether the latter can be said to be more, or in a distinctive way, moralistic and expansionist than others. But then, it may be asked if these categories are really useful in comparing the foreign policies of the United States, Britain, Germany and others. Moreover, the emphasis on certain thematic unity does not help much when one tries to account for shifts and turns in American foreign relations. These do not exist in a vacuum but must be viewed in the context of the overall international system at a given moment. The international system itself keeps changing at all times, and one must relate American attitudes, ideas and policies to the changing framework and environment. The relationship here is neither undirectional nor automatic. The American ethos, even if such a thing existed, would take different shapes and

expressions as it interacted with the environment. Conversely, the latter would also be affected by the way the United States perceived the external world.

These interactions and interrelationships are so complex that a monolithic or a dualistic interpretation of United States foreign policy is likely to be of limited usefulness. Still, some conceptual scheme is essential if one is not merely to intone a myriad of diplomatic negotiations, decisions and opinions without much structure but to develop a coherent synthesis. In order to facilitate our understanding and analysis of United States foreign relations before 1914, then, it will be helpful first to consider the period before 1865 and note the sources of American thinking and behavior in the international arena.

Americans related themselves to the outside world in a number of ways. But by the mid-nineteenth century, at least five levels or modes of this interaction had become visible: geopolitical factors, internationalist ideas, national interest considerations, special interests and mass culture. These are not mutually exclusive categories, and the same individual may respond to foreign issues at any one or more of these levels, depending on circumstances. By the same token, a single foreign policy decision may be characterized as a manifestation of several of these factors. But by identifying at least these five components or levels of American attitudes, assumptions, ideas and policies - in short, five dimensions of the American perceptions of the world - we may be able to appreciate the complexity and diversity of American foreign affairs and to trace their changing characteristics over time.

1 GEOPOLITICAL FACTORS

'Our situation invites and our interests prompt us to aim at an ascendant in the system of American affairs.' So wrote Alexander Hamilton for the 'Federalist' in 1788. By 'the system of American affairs' he meant international affairs in the Western Hemisphere. For the United States to aim at an ascendant position in the hemisphere implied a geopolitical view of foreign relations. According to Hamilton, 'The world may politically, as well as geographically, be divided into four parts, each having a distinct set of interests.' These four were: Europe, Africa, Asia and America. As he saw the world situation, he was persuaded that 'Europe, by her arms and by her negotiations, by force and by fraud, has, in different

degrees, extended her dominion over them all. Africa, Asia, and America, have successively felt her domination.' Such a situation was not conducive to the peace, welfare, or security of the United States. In order to ensure these goals, then, it was incumbent upon the latter to strengthen itself through unity and to extend its influence to other parts of the American continent so as to balance the growing power of the European nations.

> Let Americans disdain to be the instruments of European greatness! [he exclaimed,] Let the thirteen States, bound together in a strict and indissoluble Union, concur in erecting one great American system, superior to the control of all transatlantic force or influences, and able to dictate the terms of the connection between the old and the new world! (4)

Here was the essence of 'realpolitik' or globalistic thinking which provided one component of American foreign policy. As Hamilton saw it, the crucial thing was to view the United States in the context of world politics as a whole and to ask in what kind of international system the nation's security and interests could best be safeguarded. And he had no doubt that given the superiority of the European powers, the best strategy for the United States was to promote a regional system in the Americas. This could conceivably take the form of American hegemony over the Western Hemisphere. But the key factor was the willingness of the American people to play a role in international politics so as to 'dictate the terms of the connection' between Europe and America - in other words, to establish a balance between the Old world and the New. Hamilton had nothing to say about the role of the United States in Asia and Africa, presumably because these were already under European domination and the United States was too weak to do much about it. But at least in the Western Hemisphere the country had, or should have, the power and will to limit the extension of European power. This continent should be marked as America's sphere of influence.

Geopolitical globalism had, of course, characterized one facet of European diplomacy since the seventeenth century. As they pondered the question of the 'reason of state,' European statesmen invariably thought of the balance of power not only in their part of the world but also elsewhere. Colonial wars of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries were in part caused by power-political thinking; capturing another country's colony would automatically lessen its power, and since this was considered a relative thing, it followed that a state must do what it could to reduce the relative power of the

others. (5) Such considerations had been particularly pertinent to European diplomacy vis-à-vis the American continent in the eighteenth century, as exemplified by William Pitt's foreign policy which regarded imperial interests as even more important than purely European interests. From his point of view French power could be reduced by attacking Canada and reducing French influence in North America. Thus the policy of seeking to sustain a balance of power necessitated a geopolitical perspective. American leaders were heirs to this tradition, and it was not surprising that Hamilton, whose views of politics and foreign affairs approximated those of the British, should have been the first to enunciate a doctrine of American power politics.

As will be seen, power politics was by no means the only framework in which Hamilton perceived international affairs; nor was it the sole basis on which the Americans viewed the New World as distinct from the Old. But it should be noted that from its earliest inception the United States exhibited a power-oriented, geopolitical tendency in its foreign policy. This theme was not the major thread in American foreign relations before the Civil War, but it was present in several key episodes and decisions of the first decades of the nineteenth century.

Geopolitical thinking was a factor behind the assertive and highly successful American policy toward the Spanish empire in the Western Hemisphere, as the latter began to break up during the Napoleonic Wars. The Spanish-French alliance of 1795, reversing Spain's alliance with Britain, involved the country in Napoleon's wars and made its overseas colonies vulnerable to British attack. Spain relaxed its mercantilistic policies and opened up the colonial ports to neutral shipping in order to provide the colonies with foodstuffs and other materials. This gave an impetus to American commercial expansion in the Caribbean region. Havana and New Orleans flourished with American merchants. Equally important, some of the Spanish colonies in America took advantage of the European wars to set themselves adrift from the imperial bondage. Moreover, the identification of Spanish and French colonial interests induced the Spanish government to retrocede Louisiana to France; this territory had been ceded to Spain by France in 1762, but the former had never made much use of it and was willing to part with it for a substantial sum of money. Napoleon, however, was more interested in challenging the British empire in the East - the Red Sea, India, and beyond. Although Louisiana was formally given back to France in 1801, Napoleon's global strategy had no specific scheme for the New World.

