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Working Paper

American Project

THE MAKING OF MODERN AMERICA, 1776-1940

AN ESSAY ON THREE THEMES

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**THE FIRST CENTURY OF NATIONAL LIFE**



I. Innovation and Process in the Making  
of Modern America

1. The National Style and the Constitution
2. The National Interest and Washington's Farewell Address
3. The Stages of Growth and the American Sequence in the Nineteenth Century
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## I. INNOVATION AND PROCESS IN THE MAKING OF MODERN AMERICA

### 1

#### The National Style and the Constitution

##### The Concept of a National Style

A national character reflects a collective personality. To describe and communicate character and personality requires a creative act, suffused by the private insights of an individual. A national style is a more manageable notion. It defines how the collective national personality deals with its environment, how it goes about solving or fails to solve the flow of problems with which the round of national life and changes on the world scene confront it. A national style can thus be related directly to the way a nation performs in concrete situations, without fully separating out the mysterious webs of human motive, of paradox, and of process which lie beyond.

The American national style takes its shape from the way the nation has come to deal with certain inescapable dilemmas which are universally the substance of organized human life. Among the dilemmas which Americans, like others, have had to face are these: a consciousness of both good and evil in themselves and in others; a compulsion to pursue individual advantage and a need to share the values and destiny of a larger community; an awareness of the uniqueness of particular circumstance and a compulsion to generalize; an instinct for order and continuity in social organization and the requirement of change and innovation in order to survive.

In finding the balances and compromises necessary to live with these dilemmas men do not generally work out consistent values,

institutions, or patterns of action. Neither individuals nor societies appear to be intrinsically well-integrated units. They somehow rock along contentiously in patterns of apparently irrational balance.

In consequence, when judged by norms of logical consistency, nations appear to behave paradoxically. Americans, for example, have often appeared to be at the same time the most idealistic and the most materialistic of peoples. They have appeared to be given simultaneously to extreme empiricism in dealing with reality and to applying peculiarly spacious abstractions to particular circumstances; to priding themselves on efficient administration while performing most effectively in convulsive response to acute crisis. They have appeared to elevate the individual uniquely in social life, values, and politics and at the same time to maintain bureaucratic structures which weigh heavily on him, a political system peculiarly suspicious of personal power, and a set of social conventions which appear to exact a high degree of conformity. But, since the performance of any nation may be described in terms of paradox, it is the content of a particular national style rather than the presence of paradox within it which deserves attention.

The initial content of the American style was determined by the American links to Britain--notably, to nonconformist Britain of the seventeenth century. The imperatives and opportunities of a wild but ample land early asserted themselves, however, transforming initially transplanted attitudes and institutions. In the eighteenth century the colonies could produce men as peculiarly American as Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Eli Whitney; and foreign travellers could begin their catalogue of American traits, many of which remain recognizable

down to the present. But a truly distinctive American style did not emerge until the surge over the Appalachians began in earnest after 1815 and the generation of Founding Fathers passed from the scene; and it did not reach its maturity until the latter decades of the nineteenth century, when the habits and manners of an expansive frontier society were fully interwoven with those decreed by the process of large-scale industrialization accompanied by massive flows of immigration.

The nation that was founded in the late eighteenth century was formed, then, by a society in transition, a society still strongly marked by the British connection but also touched in every dimension by features unique to a North American life which had been working their effect for a century and a half.

#### Idealism and Special Interest: Dual Origins of a Political Style

In public affairs the performance of the American nation begins with the Declaration of Independence. That assertion of nationhood in terms of transcendent conceptions of political and social organization fixed in the United States the most powerful and persistent element in its national style--a commitment to strive toward certain ideal goals in political and social organization and, somehow, to express responsibility for the pursuit of those goals on the world scene. But agreement to conduct war against a colonial power and the successful conduct of such a war are limited political acts even when accompanied by the statement of a national creed. They leave much still to be settled. The nation first confronted its abiding problems as a political community with the making of the Constitution.

The debates on the Constitution--at the Convention and in the states--were a unique occasion in American life. A whole generation of leaders and, to a lesser degree, the whole electorate were forced to consider explicitly and to reconcile formally the conflicting presuppositions of democratic political life when applied to a scattered group of communities mainly engaged in agriculture and living on the fringe of an empty continent.

In one sense this was no new experience for Anglo-Saxons or, indeed, for Americans, who had been living with written constitutions in one form or another since the joint stock company left its mark on certain of the colonial charters, who had been vigorously operating a colonial system which left considerable scope for the development of democratic politics, and whose system of law had been transplanted successfully from its already substantial British base. The conflicting imperatives of liberty and order, of individual freedom and the protection of property, of local and national loyalties were familiar themes to Americans of the 1780's. The generation that made the American Constitution had been struggling actively to find an appropriate formula for government in America for at least thirty years--say, since the Albany Plan of 1754. From one perspective the Constitution can be regarded simply as a limited step forward in a typically Anglo-Saxon sequence of experimental development which flowed on with the evolution of the two-party system, the powers of the Supreme Court, and much beyond.

On the whole, however, it is more illuminating to regard the making and acceptance of the Constitution as a radical innovation, a major adjustment of a society to its problems. In the backwash of a successful revolution, confronting a succession of internal and external problems

which threatened the unity and viability of the new nation, the men at the Philadelphia Convention were forced to do more than conduct a limited pragmatic exercise in problem solving. The problem they faced could not be solved by the enunciation of high principle, by minor innovation in an on-going system or by some combination of the two. They had to structure formally the relationship between political ideals and political reality. Their deliberations were marked by an almost total lack of conventional political rhetoric.

Men of both the Enlightenment and the world of practical American politics conscious to a remarkable degree of their mission in the context of the world's political history, they examined explicitly the conflicts they aimed to reconcile: an irreversible commitment (willingly or grudgingly acknowledged) to the democratic process, and fear for the unwisdom of the popular judgment and for its disrespect of property rights; a need to make a defensible nation with a free trading market, and an awareness of the power of state interests and the concessions they could exact; a need to centralize executive power, and an acute awareness of the inability of man to handle much power with grace. The American political leadership gathered at Philadelphia, a generation peculiarly comfortable with abstract thought, acknowledged the dilemmas implicit in the concept of unified democratic America and did not hesitate to reveal their compromises with the purity of democratic ideals.

But it was not their willingness to compromise that gave their deliberations a special character; for compromise was not new either in local politics or in the conduct of national affairs under the Articles of Confederation. It was, rather, the openness and clarity with which

they acknowledged and articulated an American version of the general human dilemmas in the political organization of society.

The Founding Fathers were not, of course, infallible. Although they were men acutely aware of sin and special interest, they were, for example, overidealistic about the possibilities of choosing a president above party. But their brief but thorough exposure of the roots of the American political problem yielded a remarkably secure and workable structure; and the day-to-day operation of American politics has continued ever since to evolve in the spirit of reconciled idealism and special interest out of which the Constitution was made. American politicians have not been judged on an absolute moral scale. They have been judged by their ability simultaneously to project the common values and goals of the community and to move toward them a little while building majority coalitions which combined the special interests and the larger loyalties of their constituencies. On the domestic scene compromise is not judged appeasement unless it transcends a subtle and scarcely definable boundary in common law and human behavior.

#### Innovation and Process in American Politics

Thus the subtle business of democratic politics was permitted by the Constitution to become one of the implicit common-law processes by which American society did its work. The language of American political oratory which came to be conventional was not designed to expose the nature of the political process so much as to associate particular political figures and positions with the nation's powerful half-true unifying ideals. It is mainly to the phrases of the Declaration of Independence rather than to those of the Constitution that political orators habitually turn; although the canons of the Constitution, too, have often been invoked as a cloak of legitimacy for special pleading.

But despite active debate on the substance of the Constitution and despite controversial interpretation by the Courts, the Constitution-- as a concept, taken as a whole--was quickly placed on a pedestal and at a distance, surrounded with a haze of sanctity which has tended to conceal the doubts about humanity, some bordering on the verge of cynicism, which it incorporates and which have helped to make it workable.

The transcendent idea of the Constitution has thus served to hold domestic political struggle within safe bounds; while its substance has offered an agreed working vocabulary for political communication and debate.

In the 1780's, the United States needed to take a large step markedly discontinuous with its current position. The framework of politics built up out of local, colonial, state, and national government under the Articles of Confederation did not work; and it probably could not be made to work with minor modification if national unity were to be maintained against internal and external centripetal forces. The problem demanded gross innovation, and the innovation was successfully accomplished.

Having survived the stormy first twelve years of the Constitution's operation; having accepted the inevitability of two-party strife, including the new dimension it gave to the already heavy responsibilities of the presidency; having accepted the role of the Supreme Court asserted by John Marshall; having come through the great European upheavals and the War of 1812 with an enhanced sense of nationhood; Americans turned away from their transient mood of intense political introversion and devoted themselves to operating vigorously within the new institutional framework. Its complex origins faded into the mists. Truly fundamental constitutional



issues were raised only by the problems leading to the Civil War; and these were kept from dominating the national political scene until well along in the 1850's. The rest was piecemeal adaptation in common law or by formal amendment, around a set of problems many new in content but essentially familiar in their essence.

Despite a continuity with developments before and after the Convention, the making of the Constitution was the product of a unique set of circumstances and, indeed, of a unique transitional generation of Americans. Like other successful innovations it permitted men to turn from the searching problems of design to the energetic operation of process.

The National Interest and Washington's Farewell Address

The National Interest in an Arena of Nation States

Despite its many changes, the shape of the world arena in which nations must perform has always had one historical continuity: the interests of the units within it have regularly clashed, and each national unit has retained for itself the ultimate right and capacity to use military force to pursue or to protect its own interests. Each nation as it came into the inherently competitive arena as a distinct unit has been forced, therefore, to define its interests and to build a military and foreign policy on that definition.

How shall territorial integrity be assured? The national prosperity? The nation's political, cultural, and religious dispositions? What active objectives, if any--territorial or ideological, political or economic--should be pursued beyond the nation's borders? From time to time these questions have been explicitly answered by national leaders. And, from day to day, by what was done or not done, the flow of a nation's military and foreign policy has provided detailed implicit responses to these questions which may or may not have been consonant with enunciated concepts of the national interest.

The United States, newly released from colonial status, its Constitution formulated and accepted, was plunged immediately into a setting of major war in the world arena which permitted no delay in defining its interests and taking a day-to-day operating position in military and foreign affairs.

Idealism and Power: The Dual Origins of a National Style in Foreign Affairs

The special character of the United States as a national community raised a problem in foreign and military policy rooted in a dualism

similar to that with which the Founding Fathers wrestled in making the Constitution: How should the sense of ideological commitment and mission built into American nationhood be related to the abiding imperatives of special national interest and national power? How should the new democracy, unique in its local geography and its distance from the seats of power as well as in its political organization and conception, deal with the conventional interests of a nation-state living in a world of competing sovereignties?

This was not a wholly new question even in 1788. First thoughts on a distinctively American interest had been stirred during the third quarter of the eighteenth century as the sense of communal identity grew and the colonies sought to define a new status for themselves within the British Empire.<sup>1</sup> The Revolution itself had been fought partly as a colonial revolt in the name of independence and freedom, partly through a wholly conventional balance-of-power alliance with France; and the Constitution had been drawn up and accepted in part because of external threats to the nation's physical integrity and to its ability to protect its economic interests in conventional diplomatic negotiation.

Against this background the nation faced a peculiarly searching test in defining its relation to the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, mingling as they did the worlds of national power and political concept. Despite American remoteness from the major theaters of conflict, these wars pervaded both the American economy and American political life, bringing with them disruption and trouble, from Citizen Genêt and the Alien and Sedition Acts to the Embargo and the War of 1812.

What was the American interest in the outcome of these wars? Should that interest be determined by an assessment of their ideological content? By memories of past assistance from the French? By revulsion from the excesses of the French Revolution and a continued sense of racial and cultural connection with the British Isles? By the impact of the belligerents' actions on special economic or regional interests? Or was there a distinctive American national interest that transcended trans-Atlantic ties of race, ideology, gratitude, or memory--and even short-run economic advantage?

#### Washington's Resolution

In his Farewell Address Washington spoke of these matters in the context of a general theme which embraced domestic as well as foreign policy. In the early portion of his statement he considered the dangers of party faction within the United States and, particularly, the danger of developing parties rooted in competing regional interests. He saw this danger compounded if domestic party strife were to converge with distinctive foreign policy positions, with each party tied in sentiment and interest to a major European power--a real enough danger in the 1790's.

Washington's objective was to strengthen the sense of nationhood and the barely achieved unity afforded by the Constitutional system. His method was to define on the domestic scene an area of national interest beyond region and party, and to define a distinctive American interest in relation to the world. He sought to limit the sphere in which Americans would act abroad in terms of the essentially universal ideals out of which the nation was constructed.

In his military assessment Washington asserted that, in the short run, the American nation could be protected by its own strength combined,

as opportunity required and offered, with that of other powers whose interests temporarily converged with those of the United States; and he sensed that in the long run the rise in American military potential, relative to others, if translated into a reasonably substantial defensive force at readiness, with a well-trained professional group at its core, could cope with whatever threats might arise.

Washington did not deny or ignore the reality of the American commitment to a distinctive set of values in political and social life. He spoke movingly of the nation's attachment to liberty. But he counselled that the nation's ideological commitment was likely to be fruitful only to the extent that the nation exploited the military possibility of a security achieved and maintained without taking up fixed positions in the European power struggle, working out its ideological destiny within its own expanding borders.

#### Innovation and Process in Foreign Policy

Washington's formulation of the national interest ranks with the making of the Constitution as a moment when the various strands in a major American problem were articulated in explicit relationship to one another at a high political level. His injunction dominated American foreign policy for almost precisely a century; but over that period the inner structure of his thought, and the military and political assumptions which gave them a validity in the world arena of the nineteenth century, were carefully re-examined by only a few. Accepting isolation in Washington's sense as a working formula, the nation from Jefferson's administration forward devoted itself to the process of building and consolidating a continental structure. The United States managed to acquire the requisite territory and to neutralize the Hemisphere from

any increase in major power influence at remarkably little diplomatic or military cost. And all this was done, step by step, with shrewdness and skill.

The cumulative myth of American isolation was, however, quite different from Washington's prescription for the way American foreign policy should evolve. A gap emerged between the concept of a virtuous isolated America uniquely free of wicked balance of power politics and the way American relations to the world were actually conducted. The nation practiced balance of power politics abroad just as it did at home in party politics conducted on a continental basis; and when military force was used in the nineteenth century it was used for relatively clear and limited political and geographic ends, not for unlimited crusade in the pursuit of ideal absolutes.

Down to the end of the nineteenth century, however, the myths about the foundations for isolation could live in reasonable comfort with an effective military and foreign policy just as myths about the Constitution did not interfere with the generation of lively and successful democratic processes.

The Stages of Growth and the American Sequence  
in the Nineteenth Century

The Era of Industrialization

The formation of the United States in the 1780's coincides almost exactly with the moment when the first of the world's industrial revolutions gathered momentum--in Great Britain. Since then, and without significant pause, as one people after another has chosen to accept the benefits and to face the costs of applying to its resources a technology rooted in modern science, the transformation of old agricultural societies has proceeded. When the difficult calculus has been assessed, men have chosen the strains and potentialities of economic growth rather than the real satisfactions but limited productivity of traditional societies.