Here was an opportunity to try to implement the Hamiltonian concept of geopolitical regionalism - the United States would be the key power in the Western Hemisphere. President Thomas Jefferson, a bitter enemy of Hamilton in domestic politics, was in full agreement with such a view. He was convinced that the United States must try to reject European interference in American affairs and to prevent the rise of a strong European power in the New World. Louisiana and New Orleans, in particular, worried him, the former because of its huge size astride the North American continent and the latter because it provided an entrepot for American commerce with the Caribbean. In his famous letter to Robert R. Livingston, Jefferson declared, 'The day that France takes New Orleans ... we must marry ourselves to the British fleet and nation.' Contrary to his fears, New Orleans remained in Spanish hands, but he was determined to obtain it along with lands in the lower Mississippi. When Napoleon instead offered to sell the entire territory of Louisiana, Jefferson eagerly grasped the opportunity. While territorial expansionism was certainly a factor, considerations of power politics - as Gouveneur Morris said, 'No nation has a right to give to another a dangerous neighbor without her consent' (6) - played a decisive role in the decision to obtain Louisiana.

The Louisiana purchase (1803) and the simultaneous decline of French and Spanish power in the Western Hemisphere meant a relative increase of American power, and by the second decade of the nineteenth century it was not uncommon to conceive of the United States as the predominant member in the American system of international affairs. The independence of the Spanish American colonies, whose new governments the United States recognized one after another, served to enhance America's relative position vis-à-vis that of the European powers. Certainly after the War of 1812 (to be discussed below), it could be said that no European power would try to alter drastically the developing equilibrium in the international system in the Americas, where the European nations still retained some of their colonies and played the most important economic roles, but where the predominant position of the United States would be acknowledged. Great Britain, the strongest European and world power, admitted as much when, after the War of 1812, its government expressed its readiness to see the United States develop as the strongest power in the New World. Without British support or acquiescence, no European power would be able or willing to challenge America's position.

Thus, for instance, while France was interested in helping Spain crush the independence movement in Latin America, they would not move for fear of British retaliation. By 1823 the French government was formally denying that it had designs on the former Spanish America. Well might John Quincy Adams boast of 'our natural dominion in North America.' (7)

Such dominion fitted well with Britain's global strategy in the post-Napoleonic world, when the Vienna Conference system of international affairs had brought about the new status quo. A balance of power was maintained among the great nations which shared the same proclivity towards stability, conservatism, and order. The United States was not a member of the system, but the new international order necessarily involved a definition of regional stability in the Western Hemisphere, and after the independence of the Spanish colonies it was generally perceived in terms of the central position of the United States. The British government was particularly anxious to recognize this fact and incorporated it into its vision of global power structure; by acknowledging the emerging status quo in the New World, Britain could ensure peace and order in that part of the world, which in turn would serve to perpetuate the Vienna system. As Lord Castlereagh said in 1820, 'there are no two States whose friendly relations are of more practical value to each other, or whose hostility so inevitably and so immediately entails upon both the most serious mischiefs.' (8) Such thinking induced London to approach Washington for formalizing the new status quo in the Western Hemisphere as part of the global order. That the United States government rejected the overtures and instead proclaimed unilaterally the so-called Monroe Doctrine (1823) does not detract from the fact that a regional system of international affairs in the New World was being visualized as a separate entity from the Old World. Actually, by refusing to join Britain in enunciating the principles of hemispheric autonomy and opposition to European interference, the United States failed to have the Monroe Doctrine recognized as international law. It was merely a unilateral assertion which bound no other country. Moreover, there was no danger of European intervention in the New World, and American predominance there was more an ideal than accomplished fact. All the same, the Monroe Doctrine was an example of geopolitical thinking and, whether or not the United States intended it, became an integral part of the Vienna system.

For over twenty years after 1823 the Monroe Doctrine

remained dormant, and the successive administrations in Washington did not base its foreign policy explicitly on that doctrine. Nevertheless, the idea of the hemispheric system of international affairs in which the United States played the leading role was always there, and whenever this principle appeared threatened, the government in Washington was quick to act. The most serious challenge seemed to come after Texas declared its independence of Mexico in 1836 and sought incorporation into the United States immediately thereafter. Britain and France recognized the Republic of Texas, and they preferred that the latter remain independent not only of Mexico but of the United States. The British government under Lord Aberdeen expressed the hope that slavery would be abolished in Texas, while France under Premier François Guizot made speeches stressing the desirability of maintaining an equilibrium among independent states in North America. In the meantime, the Mexican government was reported to be giving land grants in California to British subjects and attempting to draw Britain into intervening in the Mexico-United States dispute over the region. Historians disagree whether the United States government took these alleged moves by the European powers seriously, or whether they merely provided a pretext for pursuing a belligerent foreign policy which culminated in the Mexican War (1846-8). (9) Neither Britain nor France was prepared to go to war to deny Texas or California to the United States, and they never offered serious opposition to the principles underlying the Monroe Doctrine. But the United States government, especially during the administration of President James K. Polk (1845-9), found it desirable and expedient to reassert the Monroe Doctrine as a foundation of American foreign policy. The next effect was to confirm the geopolitical tradition of Hamilton and John Quincy Adams and to establish, once and for all, as it was hoped, the regional autonomy of the American continent as a separate system of international relations.