From Britain the process first spread out across the Channel and the Atlantic to Western Europe and the United States. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century it spread to Japan and Russia, and in the twentieth century to <sup>the</sup> whole southern half of the world as well as to those vast areas in Eastern Europe and China which had failed to revolutionize themselves so as to permit absorption of modern technology in the previous century.

In the past hundred and seventy years the sequence of economic growth has substantially--not exclusively, but substantially--determined the shape of the world arena of power, the relative status within it of the various nation states, and the central problems with which politicians at home and diplomats and soldiers abroad have been confronted. Thus the evolution of national life in the United States, the grand issues of American domestic social and political strategy, and the changing agenda of the American national interest abroad can all be usefully--

if partially--defined in terms of the sequence of economic growth.

Economic growth engages not merely the pursuit of private advantage, but the whole range of human motives, for growth is the economic consequence of changes in all parts of a society, not merely its economy. Men have done the things necessary to make economies grow in order to express their individuality in its widest sense, to elevate the status of their clan or social class, and to achieve dignity and power for the nation--as well as to make money. To look at societies in terms of their stages of growth, as this book systematically does, is to look at whole societies and whole men from one arbitrary perspective; but it is a perspective peculiarly relevant to public life, to diplomacy, and to military affairs.

#### Five Stages of Growth

Before turning to the adventure of American growth in the nineteenth century, it may be useful, then, to summarize in general the stages through which modern societies have passed on the road to high levels of mass consumption.<sup>2</sup>

The traditional society. The traditional society is based on production methods of limited efficiency, usually in agriculture but sometimes pastoral. Acreage may be expanded, some innovations may be introduced, productivity may rise with, for example, the improvement of irrigation works; but the central fact about the traditional society is that there is a limit to the level of attainable output, a ceiling imposed by the fact that the potentialities which flow from modern science and technology are either not available or are not applied for other reasons.

Neither in the longer past nor in recent times have traditional societies and their economies been static. The area and volume of trade



within them and between them has fluctuated, for example, with the degree of political and social turbulence, the efficacy of central rule, the upkeep of the roads. Population has risen and fallen, not only with the sequence of the harvests but also with the incidence of war and plague. Varying degrees of manufacture have developed; but, as in agriculture, the level of productivity has been limited by the inaccessibility of modern science and its applications. Generally speaking, traditional societies have been hierarchical in social structure, with relatively narrow scope for vertical mobility, and with family and clan connections playing a large role in social organization. Political power has been centered regionally in the hands of those owning or controlling the land, who maintained fluctuating but usually profound influence over such central political power as existed.

#### The Pre-Conditions for Take-Off Into Sustained Economic Growth

The take-off is the watershed when, at last, a traditional society builds regular growth into its institutions and methods; but it takes a long time for a traditional society to prepare itself--to create the pre-conditions--for this decisive transition. The pre-conditions for take-off were initially developed within Western Europe of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as the insights of modern science, given order and dramatic impact by Newton, began to be translated into new production methods in both agriculture and industry. Among the Western European states, Britain, favored by geography, trading possibilities, and social and political structure, was the first to take off.

The more general case in modern history has seen the stage of pre-conditions begin with some intrusion by more advanced societies which shocked the traditional society and began its undoing but also set in

motion ideas and sentiments which initiated the process of modernization. Then the idea that economic progress is possible spreads. Education begins to broaden and change to suit the needs of modern economic activity. New types of enterprising men come forward willing to mobilize savings and to take risks in pursuit of profit. Banks and other institutions for mobilizing capital appear. Investment increases in transport, communications, and raw materials in which other nations may have an economic interest. The scope of commerce, internal and external, widens. And, here and there, modern manufacturing enterprise appears. But all this activity proceeds at a limited pace within an economy and a society still mainly characterized by traditional low-productivity methods, by the old social structure and values, and by the regionally based political institutions that developed in conjunction with them.

In many instances the traditional society has persisted side by side with modern economic activities conducted for limited economic purposes by a colonial or quasi-colonial power. Politically, the building of an effective centralized national state in opposition to the traditional landed regional interests, the colonial power, or both--was a decisive aspect of the pre-conditions period, and, almost universally, a necessary condition for take-off.

#### The Take-Off

In the take-off the old blocks and resistances to steady growth set up by the traditional society are finally by-passed or overcome. The forces making for economic progress, which had hitherto yielded limited bursts and enclaves of modern activity, expand and come to dominate the society. Economic growth becomes its normal condition, and the society expands as if governed by compound interest.

In Britain and the well-endowed parts of the world populated substantially from Britain (the United States, Canada, etc.) the proximate stimulus to take-off was mainly, but not wholly, technological. In the more general case the take-off awaited not only the build-up of adequate transport facilities and a minimum technological basis for growth, but also the emergence to political power of a group prepared to regard the modernization of the economy as serious high order business.

During the take-off the rate of effective investment and savings may rise from, say, 5 per cent of the national income to 10 per cent or more, although where heavy social overhead capital investment is required to create the technical preconditions for take-off the investment rate in the pre-conditions period could be higher than 5 per cent as, for example, in Canada before the 1890's and Argentina before 1914. In such cases capital imports usually formed a high proportion of total investment in the pre-conditions period.

Key new industries expand rapidly, yielding profits a large proportion of which are reinvested in new plants; and in turn the new industries stimulate through their rapidly expanding requirement for factory workers, the services to support them, and other manufactured goods a further expansion in urban areas and in other modern industrial plants. As agriculture is commercialized, new techniques spread to the countryside as well, as increasing numbers of farmers become persuaded that the new methods are more productive than the old, and they acquiesce in the deep changes they bring to ways of life. A new class of businessman, usually private, sometimes public servants, emerges and directs the enlarging flow of investment. The economy exploits hitherto unused natural resources and methods of production. In a decade or two both the basic structure

of the economy and the social and political structure of the society are transformed in such a way that a steady rate of economic growth can be regularly sustained.

### Maturity

There follows a long interval of sustained if fluctuating progress. Some 10 to 20 per cent of the national income is steadily invested, permitting output regularly and perceptibly to outstrip the increase in population. Progress becomes the normal condition, the normal expectation. The make-up of the economy changes increasingly as techniques improve, new industries accelerate, and older industries level off. The economy finds its place in the international economy. Goods formerly imported are produced at home; new import requirements develop, and new export commodities to match them. The society makes such terms as it will with the requirements of modern efficient production, balancing off the new against the older values and institutions or revising the latter in such ways as to support rather than to retard the growth process. The old culture is not destroyed; it merely adapts itself to the imperatives of regular industrial growth.

Some sixty years after take-off begins (say, forty years after the end of take-off) maturity is attained. The economy, focussed during the take-off on a relatively narrow complex of industry and technology, has extended its range into more refined and technologically often more complex processes. For example, there may be a shift in focus from the coal, iron, and heavy engineering industries of the railway phase to machine tools, chemicals, and electrical equipment, the transition through which Germany, Britain, France, and the United States had passed by the end of the nineteenth century or shortly thereafter.

The maturing of the industrial system can be defined in more general terms as the stage in which an economy demonstrates the capacity to move beyond the original industries which powered its take-off and to absorb and to apply efficiently over virtually the whole range of its resources the most advanced fruits of the currently modern technology. This is the stage in which an economy demonstrates that it has the technological and entrepreneurial skills to produce not everything but anything that it chooses to produce. It may lack, like contemporary Sweden and Switzerland, for example, the raw materials or other supply conditions required to produce a given type of output economically; but its dependence is a matter of economic choice or political priority rather than a technological or institutional necessity.

Empirically, the case for, roughly, a sixty-year interval between take-off and maturity is reasonably good: for Britain, from the 1780's to the Crystal Palace Exposition of 1851; the United States, 1840-1900; Germany, 1850-1914; Japan, 1880 to Pearl Harbor; Russian, 1890 to its first nuclear explosion in 1949. Analytically, the explanation for some such interval lies probably in the powerful arithmetic of compound interest applied to the capital stock combined with the consequences for a society's capacity to absorb modern technology of three successive generations living under a regime where growth is the normal condition. But, clearly, no dogmatism is justified about the exact length of the interval from take-off to maturity.