In the decade preceding the Civil War, geopolitical regionalism became even clearer and defined, at least in part, the nation's approach to Central America and the Pacific Ocean. The administrations of Millard Fillmore, Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan asserted the unique position of the United States in the Caribbean and sought to tie the region more closely together. Although there were many reasons for such a policy, one crucial factor was the desire to weaken steadily the position of the European powers in the Western Hemisphere. In 1849 the United States negotiated a treaty with Nicaragua which

granted to the former an exclusive right to build an isthmian canal across the latter's territory. This came to nothing, as the British government objected to giving up its interests in Central America, and the Clayton-Bulwer treaty (1850) stipulated that no nation was to have exclusive control over such a canal. Not to be daunted by this failure, the United States under President Buchanan (1857-61) sought a right to maintain the security of Central America by placing American troops in the region and explicitly committing the nation to assist the local regimes to maintain law and order. There was also a strong interest in the fate of Cuba, concerning whose future the United States wished to have a freedom of action without European interference. The principle of 'no transfer' was frequently reiterated, opposing the transfer of a European colony in the Western Hemisphere to another European power. Ultimately, it was hoped by the Buchanan administration that the island might be offered by the Spanish government for purchase by the United States. None of these attempts at extending American dominion came to fruition at this time, but they nevertheless indicated the continued functioning of one strain - geopolitical considerations - in American foreign policy. It was becoming axiomatic that the United States would seek to establish its identity in international relations through assertion of its predominant position in the Western Hemisphere, in particular in the Caribbean and Central America.

The 1850s also saw the extension of American power and interest in the Pacific Ocean. Here again various factors were involved, and many types of ideas and interests were behind American approaches to Hawaii, Japan, and other lands in the Pacific. Power politics was clearly one of them. As the United States government and people looked beyond California to Hawaii, or beyond the Indian Ocean to Taiwan, the Liuchiu islands (Okinawa) and Japan, there was a sense that the nation was destined to play a key role in the international politics of the Pacific Ocean. Commodore Matthew C. Perry, for instance, was convinced that this was the region where rivalries among the great powers would take place in the future, and that the United States must prevent the European nations from establishing their hegemony there by adopting an assertive policy of its own. His expedition to Japan (1852-4) was to him just the beginning; he insisted that the United States acquire or at least establish control over Taiwan and the Liuchiu islands to deny them to Great Britain or other European powers.

Very few of his contemporaries held such a grandiose vision of the United States as an Asian power, but the government in Washington was at least willing to enunciate a clear-cut policy toward Hawaii; the islands were not to fall under the control of one or other European nations. President Pierce wanted an eventual annexation of Hawaii by the United States, and the reciprocity treaty of 1855 was designed to tie the island kingdom economically to America. The treaty was rejected by the Senate, and Congress on the whole remained indifferent to the Perry expedition and other acts of American assertiveness in East Asia. The country was not prepared to play a role in the politics of the Asia-Pacific region. Nevertheless, the emergence of a power-oriented view in American diplomacy in the area was significant. Next to the Western Hemisphere, the Pacific Ocean and East Asia were already being considered by some as a theater of active American participation in international affairs, whereas the same could not be said of Europe, the Middle East, and other parts of the world. Just once, during the Crimean War, the State Department decided to act like a world power by offering mediation. The timid overtures met with no positive response, the French foreign minister reminding the Americans that 'the United States can hardly hope to solve the Eastern Question for which the European powers have been unable to find a solution during the last twenty-five years.' (10) Europe and the Middle East were beyond reach of American policy in geopolitical terms, but this, after all, had been foreseen by Hamilton and reflected the thought that these areas were within the European spheres of predominance. In the Caribbean and the Pacific, on the other hand, the United States would assert its power and be counted as one of the main actors in world politics.

2 INTERNATIONALIST IDEAS

The view of the world in terms of power politics and global balances characterized only a segment of American perceptions and policies before the Civil War. Another key theme in American foreign affairs was a tendency to universalize foreign relations and conceptualize them in some internationalist language. Whereas power, the basic theme in geopolitics, was amoral, non-ideological and particularistic, this second approach was more ideological, aspirational and universalistic. It sought to define America's relations - political, economic, and cultural - with other countries through some concepts of

allegedly universal application. Such an attitude may be termed internationalism, although, as it will become clear, presumably universalistic values applied primarily to culturally Western and economically advanced countries. Still, it is important to distinguish this from other strains in the making of United States foreign relations.

For instance, the ideas of reciprocity and equality among Western nations were central to American foreign policy after 1776. It was considered important, now that the colonies had declared their independence of the fetters of British mercantilism, that they should enunciate the principle of unrestricted commercial relations among all countries, especially between the United States which produced an agricultural surplus and the European countries at their initial stages of industrialization. But commercial opportunities would also be sought in less developed areas of the world, and the new nation would insist that most-favored-nation treatment be accorded it in treaties of commerce and navigation it negotiated with other countries. American foreign affairs thus began by stressing the internationalist nature of commercial pursuits. This was a revolt against the particularism of the British empire and reflected the ideal that there should be unrestricted and unlimited commercial intercourse among all nations. The 1778 treaty with France, whereby the signatories accorded most-favored-nation treatment to their mutual citizens and several ports were opened up in France and the French West Indies to American produce, was a signal achievement to be followed by similar treaties with Holland, Sweden, and Prussia. The American negotiators in Paris, discussing peace terms with the British in 1782, were anxious to include commercial reciprocity as part of the settlement, but in this instance they were unsuccessful, as the British government was unwilling to give up the mercantilist policies and practices.

Internationalism had also a political aspect. After Concord and Lexington, Americans proclaimed themselves to be in 'the state of nature.' They were now outside the protection of British law, and their rights would cease to be those of Englishmen. Instead, they began universalizing their experience; they spoke of 'rights of men' - not simply for American or British but for human rights. Such revolutionary idealism was of course never the whole picture, and was not allowed to eclipse totally more mundane considerations or power-oriented notions. Political internationalism in fact might soon have been relegated to a minor place in American foreign policy if not for the almost concurrent development of

another revolution, that in France. The spread of universalistic vocabulary in the 'age of the democratic revolution,' combined with the circumstances of the birth of the American republic ensured that idealism and internationalism would continue to play an inordinately important role in the formulation and perception of United States foreign policy.

'The American Revolution was the mother of the French revolution,' said Jacques Pierre Brissot. 'Shall all the nations of the earth,' wrote Marquis de Condorcet on the eve of his death, 'some day achieve that stage of civilization to which have arrived the freest and most enlightened peoples, the French and the Americans?' (11) Such expressions reflected the image that the revolutions in America and France were intimately linked because they were but two manifestations of mankind's struggle for freedom and human rights. As Joseph Garat wrote in 1783, 'Every eye today is fixed upon North America; it is there that the greatest interests of the Universe are at stake ... The philosophers of all Europe see in the new constitutions [in the various states] the noblest, and perhaps the last, hope of the human race.' (12) The implications were unmistakable. The independence and consolidation of the United States would have significance for the entire world, and the example of America would be followed first by France and ultimately by all other countries.

The American people generally reciprocated such a sentiment and welcomed the coming of the revolution in France - which became a 'sister republic.' There was real enthusiasm after 1792, which saw the abolition of monarchy in France and the defeat of the invading armies of the European powers. There were public celebrations throughout the United States, and Americans took to wearing 'caps of liberty.' Even those who did not succumb to revolutionary fervor or accept the identification of the two revolutions readily subscribed to an image of America as a champion and disseminator of the blessings of civilization and progress. They were convinced that the United States was a different kind of nation, destined to influence world history by its example and through the spread of these blessings to other lands. America was a nation not only dedicated to the principle of free intercourse among peoples but also to certain universalistic notions such as liberty and rights. The American people, it followed from such a self-image, were an instrument for promoting these principles and disseminating knowledge to the rest of the world. American citizens abroad were not just subjects

of a government; far more important, they were agents of ideas and principles which were considered of universal applicability. They stood not only for a state in the technical sense but were also representatives of common human concerns and champions of their aspirations.

Because these developments took place when the central government was still weak and before there was an opportunity to clarify what constituted the national interest, internationalist concepts were bound to have strong repercussions on American foreign policy during the era of the Napoleonic Wars. At least initially American sentiment was predominantly pro-French, and many spoke out in favor of forming an alliance with France. It is no accident that the sentiment began to wane when Americans came to see French policy as less universalistic than particularistic, designed to promote France's own self-interest rather than broader concerns of mankind. But pro-French feelings persisted and grew into an active political movement within the United States when the administration of President George Washington proclaimed official neutrality in 1793. Washington was accused by James Madison of his 'seeming indifference to the cause of liberty' - to which Alexander Hamilton replied in a characteristic fashion, saying that 'generosity' was a good thing in individuals but not for international relations. In 1794, when Jay's treaty was concluded with Britain, providing for the dismantling of the remaining British garrisons in the Northwest and the referral to joint commissions of most other disputes between the two countries, it was fiercely opposed by those Americans who considered the terms of the treaty a national disgrace and designed to befriend the British at the expense of the French. American opinion became split between the Federalists, favoring the treaty, and the Democratic-Republicans who opposed it, and the latter represented the current of pro-French sentiment. The nation-wide debate on Jay's treaty was the first instance where a foreign policy question divided American opinion between internationalist views and their opponents. In the end the latter prevailed, with President Washington lending his prestige to the Federalists and cautioning his countrymen, in his 'farewell address' of 1796, against a sentimental attachment to any particular country.

Internationalism was not strong enough to be translated into official policy, but it continued to constitute one facet of American attitude toward foreign countries. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, one can best see this in the sentiment supporting the revolt of the Spanish colonies in Latin America.

In 1811 the House committee on Spanish American colonies adopted a resolution declaring, 'as neighbors and inhabitants of the same hemisphere, the United States feels great solicitude for their welfare.' After the Congress of Vienna, Henry Clay expressed the fear that the European principle of legitimacy might work to the destruction of 'every principle of liberty' in the Western Hemisphere. (13) He was instrumental in persuading the House of Representatives to adopt a resolution in 1821 expressing sympathy with the newly independent Latin American republics. Such ideas, seeing in the independence movements of the Spanish colonies the continuation of the struggle for freedom that had begun in North America but which had been frustrated in France, created a strong pressure on the government to recognize the Latin American republics. Although ideology was by no means the only factor, the United States under President James Monroe was ready to do so, and by 1826 seven of them had been recognized. Nearly thirty years later William H. Seward boasted, in a speech entitled 'The Physical, Moral, and Intellectual Development of the American People,' that the 'influences of the United States on the American continent have resulted already in the establishment of the republican system everywhere, except in Brazil, and even there in limiting imperial power.' He added in a significant passage: 'heretofore nations have either repelled, or exhausted, or disgusted the colonies they planted and the countries they conquered. The United States, on the contrary, expand, not by force of arms, but by attraction.' (14)

This was the essence of American internationalism. The United States was an example to the entire world, and its experiences, institutions and activities were relevant to other countries and peoples because they were part of the evolving drama of human history. What happened in America had universal significance. Conversely, events elsewhere became meaningful in terms of their relevance to the universalistic values which the United States embodied. It is no accident that in the above speech Seward did not confine himself to mentioning Latin America as an example of American expansion 'by attraction.' The same values and principles that spread from North to Central and South America could not fail to have their impact on other parts of the world. As he said, the 'influences of the United States' had in Europe 'awakened a war of opinion, that, after spreading desolation into the steppes of Russia, and to the base of the Carpathian mountains, has only been suppressed for a time by combination of the capital and of the political forces of that continent.' In Africa

'those influences, aided by the benevolent efforts of our citizens, have produced the establishment of a republic [Liberia] which ... is going steadily on toward the moral regeneration of its savage races.' In Asia, Seward asserted,

> Those influences have opened the ports of Japan, and secured an intercourse of commerce and friendship with its extraordinary people ... The same influences have not only produced for us access to the five ports of China, but also have generated a revolution there, which promises to bring the three hundred millions living within that vast empire into the society of western nations.