#### Durable Consumers Goods and Services

As societies moved into maturity under conditions of twentieth century technology two things happened: real income per head rose to a point where a

large number of persons gained command over consumption which transcended basic food, shelter, and clothing; and the structure of the working force changed in ways which increased not only the proportion of the population in white and blue collar jobs who are aware of and anxious to acquire the consumption fruits of a mature economy. The sewing machine and then the various electric-powered household gadgets were gradually diffused. Historically, however, the decisive element has been the cheap automobile which permitted extended metropolitan areas to develop beyond the orbit of the street car and the bicycle, with all that followed in terms of the content and expectations of suburban life.

For the United States the turning point was, perhaps, Henry Ford's moving assembly line of 1913-14; but it was in the 1920's and again in the postwar decade 1946-56 that this stage of growth was pressed virtually to its logical conclusion. In the 1950's Western Europe and Japan appear to have fully entered this phase, accounting substantially for a momentum in their economies quite unexpected in the immediate postwar years. The Soviet Union is technically ready for this stage, and, by every sign, its citizens hunger for it; but Communist leaders remain committed to tap off disproportionate resources for military, foreign policy, and investment purposes, in part because they would face grave political and social problems of adjustment if the stage of durable consumers goods were wholeheartedly launched in Russia.

Beyond, it is impossible to predict, except perhaps to observe that Americans, at least, have behaved in the past decade as if, after a point, diminishing relative marginal utility set in for durable consumers goods; and they have chosen, at the margin, larger families, leisure, and services.

### The Nature of the American Case

In terms of the process of economic growth, the United States belongs among a small group of lucky nations, notably, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.<sup>3</sup> The luck of this group has consisted in two related facts, one technical and the other cultural. Technically, the United States enjoyed a balance between population and natural resources (including fertile land) which permitted a relatively high standard of welfare for each inhabitant even in pre-industrial days. Culturally, these nations, building substantially on foundations derived from a Britain already in transition towards modernization, have not had to overcome to the same degree as the older societies which moved into industrialization the heavy weight of low-productivity, labor-intensive agriculture, feudal land structures, social organization, and values, and the powerful regional political interests which have systematically obstructed the process of modernization in so many parts of the world.

Despite the ease with which the transition to industrialization could be made from the capitalist agricultural and commercial base of eighteenth century America, the national experience was not wholly free of certain more universal problems which underdeveloped societies have confronted before take-off was launched. The Federalist coalition--with its mixture of fears for national safety and its vision of a unified secure national market and industrialization--bears a family resemblance to those coalitions of soldiers and merchants that in many societies have created the national political base required for economic growth; and, although Jefferson's vision of a commonwealth of independent farmers extending out over a great fertile continent was uniquely American, the resistance to the concept and implications of industrialization by

agricultural groups has been a familiar feature of the pre-conditions period in many societies. And, again, although slavery on the American scene was a unique problem, many other societies have experienced struggle between those committed to industrialization and to the values of a modern society against those whose way of life and political influence in the nation hinged on the perpetuation, if not the extension, of a more traditional agricultural system and the structure of classes and values that went with it.

Moreover, the United States was, to a degree, delayed in its industrialization by the very fact that rich land was available in abundance for a relatively small population. Urban labor was scarce and commanded a wage rate that had to compete against what a man could produce with free reasonably fertile land. From the late eighteenth century forward, relatively high American wages established a premium on labor-saving machinery, from the late eighteenth century forward, wherever industrial processes were set in motion; but they also set a high threshold which had to be surmounted before industry could take firm hold. Nevertheless, in the end, the existence of a vast and fertile continent and the process of industrialization powerfully converged.

#### Completion of Pre-Conditions and Take-Off

The convergence did not come fully into play until the second decade of the American take-off in the 1850's. In that remarkable interval the railway network was thrown out to the Middle West, binding the two northern regions of the nation together, laying the basis for modern iron, coal, and heavy engineering industries, and providing the pull to match the push of European hunger and high food prices in bringing the flood of immigrants



across the Atlantic. Before that time the American economy had shifted the focus of enterprise almost rhythmically between the exploitation of the land and the creation of the pre-conditions for industrial growth.

In the 1790's, in response to European needs and high prices, the production and export of foodstuffs and raw materials expanded and early experiments with modern industry came to little, overwhelmed by the attractiveness of agricultural and commercial alternatives and inadequacies in management, technical skill, and the working force. In the first fifteen years of the new century the fortunes of agriculture and trade were rendered erratic by Napoleon's Blockade, Jefferson's Embargo, and the War of 1812; but the vicissitudes of war gave American industry a protected market to try its hand in substitution for British manufactured imports. With the arrival of peace, the industrial war babies mainly collapsed, and there followed the first of the three pre-Civil War surges into new land: 1816 to 1818; the push of the 1830's for new cotton acreage and to exploit the regions made accessible to the East by the Erie Canal; then the 1850's, with the line filling out from Texas to the Dakotas and the excitement of California and gold heightening the pressure to complete the continental structure.

Meanwhile, industrialization began slowly to acquire a solid American base. In the 1820's there was built on the sturdy foundation provided by Francis Cabot Lowell's resilient war baby a viable modern cotton textile industry in New England. Around that industry there occurred a general regional industrial revolution, in much the same way that Britain's cotton textile developments of 1783-1802 yielded a generalized take-off. This momentum was maintained in the 1830's; and, in the 1840's, with eastern capital less drawn to the western lands and public improvements of the

previous decade, the northeast laid down its railway network and expanded industry on a wider basis. From this eastern base, the westward leap was made in the 1850's, with the railways not only bringing back to the coast the products of the prairie states and not only creating the framework for a national market but also setting in motion a steady requirement for a heavy industrial output. Although a long road lay ahead, the American take-off was completed by the eve of the Civil War.

As the economic transformations of 1815-60 were driven forward, they reinforced changes in the whole cast of American life. The vision of America as a land of equal opportunity assumed new dimensions as horizons of land and of industrial growth expanded. And the lifting of horizons extended to public schools and libraries, to Emerson's audiences, to a nation's "magnificent image" of its destiny which embraced but transcended the material tasks at hand. The political process shifted into the hands of men of a new generation, as the initial constitutional controversies gave way to bread and butter matters, and issues of the locus of power raised by the vast process of extension: tariffs, credit, public improvements.

Industry acquired a less secure base in the South, and that region did not fully share in the spread of popular education and in the distinctively American cultural currents in the North; but the South was also a confident, prosperous, and expanding empire in the 1850's.

### The Drive to Maturity

Like the Napoleonic Wars--which struck Britain at a comparable stage of economic growth--the Civil War, even excluding its destructive impact on the South, almost certainly reduced the rate of American economic development below the level it would otherwise have attained in the 1860's. The demands

of the military in the field stimulated meat-packing, the woolen industry, and certain kinds of metal-working trades; but railway building was temporarily slowed down and with it the industries railway construction directly and indirectly sustained.<sup>4</sup>

After the Civil War the South, in a state of chaos, had slowly to reform its structure and gradually to make the pre-conditions for a regional take-off which was solidly begun only some seventy years after Appomatox. But the nation as a whole moved on after 1865 with accelerated momentum. The railways were pushed out to the Pacific, and the railway era was brought towards its close in two waves: the first wave of the early 1870's completed the skeletal structure of the transcontinental railway system; and the second, of the early 1880's, rounded it out with double tracking and feeder lines.