What Seward characterized as expansion by attraction has sometimes been referred to as liberal expansionism, or informal expansionism. In the history of United States foreign relations, it represented a world-view which envisioned an unlimited and universalistic expansion of American ideas and goods, not only through individual Americans acting as their transmitters but also through other peoples following the American model of progress. In contrast to the geopolitical vision which stressed power, the internationalist concept impelled Americans to think of their country's mission, duties, and responsibilities because of its unique existence as an embodiment of universalistic values and progressive ideas. The two strains developed side by side, and it would be wrong to single out either one of them as the dominant theme in American foreign relations. The image of the United States as a power existed together with the idea of America as a civilization, and along with other themes to be discussed later, characterized the way the American people and government viewed international affairs.

The internationalist strain was especially visible in American writings of the 1830s through the 1850s, when men often discussed their national experience in terms of the themes of progress and civilization. 'The history of humanity is the record of a grand march, more or less rapid, as it was now impeded by obstacles, and again facilitated by force, at all times tending to one point - the ultimate perfection of man,' wrote the 'Democratic Review' in 1839. (15) The 'American Whig Review,' not to be left behind, defined progress in terms of civilization, which it defined as 'the complete harmonious development of man in all his appropriate relations to this world.' The mission of civilization was 'to bring into one, the past, the present and the future - all nations and all generations.' (16) Writing for the 'North American Review,' Jonathan Chapman declared in 1834 that all

events of the past, the present and the future were interrelated as they revealed the steady march of man from barbarism to civilization. In this grand panorama of human progress, all artificial boundaries between nations and continents were insignificant, and ultimately there was to dawn upon earth the reign of a utopia, toward which man had ceaselessly been pressing forward. Such a utopia had not yet arrived, but at least in the United States civilization had reached a stage where one could see a concrete manifestation of human progress. As he said, 'the undefined something to which man has tended is none other than that whose reality is now ours; - ours because the human race has been struggling for it.' (17)

These ideas of progress and civilization, and the confident self-image of American history and society were frequently a basic determinant of the way Americans, in and out of government, viewed their country's external affairs. In Europe, Seward's above speech referred to the revolutionary waves of 1848 which he attributed to the influence of American ideas and example. Toward France, the United States Senate unanimously adopted a resolution 'tendering the congratulations of the American to the French people' on the successful launching of their second republic. George Bancroft, American minister in Prussia, went to Paris to offer advice as the French worked on their new constitution. When popular movements spread to Germany and culminated in an attempt at Frankfurt to create a united German nation, Secretary of State Buchanan sent a minister to that city to recognize the emerging new state. The mission had to be withdrawn in 1849 as the unification movement failed, but this act was severely criticized by Lewis Cass and other Democratic leaders. Farther east, when revolt against Austria took place in Hungary, its leader, Louis Kossuth, was likened by Americans to George Washington, and there was widespread public clamor for recognition of Hungary. The administration of President Zachary Taylor sent an emissary to observe the situation in that country, and when the Austrian government protested, Secretary of State Daniel Webster replied that the revolutionary events in Europe 'appeared to have their origin in those great ideas of responsible and popular governments on which the American constitutions themselves are founded.' The United States, therefore, had the right to be interested in the development of democratic institutions in Europe. Even after the failure of the revolution of 1848 in many countries in Europe, American interest did not decline. George Sanders, United States consul in London, maintained a rendezvous for political exiles from the continent and

used a diplomatic pouch for sending inflammatory letters, and Pierre Soule, minister to Spain, loudly proclaimed his sympathies with the anti-monarchists. (18) Underlying these acts and statements was the belief that ideas and institutions that had developed and matured in the United States were relevant to other countries, and that America, standing at the apex of human progress, had the duty to share them with the rest of the world. Although this type of internationalism was by no means the sole determinant of official policy, it provided one basic framework for viewing events overseas.

Similarly in Asia, Americans often viewed the 'opening' of China and Japan to foreign trade and intercourse through the lens of internationalism. The whole East admirably fitted into the American conception of history and civilization because of its ancient glory and modern stagnation. Asia was the land where civilization was born and which had since decayed or remained stagnant, while the West progressed and in time surpassed it. As a writer for the 'Southern Literary Messenger' put it in 1854: 'It is eminently the *past*, looking down from her few broken and time-stained columns, that alone tells us of what it once was, but is no more.' (19) Bayard Taylor, talking of the Ottoman empire, wrote in 1855 that 'the life of the Orient is nerveless and effete; the native strength of the race has died out.' (20) The Chinese were described by Francis Warrier as a people who 'have handed down their customs, from time as far back as the lights of tradition reach,' and who 'even now ... seem to be in a primitive state, both as to manners and customs.' (21) According to the 'Democratic Review''s characterization of Asia,

> A dull, dead, stationary, uniformity encrusts society. The history of today was the history of yesterday, and will be the history of tomorrow, occasionally relieved by the march of devastating armies, and more frequently by the tyrannous freaks of local pride and power ... Languor, sluggishness, and apathy take possession of the general mind. (22)

In contrast to the stagnant East was the image of a progressive, vigorous West. As S.A. Mitchell said in 1843, 'Asia, at a very early period ... appears to have made a vast stride in civilization; but then she stopped, and has suffered herself to be far outstripped by the originally less advanced nations of Europe.' (23) Since, in the generally accepted view of human progress, the United States was placed ahead of Europe, it followed that the people of Asia were far behind the Americans in the scale of civilization. But nineteenth-century

American internationalism did not stop here. A corollary of the image of a stagnant Asia was the rationalist faith that the latter could once again resume the march toward higher civilization if given impetus from the outside. 'Let it be understood,' said the 'Democratic Review' in 1839, 'that the same nature is common to all men, that they have equal and sacred claims, that they have high and holy faculties.' (24) It followed that if only those elements in the East which impeded its progress were removed and replaced by those which had contributed to Western advance, the former would be able to regain its ancient vigor and join the march of history. As 'DeBow's Monthly' put it in 1859, 'Left to themselves, the Asiatic, African, and Polynesian races seem to be as unchangeable in their habits as the bee; but they are readily modified and revolutionized by contact with superior civilization.' (25)

It was this task of 'regenerating' or 'awakening' Asia that the United States, as the vanguard of modern civilization, could and should perform through its example and through the activities of enterprising Americans overseas. 'It was up to the Americans,' declared 'Knickerbocker' in 1840, 'whether our fellow men shall reach the elevation whereof they are capable, and ... whether or not [we shall] confer on them the most inestimable of all earthly boons, the boon of Civilization.' (26) Was Asia, asked a writer in the 'Christian Examiner,' to remain unchanged? 'Certainly not,' was the answer; Western commerce and technology were bound to change Asia. 'To nourish and water, without inundating, all this growth and progress, there will be colonies of Europeans and Americans, wherever commerce attracts and climate favors.' (27)

Such perceptions enabled Americans to comprehend the 'opening' of China and Japan in a familiar framework of internationalism. While there was some initial criticism of the British use of force during the Opium War, the overwhelming sentiment in the decades before the Civil War was to favor the establishment of commercial relations with and the sending of American merchants, missionaries, and educators to China and to other countries of Asia. The same impetus had sent Americans to the Near East, where by the middle of the century they were conspicuous as missionaries and governmental advisors to the Ottoman empire and its dependencies. But it was the Perry expedition and the opening of Japan that particularly aroused interest in the United States. It seemed to be a perfect example of what America could do in and for the world. The United

States would induce a people, hitherto stubbornly refusing to associate themselves with the outsiders, to open their land for foreign contact, and the Americans would take a lead in bringing them the benefits of civilization. While, as seen above, Commodore Perry had also geopolitical intentions, one basic framework in which his expedition was viewed by Americans was internationalist; it was seen as an attempt to relate the two peoples through the universalistic medium of commercial and cultural intercourse. Americans would not only bring civilization to Japan, but also disseminate knowledge about Japan to the rest of the world. The assumption, of course, was that both the Japanese and the other peoples would appreciate such an endeavor by the Americans. They would all come together more closely knit as members of the world community.

The success of the Perry mission and the subsequent opening of commercial and diplomatic relations with Japan ensured that the Japanese would remain the favorites of Americans, as exemplars of what American internationalism could produce. Those who went to Japan discovered that its people had 'an aptitude for acquiring the civilization of the West to which no other Oriental race can lay claim.' The Japanese seemed to possess 'real vigor, thrift, and intelligence.' (28) When the Japanese government, only six years after the signing of an official agreement with Perry, sent its first mission to Washington, there was tremendous curiosity and favorable comment in the United States. The embassy, said the 'New York Times,' was the first Asian mission to a Christian state since the empire of Siam sent its envoys to the court of Louis XIV. (29) The Japanese mission involved consequences 'the most momentous to the civilization and the commerce of the world for ages to come.' (30) Henry Wood, who accompanied the Japanese as chaplain, noted that 'American customs, ideas and spirit have found their way' even to Japan. 'It cannot be told how much American intercourse in Japan ... will modify the spirit and institutions of that country, while the present Japanese Mission to the United States is certain to carry back a still stronger and more beneficent influence. The lowest official, and every cook and servant, will go back a missionary.' (31) A more characteristic expression of mid-nineteenth century American internationalism would be hard to find. Americans conceived themselves as missionaries to promote commerce, spread knowledge and increase goodwill among men; foreigners who came under their influence would in turn become agents of change in their societies, so that

there would be greater interdependence and understanding among nations.

3 NATIONAL INTERESTS

Not all Americans, however, responded to the Japanese embassy of 1860 solely in an idealistic, internationalist manner. Many of them would have agreed with the 'New York Times' editorial of 21 April that

> The Japanese Ministers are to be welcome as the forerunners of a wonderful expansion in the intercourse of maritime Asia with the United States; and we are already confidently counting upon our growing influence with the Chinese and Japanese nations, to give us certain immense future advantages over our European rivals in the opulent commerce of the Orient.

Such an opinion reflected the view that America's commercial interests were involved in the embassy, and that the nation could conceivably gain at the expense of its rivals. Implicit was a perception of commercial competition in the world, in which a country had to struggle hard to promote its interests. It would seize any and all opportunities for promoting specific material objectives, and its response to a foreign-policy issue would be dependent on its relevance to these interests.

This type of attitude is different both from power politics and from internationalist assumptions. Rather, it is a nationalistic response to a specific situation. One reacts to it not in terms of some grandiose concept of world politics or of universalistic principles, but in a narrow, pragmatic framework of how best to achieve particular objectives. What matters is how the interests of the nation in the immediate circumstances will fare. This is essentially a pragmatic and limited definition of the nation's relations with other countries, best summed up by the phrase 'national interest.'