Iron, coal, and heavy engineering had led the way in the first phase of American industrialization, responding to the stimulus of massive railway construction. As industrialization proceeded, steel launched its great expansion, and railway steel remained an important category of use; but the emphasis was on larger, more efficient, and cheaper rolling stock, and on steam engines rather than on rails. And the mass-produced lighter engineering products came into their own: agricultural equipment, the typewriter, and those two almost universal harbingers of the consumers durable revolution--the sewing machine and the bicycle. Above all, with the railways laid, the nation became a unified continental market with powerful incentives in it to organize production and distribution in vast centralized units. American enterprise moved into industries using a wider range of technology, a different and more skilled working force.

Much in this industrial surge was based on radical improvements in the metal-working machine tool, which comes as close to being a correct symbol for the second phase of American industrial growth as the railway is for the first. And, by the 1890's, the electricity, automobile, and chemical industries, which were to play an extremely important role in the third phase, were commercially in being.

As the nineteenth century ends, then, the majestic arc of geographical extension and industrial growth had filled out the continent and brought the American economy to a stage of maturity. The full existing range of modern technology was in the nation's grasp and was being voraciously applied. It was the many-faceted drama of these material developments that had absorbed the national energies, served as a backdrop to its military and foreign policy, and shaped a national style which, although distinctive, was still linked to the nation's pre-industrial history.

## Lincoln and Civil War

### The Break in Continuity

American growth, with its contrapuntal themes of geographical extension and industrial expansion, unfolded in remarkable continuity, presenting to Americans for a century a flow of exciting problems each in itself unique but susceptible to solution by familiar and increasingly well-established processes.

In the conflict over slavery, however, the nation faced a problem where even substantial modification of familiar process could not work. The forces of geography, economics, and American history in its widest sense decreed that the slave South would have to become a minority region as the nation extended to the West Coast. Feeling at stake the loss of a distinctive way of life, the South preferred to risk going down in the manner to which it had become accustomed rather than accept the future it believed implicit in Lincoln's victory.

There is ambiguity in the events leading to the Civil War which makes its inevitability still debatable. Could, for example, the North have so behaved as to have made it psychologically and politically possible for the South to accept a limitation of slavery within its existing area? Could the South have made better assessments of the underlying attachment of the North to unity and of the North's military potential when mobilized and thus assessed more accurately its likely fate in a military show-down? But however temperate the North might have been, however willing to continue to suppress the conflict between the principle of slavery and the principle of majority rule in the new territories and, perhaps, it was impossible for

any American, North or South, to predict persuasively how the North would react when it confronted the brutal fact of national disunity at Fort Sumter. In any case, after a decade of experiment with formulæ, no one had defined in 1860 a politically viable extension of the sequence of compromises over slavery which had begun in the negotiation of language for the Declaration of Independence and had run through the Constitutional Convention down to the Missouri Compromise of 1850.

Thus Lincoln, like the Founding Fathers, faced a problem of gross discontinuity, the necessity for radical innovation which could be no longer postponed; and, like them and like Washington in the Farewell Address, he proved capable of articulating in powerful abstractions the dilemma which the nation confronted and the solution he proposed.

#### The Shape of the Dilemma

There were two issues: national unity and the status of the Negro in American society. Lincoln evoked and held with remarkable firmness to a particular view of their connection. He was for national unity and against slavery; but he refused to permit himself the indulgence of identifying the two issues. He was prepared openly to compromise on the moral issue of slavery in the interests of national unity; and he did not let himself believe that the Negro's status in American life could be brought into conformity with American social values by the simple fact of victory in war. Emancipation was, indeed, brought about as a by-product of the war and its conduct; but Lincoln knew that the nation confronted a long and painful evolutionary process to which Northern victory in the war might contribute

but which it did not guarantee. In short, Lincoln denied himself the emotional luxury of a crusade.

Since the Constitutional Convention there has been no major political figure other than Lincoln who manipulated and balanced with such clarity the mixture of conflicting abstract goals on which American life has been built. And, in all its consequences for his own time and later, in this lay his genius.

Among other things Lincoln was from his youth a thoroughly professional American politician. He rose to eminence and power on the slavery issue, to which he brought every quality of his spirit, his perception, and his ambition. The position he devised was extremely powerful politically because it was his insistent separation of unity from abolition and his priority for the former which held the border states in the Union and made victory vastly easier if, indeed, it did not make it possible at all.

The ultimate power of Lincoln's articulation of the meaning of the Civil War arose, however, not merely from his sturdy separation of the constitutional issue of unity from the moral issue of slavery. His position gained its final stature from the special ideological dimension he gave to the concept of unity. He knew that in many parts of the nation the question of unity was tied up with special interests of great political power--for example, the new West's determination to keep the route to New Orleans within the Union. Those interests and pressures he fully exploited. But he did not stop there. While exposing the moral blemish implicit in the history and status of the Negro in America, from his First Inaugural onward Lincoln reaffirmed the concept of the United States as a nation

whose survival in unity had a transcendent meaning. He recommitted the nation to continuity with its old sense of an on-going mission, a special evolving process imperfect but ultimately governed by moral and religious values.

### The Resumption of Process

The nation could not sustain the tension and balance of Lincoln's position any more than it sustained the mood and terms of the Constitutional Convention. The conflicts briefly synthesized to produce a Constitution, fell back into the arena of national politics, to be refought and compromised again and again. Similarly, the interests and passions briefly synthesized by Lincoln fell out into their component parts. The painful sequence of the Reconstruction and its failure was played out; and the status of the Negro in terms of ideal American values was left very slowly to evolve, case by case, in experimental processes. Nevertheless, the crisis of radical innovation was passed; viable rules for American political life had been made and accepted; the Union was preserved; the nation could, without unacceptable cost, lapse back to its instinctive operating style.

But an awareness of the possibility of failure, of tragedy, and of grandeur in American life was somehow, somewhere, to a degree, left behind beneath the surface of the triumphant drive to continental unity and industrial maturity; an awareness that the comforting, successful routines of progress could and might again be broken; and awareness that the real moral issues behind the convenient national process of compromise might again have to be confronted.



II. The National Interest and National Style in  
War and Diplomacy

5. Power and Ideology in Nineteenth Century Diplomacy
6. The Making of the Professional Diplomatic Tradition
7. Military Force in an Isolated Democracy
8. The Making of the Military Tradition

Power and Ideology in Nineteenth Century Diplomacy

American diplomacy in the nineteenth century reflected accurately the three major elements which shaped the nation's contours and were synthesized in Washington's counsel: the commitment to nationhood in terms of democratic ideals; the Constitutional framework for the compromise of regional and other special interests; and the initial absorption of national energies and purposes in the process of growth within a fertile, empty continent. Out of these commitments and interests, the nation in the nineteenth century fashioned for the conduct of its diplomacy a thoroughly workable process capable of a rationale the conflicts of which with the nation's moral commitments were at least livable. This process unfolded in a sporadic series of negotiations and pronouncements which were closely linked to the problems and possibilities which emerged from the arena of power in which the nation found itself.

The Nineteenth Century Arena

In the nineteenth century a considerable area of the relations between national states was conducted on the basis of international law and common law understandings quite independent of the force that could be brought to bear by one country against another. Despite important exceptions, notably in colonial areas, the rights of persons to travel, the rights of nationals when in foreign countries, and the conduct of international trade and capital flows were widely ruled by precedents for which there was international consensus and respect.

In the major issues of diplomacy, however, the interplay of force and potential force was never far from the surface of things, constituting the framework within which diplomacy proceeded. The pattern of world power

was determined by the fact that Britain emerged in 1815 as the sole nation to have moved beyond its take-off into sustained industrial growth. In the early nineteenth century, at the peak of its power, Britain did not directly dominate the world; but it dominated the seas and the maritime fringes of the great continents; and its paramount role in trade, shipping, and the flows of international capital re-inforced the influence of its flexible naval strength. The inner reaches of the continents were either pre-occupied with the processes of transformation towards modern status, as in Europe, or still caught up in essentially traditional societies, as in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. A limited British hegemony was the basis of the century of respite from major international war which followed 1815. But in the course of the nineteenth century increased effective power was being generated in France, Germany, Russia, and Japan; many limited engagements were fought or barely avoided; and at no time from 1787 forward was the United States freed of an environment of active or latent major power conflict.

This fact was recognized and accepted from the beginning by those charged with American foreign affairs. The working rule of American diplomacy came to be to exploit major power conflicts in order to advance direct American interests. Victory in the War of Independence itself hinged on an American alliance with France which was a by-product of Anglo-French power conflict. And after the nation was formed, the success of its diplomacy continued to depend on a systematic exploitation of the continuing power struggle among the great European states.

#### Scavenging on the Fringe of the World Arena

Once, at least, in the War of 1812, American scavenging on the fringe of the big arena met only limited success at best. But it yielded

good results in the whole series of Anglo-American negotiations from Jay's Treaty of 1794 to the Alaska boundary arbitration of 1903. Anglo-American tension developed from time to time, even as late as the Venezuela Boundary Dispute of 1895-1896; but the underlying security interests of Britain and the military potential of the United States, if ultimately challenged, defined a fairly spacious working area for diplomats.

A United States virtually unarmed (except for the distracted Civil War years) could bargain on a basis of equality with a Britain controlling the seas, due to the vulnerability of Canada and the growing sense that, militarily as well as economically, the maintenance of the British world position required a United States that was not actively hostile and which was potentially at least a counterforce to Britain's continental rivals. Britain's strength was sufficient to prevent any superior power or power bloc from crystallizing in Europe against it, but it was not sufficient to conduct a second active front in the Western Hemisphere; and, as the century wore on, and the weight of Germany was progressively felt in the diplomacy of the Old World, Canning's concept of the New World's balancing role, enunciated during the negotiations leading to the Monroe Doctrine, took on a new vitality in British minds.

The United States benefited in other directions from the military preoccupations of European powers. As nearly as one can reconstruct Napoleon's thought, as war was resumed in 1803 after the brief Peace of Amiens, Jefferson was offered the Louisiana Territory by the French to avoid its occupation by the British; and Seward was offered Alaska because the Russians, with memories of the Crimean War, wished an American buffer between Siberia and British Canada. The ease with which the American continent was consolidated, with substantial recourse to arms only in the

Mexican War and against the Indians, the easy acceptance by the world's powers of the Monroe Doctrine, and even the possibility of conducting the Civil War without dangerous interference from other nations, hinged on a fortunate relationship between American interests and the interplay of military power on the world scene during the nineteenth century.

The national tendency to exploit in its own interest and without the use of American force the possibilities opened by the interplay of power on the world scene was also evident in the one area beyond the Western Hemisphere where American interests became seriously engaged in the nineteenth century--the Far East. In China, where the nation developed considerable commercial interests after 1815, American diplomacy moved in behind the British victory in the Anglo-Chinese War of 1839-1842 to negotiate in 1844, in the treaty of Wanghia, a favorable commercial arrangement including explicit extraterritorial rights. Caleb Cushing combined a degree of threat with his diplomacy, but the Chinese, resigned after their defeat by Britain to the disturbing fact of enlarged trade with the outside world, were mainly concerned to avoid excessive unilateral rights accruing to any one power.

Commodore Perry's show of force initiated the opening of Japan to trade in the treaty of 1854; but the opening was extremely narrow until Townsend Harris, in the wake of the major European powers, negotiated the commercial treaty and convention (1857-1858), arguing along the following lines:<sup>5</sup>

Harris, unaccompanied by force, secured this treaty by pointing out emphatically to the Japanese: (1) that the Government of the United States prohibited the acquisition of territory in the Far East--it would not even admit into the Union countries, like Hawaii, which had requested admission; (2) that Great Britain and Russia, converging on Asia south and north might seize Japanese territory as a base of operations; (3) that

Japan might best protect her menaced homeland by 'going western' and training herself under American tutelage to meet the European powers in their own manner; she should therefore give up the policy of exclusion, admit all foreigners freely to her trade, and preserve her own independence and integrity by playing off their rivalries against each other....

These were not the representations of a naive or innocent power.

### The Role of Idealism

The acceptance of power politics and the reality within it of an American national interest did not end the problem of reconciling American diplomacy and American ideals even among those most professionally concerned. There was, for example, the famous muted duel between Monroe and John Quincy Adams.

As multiple pressures converged on the American government for a fresh definition of the American position within the Western Hemisphere, the President (and Calhoun) were tempted to lean, in part at least, on an ideological identification with the newly independent Latin American states and on a kind of liberation doctrine with respect to Greece and other current victims of the Holy Alliance. Looking south within the Hemisphere, Adams took a dim view of the prospects for democracy in states with so powerful a feudal and clerical heritage. Looking east out over the seas, he counseled that the nation should accept the existence of two systems of states, one American, the other European, applying to its ideological sympathies that self-discipline it was seeking to impose on the European powers within the Western Hemisphere. Although traces of ideological thought and impulse can be found in the language of the Monroe Doctrine, Adams won,<sup>6</sup> confirming the spirit of Washington's Farewell Address, and setting the framework for American diplomacy down to the 1890's.

America in its view of the world did not abandon its old sense of

mission and destiny. It used that conception as a rationale for a purposeful, even ruthless, extension of American power over the face of the continent; and it preserved something of the conviction that, in building and maintaining an America more or less loyal to the principles on which it was founded, the nation was performing an act of international, if, indeed, not of religious, significance. And from Franklin's encouragement by the French view of the universal meaning of the American Revolution, down through the Manchester workingmen's message to Lincoln, to the flow of hopeful immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe as the nineteenth century ended this conception was not without substance.

During its first century the nation generally accepted its good fortune as a natural gift, without understanding fully its foundation in the peculiar structure of the world arena of military power and the American relation to it. After 1815 in support of foreign policy only the Mexican War called for the expenditure of blood, and only Alaska, for substantial treasure. Popular illusions could persist.

However, these illusions were not generally shared by American officials charged with American foreign policy in the nineteenth century. The Presidents and Secretaries of State who consolidated the continental structure and made the Monroe Doctrine stick were knowledgeable men. It was no accident that the American Secretaries of State included some of the ablest and shrewdest political minds the nation produced: Jay, Jefferson, Randolph, Marshall, Madison, Monroe, John Quincy Adams, Clay, Van Buren, Webster, Calhoun, Buchanan, Seward, Hamilton Fish, and Blaine. The issues of American diplomacy in the nineteenth century were often of first-rate domestic political importance, touching vital and self-evident national and regional interests, determining the geographical contours

of the nation and its status in the Western Hemisphere. They were taken seriously and generally handled with skill.

On the great continental and hemispheric issues the national diplomatic tradition was, then, purposeful and thoroughly professional; and within that tradition there developed operating methods which geared into the living machinery of American political life.



The Making of the Professional Diplomatic Tradition

Diplomacy in a Federal Democracy

From the earliest moves in American diplomacy there became evident certain persistent characteristics of the national style in foreign affairs, a style deriving from a government of diffused authority, serving a nation to which diplomacy was permitted to be third order business. A contemporary American Secretary of State finds much familiar--and, for the most part, painfully familiar--in the problems confronted by Livingston, Jay, Jefferson, Randolph, and Pickering from 1775 to 1800.

The Department of State emerged in stages from a committee of the Continental Congress--the Committee of Secret Correspondence (1775-1777), after 1777 the Committee for Foreign Affairs. That committee was by no means accorded a monopoly of Congressional responsibility for foreign affairs: "During the years 1779 and 1780, at least fifteen different special committees were elected to carry out functions which pertained wholly to the field of foreign affairs. The result was a constant tug of war at home between the radical and conservative factions of these committees, with a corresponding diversity of instructions, which made for uncertainty of policy abroad."<sup>7</sup> The situation was somewhat improved by the creation in 1780 of the post of Secretary of Foreign Affairs, first held by Robert Livingston. The day-to-day conduct of military affairs had long since been delegated to Washington before a Congressional Committee was prepared to surrender its operating prerogatives in foreign policy.