'National interests,' of course, may include concern with a global balance of power or with the spread of knowledge and civilization throughout the world. But it will not help to discuss all manifestations of foreign policy as aspects of the national interest, since one will then have to examine these various aspects and propose a conceptual scheme for analyzing them. It seems more useful to consider a pragmatic response to foreign affairs in terms of specific national interests as one ingredient of United States relations with the

rest of the world. This ingredient may be termed 'national interest.' It connotes a narrow range of concerns with the nation's security, economic interests andprestige, in contrast to the larger preoccupations with global strategy or internationalism.

Many instances of early American diplomacy can be explained as products of such nationalism. The idea of national interest was first forcefully expressed in the 'Federalist' papers, where Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, George Washington and others stressed the need to take a 'national' as against a sectional view of the country's interests. As Hamilton said, the individual states comprising the new nation were 'incapable of enhancing the general interests of the Union,' and only a central government could speak and work for the promotion of the 'national interest.' The establishment of a federal authority was particularly important in the conduct of foreign affairs, and the Federalists urged that the new government be vested with powers over 'security against foreign danger' and 'regulation of intercourse with foreign nations.'

These two objectives would be common to all governments, and in asking that the American people support the creation of a federal agency to exercise these powers, the Federalists were able to draw upon the practices and precedents of European diplomacy since the seventeenth century. The basic assumption had been the existence of sovereign nations in a perpetual state of potential rivalry. Each country had to look after its own security and interests, and employed all available means, including warfare, to attain the ends. All aspects of a nation's interests were interrelated as it struggled for greater power. As William Mildmay said in 1765, 'A Nation cannot be safe without Power; Power cannot be obtained without Riches; nor Riches without trade.' (32) Or, according to Jean-Baptiste Colbert, 'Trade is the source of finance and finance is the vital nerve of war.' (33) Power, security and trade were thus closely linked together, and statesmanship consisted in making certain that the nation's needs were served in all three areas.

American leaders in the late eighteenth century were heirs to this tradition, and when they talked of national interest their model was undoubtedly the European powers. There was essentially no difference between them and the United States in their conception and pursuit of national interests. It is true, as has been often argued, that the United States enjoyed 'free security' in the first century of its history in the absence of powerful and ambitious

neighbors. In contrast to Europe, where nations shared frontiers and the distance of only a few miles separated one country's army from another's, the American continent was thinly populated, and one could travel hundreds of miles without crossing into another country. Aliens were usually immigrants who arrived to become American citizens, not foreign officials, soldiers or mercenaries. There were battles with Indian tribes, but they were not considered conventional wars as defined in European usage. In time there grew the conviction, as Alexis de Tocqueville put it, 'that [America's] only safeguard against itself lies in itself.' (34) In other words, national security came to mean not so much the safeguarding of the country from external threat, as the prevention of domestic disintegration. It depended on the American people's ability to compromise various interest groups and preserve national unity, rather than on diplomacy and warfare to prevent foreign invasions.

It would be wrong, however, to ignore security considerations as one ingredient of American foreign policy. From the very beginning, the federal government was concerned with ensuring the safety of Americans both at home and abroad. What little naval strength the new republic had was put to use in the Caribbean, the Pacific Ocean, the Mediterranean, and even in the Asian waters to extend protection to Americans overseas. It was considered a sign of national respectability to protect citizens away from home, and one of the first acts of the United States government was to seek to safeguard commercial activities along the North American coast. The Tripoli War (1801-5) demonstrated willingness to use force to protect Americans as far from home as Tripoli.

What is less obvious but of even greater significance was the protection of citizens in the American wilderness. Because the United States chose to be a vast continental nation-state, instead of a more compact country or a vastly extended empire made up of disparate parts, citizenship entailed federal protection. An American was entitled to the protection of the state anywhere within the national boundary, even though much of the country was still wilderness. Protection by state authority ultimately meant the extension of the power of the federal government, and the history of the westward movement amply demonstrates the close connection between 'exploration and empire.' (35) An American penetrating the western lands carried with him his citizenship, entitling him to constitutional guarantees of life and property. He was within the jurisdiction of the government in Washington, and he operated within the

legal system of the American nation. The national interest in this sense amounted to the protection of Americans as they sought to found new homes in the wilderness. It is important to remember that in disputed territories such as the Pacific Northwest and the Southwest, American settlers, traders, and explorers looked to distant Washington, rather than to closer authorities of the Hudson Bay Company or the Mexican government, for protection. They did not establish their communities within foreign jurisdiction. Instead, they remained Americans legally as well as morally. There was a kind of particularism about their behavior and convictions. By acting within the American political and legal process, they were extending the limits of the nation, and the latter in turn justified its claim over the wilderness by extending its authority and protection to them. The lands they occupied became part of the American nation, not simply distant trading posts to bring riches to the country's coffers, or frontier forts to safeguard an empire. The fact that there was relatively little threat to national security from without should not obscure this internal nature of American nationalism. National-interest considerations were first and foremost concerned with the safety of the life, property and enterprises of Americans at home. National strengthening hinged on the government's ability to provide it.

It is for this reason that there grew a tendency in the United States to view foreign affairs in terms primarily of their impact upon the welfare of Americans at home. Since the main objective of the federal government was considered to lie in safeguarding the security and well-being of the citizens, foreign policy issues were apt to be seen in the domestic context. Events occurring thousands of miles away overseas did not seem relevant so long as they left the Americans undisturbed in their pursuit of economic development. They expected their government to exercise its power and authority more at home than abroad. So long as there was peace, liberty and welfare within the national boundaries, America should not bestir itself to seek involvement in foreign affairs. It is obvious that this type of response - often described, too loosely, as isolationism - was a reflection of a peculiar brand of American nationalism, derived from a peculiar conception of national interest. It was not that the Americans lacked a foreign-policy outlook, but rather that their vision of an ideal world stressed an environment in which they would be free to engage in their private endeavors.