Although Livingston moved with vigor to establish some order in the nation's diplomacy and in his department's relation to Congress, he was a harrassed man: "The principal defect in the situation in which Livingston found himself was the interference of Congress. The duties of the Secretary had never been clearly defined and he was never given a free hand in the conduct

of foreign relations. Congress passed resolutions directing the policy which foreign ministers were to pursue, and even dealt directly with foreign representatives in Philadelphia. Special committees were constantly appointed which infringed upon the powers supposedly delegated to the Secretary."<sup>8</sup>

Even so self-disciplined an eighteenth century gentleman as John Jay was moved to visions of (tempered) violence when he contemplated Congress from his post in Madrid in 1780: "I would throw stones, too, with all my heart," he wrote, "if I thought they would hit only the committee without injuring the members of it. Till now I have received but one letter from them, and that was not worth a farthing, though it conveyed a draft for one hundred thousand pounds sterling on the bank of hope. One good private correspondent would be worth twenty standing committees, made of the wisest heads in America, for the purpose of intelligence."<sup>9</sup> When, in 1784, Jay took over from Livingston, his prestige and ability brought a somewhat better balance into the relations between the Secretary and Congress; and the adoption of the Constitution gave Jefferson and his successors in the post of Secretary of State a standing at least superficially more reassuring than that of agent for a Congressional committee.

Jefferson's central problem was different from that of Livingston and Jay, but not less familiar in the story of American diplomacy. The Secretary of the Treasury, Hamilton, sought to make foreign policy. Hamilton's influence with the President was so great that Jefferson finally insisted on resigning. Hamilton not only inaugurated the tradition in the American Cabinet of under-cutting the Secretary of State but he also introduced the British to the engaging possibility of receiving confidential information and advice from one department of the American government on how to deal with another.

In somewhat different ways Randolph and Pickering each learned another

perennial lessen of American diplomacy--that, in the end, the Secretary of State is the President's instrument and must expect over-riding interventions in small and in large matters. Contrary to his advice, Randolph saw Jay chosen to conduct the treaty negotiations with Britain, and his rude and hasty denunciation by Washington for alleged misconduct led to his resignation; and the contentious Pickering was fired by Adams to clear the way for peace-making with France.

Lastly, an unending theme of life in the Department of State makes an early appearance. As early as 1782, Livingston discovered that his expenses exceeded his salary by 75 per cent. In the annals of the Department of State those Secretaries capable of getting through the Congress the increases in pay and allowances that systematically lagged behind costs of living have a special place of honor.

#### The Scale of the Diplomatic Operation

The ease with which American interests could be protected in the world arena of the nineteenth century was reflected in the scale of American diplomatic operations. Two clerks worked for Livingston, a Chief Clerk and his seven subordinates served John Quincy Adams, and there was a staff of under 100 in the Department of State as late as the turn of the century.

As the century wore on, the number of missions abroad increased and with it the number of incoming and outgoing messages. The typewriter superseded the painfully transcribed and copied dispatch, wireless superseded for many purposes sea-pouch; but there was a true continuity in the Department of State's business. For the most part it handled a steady flow of two-way communications concerning the commercial and other private problems in which American citizens traveling or conducting business abroad became involved;

and it noted and filed the endless flow of dispatches forwarded by those on foreign service, describing the state of things in the parts of the world to which they were assigned. Rules and precedents grew up or were adapted from the corpus of received diplomatic practice and applied by the Department to these situations.

The nature of this routine diplomatic business is dramatized by the traditional role of the Chief Clerk (later Assistant Secretary), the ranking permanent officer of the Department down into the twentieth century. He kept records, knew the precedents and procedures, superintended the drafting of replies, and, at his best, was himself an expert in precise diplomatic drafting. Two Chief Clerks, William Hunter and Alvey Adee, spanned between them the years 1829-1924, Adee taking over in 1886; Hunter served the Department of State for fifty-seven years of his life; Adee, for fifty-four. They were the masters of the routine business of foreign affairs, the keepers of precedent, the indispensable technical advisers to the flow of men brought in from politics or elsewhere to manage the Department for relatively short periods. Each found himself for short periods in de facto control of the Department, and Adee played a minor role in the drafting of the Open Door notes; but these men, and those they symbolize, were not makers of foreign policy. Although they often had their own views,<sup>10</sup> they were devoted technicians in the process of day-to-day dealings between sovereign states; and they were, above all, the personalized memory of the nation in these matters.

Down to the First World War (and even to 1939) the great acts of foreign policy--the issues which get into the books on diplomatic history--were so few and far between that they were handled personally by the Secretary of State, usually in intimate consultation with the President, or directly

handled by the President himself. At the most, each administration is associated with only two or three such major diplomatic affairs, usually in the form of a negotiated treaty but twice (the Monroe Doctrine and the Open Door) a unilaterally enunciated statement of American policy. In government parlance, the Secretary of State (if not the President himself) could be the desk officer on major matters, such was their occasional character; and the sequence of American diplomacy in the nineteenth century is marked by long passages in which able Secretaries of State, such as Henry Clay and Edward Livingston, found no task worthy of their talents.

#### The Social Origins of the Diplomatic Corps

Under such circumstances the average among those drawn into the professional work of foreign affairs was unlikely to represent the highest levels of ability or vigor in American life. The professional's day-to-day jobs were basically clerical or social in character. The diplomatic officer was one who preferred a career off the beaten track of major national concern; and many men were apparently strongly influenced to enter the Foreign Service by a desire to live abroad for a time. Down to the Root reforms of 1905-1906, appointments were generally a highly political affair, emphasizing the casual dilettante character of the Department of State's routine work.

The diaries of Joseph Grew catch the mood of the transitional days, between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. After a post-graduate period of travel and big game hunting abroad, Grew's boyhood taste for the sea matured in a desire to join the Foreign Service. In addition, Grew appears to have perceived that foreign affairs would grow in importance over the span of his career. His appointment was brought about by the intervention of the President:

. . . . Then Alford Cooley, Assistant Attorney General and a friend of my family, who was close to President Theodore Roosevelt and a member of his celebrated 'Tennis Cabinet,' spoke to the President of my ambitions. The reply was always the same: 'Too much political

pressure. I can't do it.' One day Cooley had a brilliant thought. He went out for a hike with the President and told him of my adventure with the tiger in China. Mr. Roosevelt listened with interest and finally pulled out his notebook, saying: 'By Jove, I'll have to do something for that young man,' and the very next day, March 1, 1906, my appointment as Third Secretary of the Embassy in Mexico City was announced. That tiger-shooting was the only examination I ever took, and what fun I had some twenty years later when, as Chairman of the Examining Board for the Foreign Service, I used to say to the candidates: 'You gentlemen have a very easy time entering the Service. All you have to do is answer a few questions. I had to shoot a tiger.'