A foreign policy which created and strengthened such possibilities was to be welcomed and supported, but a policy which was not immediately related to them was viewed with skepticism.

This does not mean that there were no foreign-policy questions that affected the welfare of the country as a whole. From the very beginning there arose practical issues involving the new nation's relations with other countries which had to be dealt with by the government in Washington and their representatives overseas. In doing so they had to formulate some basis for policy, and explicitly or implicitly they developed conceptions of American national interests as guidelines to action. For instance, during the 1780s and 1790s, the key question in the country's external relations was the issue of navigation on the Mississippi river. The use of the river was an extremely important matter for American trade, especially the export of agricultural produce from the western states, and the federal government after 1789 consistently sought to have Spain recognize the Americans' right to navigate the river and to store goods at its mouth on the Gulf, New Orleans. Pinckney's treaty (1795), stipulating these points, was a product of ten years' negotiations with Spain.

American response to the European crisis of the 1790s was another instance where considerations of pragmatic national interests provided a determinant of policy. Although, as seen above, there was an ideological sympathy with the French Revolution, it alone did not determine United States foreign policy. Policy makers were keenly aware that the United States was intimately linked to Britain economically and commercially; the country exported vast quantities of raw materials, especially cotton, to England and its colonies, it supplied the bulk of foodstuffs to the British West Indies, and three-fourths of foreign imports into America originated in Britain and its empire. England was also a source of capital for the United States, as Englishmen purchased land, bank stock, governmental bonds and securities in the United States. British exports to the United States were a main source of tarriff revenue, the principal income for the federal government. Some efforts were made to diversify America's economic relations to lessen dependence on the British economy, but the existing obligations, the availability of ready credit and sheer habit tended to tie Americans closely to Britain.

Under the circumstances, George Washington's policy of neutrality was best calculated to protect America's

commercial interests. It would protect the nation's economic ties with Britain by refusing to side with France, although it meant sacrificing idealistic and sentimental attachment to the cause of the French Revolution. The victory of John Adams over Thomas Jefferson to succeed Washington as president confirmed general acceptance of this line of reasoning; Adams was an advocate of the policy of neutrality, and he also supported Jay's Treaty (1795) which was greeted favorably by those who stressed the importance of maintaining conciliatory and mutually profitable relations with Britain, even if that implied coolness toward France.

Until about 1805 such a pragmatic policy seemed to suffice. American trade and shipping flourished, as the nation took advantage of the European war as a middleman in economic relations. There were tremendous increases in the volume of re-exports, indicating that foreign products, once brought to American shores, were taken by American ships once again to other ports. The United States followed the principle of 'free ships free goods' - the idea that neutral ships could carry non-contraband goods free of molestation by belligerents at sea - and France, Britain and other powers on the whole tolerated America's neutral shipping. It seemed to benefit a belligerent without seriously helping its opponent. The situation changed after 1805, when Napoleon imposed the continental system in order to close the European continent to British trade and choke off England economically. Britain retaliated by denying American trade with France. The position of the United States, which hitherto had profited from the war between the European powers, became untenable, as American ships going to England would be seized by the French navy, and those trying to enter France would be captured by the British. Between 1807 and 1812, 389 American ships were seized by Britain, and 352 by France.

The situation compelled the Jefferson administration to confront the question of priorities, which presented itself in such stark seriousness for the first time in the nation's history. The United States had to clarify what its essential interests and policies were, and how to implement them. While there were many factors that eventually resulted in the war with Britain in 1812, the events after 1805 demonstrated the importance of a psychological dimension of the national interest. Quite apart from the fact that American ships were being captured, causing hardships to their owners and exporters, here was a challenge to the national will.

America was being humiliated by the great powers, who so cavalierly seemed to disregard the sensitivities of the republic across the ocean. This type of nationalism was different from the more optimistic, internationalist strain of the earlier years. Now it was a question of being taken seriously by other countries. To succumb to indignities, and to be treated as if American sentiments did not matter, was a direct challenge to the very idea of the United States as a respectable nation among nations. The country could not forfeit its right to be treated with dignity and consideration on high seas. It was this kind of nationalistic feeling, which transcended sections and interest groups, that provided the psychological background of the coming of the War of 1812.

The war settled little, but it served as a catalyst for overcoming national frustration over being regarded as a second-class nation by the great powers. In that sense it demonstrated the importance of national honor, prestige and pride as ingredients of the national interest. The country - at least individuals and groups that supported the war policy - would rather fight than accept cavalier treatment by others. As Henry Clay said in 1816, '[We have gained] Respectability and character abroad - security and confidence at home.' (36) Although the peace of Ghent (1814) was basically a truce arrangement, leaving aside Anglo-American disputes on shipping, blockade and other matters, the coming of peace coincided with the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and the United States emerged from the experience with self-confidence and respectability. In a world of sovereign states vying with one another for promoting their respective 'reasons of state,' the United States had proved itself up to the European powers in defining and fighting for what it considered its vital national interests and honor.

The United States, however, did not participate in the European international system that was structured out of the ruins of revolution and warfare. With a few exceptions, some of whom have been noted, Americans continued to consider their national interests narrowly, and their government dealt with foreign-policy questions on the whole in a pragmatic fashion, without concerning itself with geopolitical issues. For over a quarter century after 1815, the national interest tended to be viewed predominantly in economic terms. It was considered to be a basic objective of policy to foster economic development at home and expanding trade overseas. With this in mind, successive administrations devised various ways to assist individuals and groups to compete with foreigners. The tariff of 1816, for