When later I saw President Roosevelt in Washington in 1906 he said: 'I have put you in the Service because I believe in you, but I can't recommend it as a permanent career. There is no career; it's all politics. I will keep you there as long as I am President but my successor will in all probability throw you out to make way for political henchmen, and then where will you be?' I replied: 'Mr. President, I'll take the chance. We must develop a career. As a great nation with steadily expanding interests abroad we must, if only as a simple business proposition, develop and maintain a professional service. Otherwise we shall be steadily handicapped in competition with other nations.'<sup>11</sup>

The texture of life and work in the American Foreign Service at this stage is illustrated in these further entries from Grew's diaries:

. . . . One summer afternoon. . . in the good old times when our chanceries generally closed at one o'clock for the day, a colleague from another post wandered into the Chancery in Berlin and found me alone, hard at work. His amazement was quite genuine. 'What on earth are you doing?' he asked. 'Oh,' said I rather shamefacedly, 'I'm getting up a resume of all the military cases involving Americans of German birth since the beginning of the Empire, so as to be able to show by graphs the percentage of cases in which we have been able to get our naturalized citizens out of the German Army and the particular circumstances which have brought failure or success. It may be useful as a future guide.' My colleague regarded me with real pity. 'Cut it out,' he said (how well I remember his words because they certainly cut me at the time), 'work won't get you anywhere. Only politics count in our service. Better enjoy yourself while you're in it.' That was the guiding spirit in those days.<sup>12</sup>

But the music, dancing and dining were not the only form of sport of those halcyon days. We played tennis daily on the courts at Ghexireh, and another form of sport once led me, unconsciously, into a situation of gravest danger. In the small native villages were erected towers of dried mud which served to attract multitudes of wild pigeons and were so constructed that the natives could collect and use the guano for fertilizing their fields. But among the wild birds were many domestic pigeons which belonged to the villagers and were carefully protected. It was a usual form of sport among the officers of the resident British regiments to

organize shooting parties to these villages and occasionally I was included. I did not know, however, that acute opposition to these shoots had been gradually mounting among the natives who resented the fact that their domestic pigeons, difficult sometimes to distinguish from the wild ones, were killed and towards the end of my assignment in Cairo this feeling had approached the boiling point. It must have been but a few weeks before our final departure from Egypt that I joined one of these shooting parties to a village called Denshawi. No outward sign of mutiny among the natives was then visible, but my horror was great when a few weeks later, in France, I read of the historic and terrible "Denshawi Incident" in which the villagers mobbed just such a shooting party as those I had so recently participated in, killed a British captain, and, as I remember it, either killed or seriously injured several other officers. Lord Cromer was absent at the time and Findlay was in charge. His responsibility was great, for he had to make an example of the murderers or risk further disturbances. I think that four men were hanged and four flogged, alternately, on a scaffold erected in the village where the assault had taken place. It was a grim reprisal and it excited grim repercussions in England. Upon the wisdom of the sentence, I do not presume to pass judgment. Presumably the officers knew something of the risk they were incurring in carrying on those shoots, and perhaps, I, albeit unwittingly, had shared in a provocation which never ought to have been permitted. It was many years before I could forget the shock of that terrible news.<sup>14</sup>

Such was the fragile but still manageable world in which at the turn of the century American diplomacy operated as an increasingly fascinated observer but as a narrowly limited participant.

### The Silent Observer

Professional American diplomacy evolved at two levels; one the level of consular business, the other that of major power negotiation. With respect to the latter, the American diplomat was in a peculiar position; for he had to relate a narrow agenda of American interests such as boundaries, navigation rights, fisheries, and the Indians, to the endless and complex interplay of the balance of power struggle in Europe.

In 1794 John Quincy Adams defined the role of the American diplomat as follows: "It is our duty to remain the peaceful and silent though sorrowful spectators of the European scene."<sup>15</sup> Sorrowful or not, the American

representative abroad had to become the detached analyst of a set of relationships which it was the interest of his nation intermittently to exploit while avoiding sustained involvement. The diplomacy of the major powers was a matter of knowledge and concern to only a handful of Americans; nevertheless it was the matrix within which the major continental and hemispheric interests of the United States had to be pursued. The flow of American diplomacy was generally "peaceful and silent;" but when, on relatively rare occasion, a major issue of diplomacy did arise, it moved quickly into the highest level of politics within the Executive Branch and the Senate, spilling over from time to time into the still less orderly arena of party politics and public opinion.

The skills demanded of the American diplomat were, then, skills untypical of the American style as it was formed in the course of the nineteenth century; for his profession demanded patience, detached observation, reflection, restraint, and a cosmopolitan outlook. The good American diplomat could be neither a moralist nor an activist. In the eighteenth century, when many American leaders were still intimately bound up with the culture and manners of Europe. American with such skills emerged rather naturally from the center of affairs; but as time passed, the man of diplomacy became increasingly untypical, a transition symbolized by the shift of the Adamses--from John to Henry--from the center to the margins of American life. Nevertheless, American life had the resource, variety, and resilience to man an effective diplomacy over the century and a quarter after independence of Britain was asserted.



## Military Force in an Isolated Democracy

### The Sporadic Sequence of Military Affairs

In the nineteenth century setting of world power, the initial concept of the national interest applied to diplomacy yielded a series of deceptively easy achievements. The United States expanded to the Pacific, settled convenient boundaries with Canada and, in the end, with Mexico as well; and acquired Alaska. It progressively diminished the power and influence of European states in the Western Hemisphere and it maintained a status of commercial equality in Japan and China with the exercise of minimum national effort. Moreover, the nation fought and survived the Civil War, which left its diplomatic position in the world enhanced despite the French adventure in Mexico and the British temptations to intervene.

Applied to military affairs, the same concept of the national interest yielded a somewhat different and more uneasy result. A very small military establishment is much larger than an ample Department of State, and a small war has a larger impact on the national consciousness than a most substantial diplomatic affair. Thus the nation had some 21,000 men on active duty in the militarily somnolent year 1850, more Americans than the Department of State employed at the peak of its post World War II responsibilities; and the Mexican War was a major event for the nation and its political life whereas the Monroe Doctrine was enunciated with scarcely a ripple of public interest or concern.

Inevitably, a sporadic application of military force left a somewhat deeper set of marks on the nation than a not less irregular flow of diplomacy.

Out of the nineteenth century there emerged and persisted a striking degree of consistency in the military performance of American society. War came with the nation unprepared, against a long background of neglect for its military apparatus; severe and bloody reverses were suffered in the

early stages, but as the struggle proceeded the nation learned the peculiar tasks of the particular war and mobilized the resources, energies, and talents necessary to see it through to victory in the field; and in the end victory was complete--except in the War of 1812, when Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo and Jackson's victory at New Orleans permitted an end of hostilities without elaborate soul-searching as to the meaning and purpose of the enterprise and the character of its results.

Tocqueville's judgment on the military performance of democratic societies fitted well the American case:<sup>16</sup>

I am therefore of the opinion that when a democratic people engages in a war after a long peace, it incurs much more risk of defeat than any other nation; but it ought not easily to be cast down by its reverses, for the chances of success for such an army are increased by the duration of the war. When a war has at length, by its long continuance, roused the whole community from their peaceful occupations and ruined their minor undertakings, the same passions that made them attach so much importance to the maintenance of peace will be turned to arms. War, after it has destroyed all modes of speculation, becomes itself the great and sole speculation, to which all the ardent and ambitious desires that equality engenders are exclusively directed. Hence it is that the selfsame democratic nations that are so reluctant to engage in hostilities sometimes perform prodigious achievements when once they have taken the field.

From Valley Forge through Bull Run down to Cuba and beyond, the United States paid heavily in the first instance for its unpreparedness; but in the end victory was achieved. Then the nation turned to its postwar tasks with civil instruments; the military machine was ruthlessly cut back, excepting a small hard core of professional soldiers shunted off the main paths of American life. The ardent and ambitious, looking back on war as a transient period of misery, adventure, or both, but not vitally linked to the main tasks of the society, turned wholeheartedly to the roles of civil life.

#### The Rationale for Military Policy

In the nineteenth century there was a crude rationality in the American pattern of acutely disjointed military performance. The self-evident national

tasks were to establish an independent nation, confirm its external status, extend its boundaries to the Pacific, and settle the issue and the terms of national unity when that unity was challenged.

The Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican War, and the Civil War all arose from the consolidation of the nation and its physical extension on this continent; and each of those major military engagements appeared as a once-for-all adventure. After the Revolution there was certainly scepticism in Europe of the viability of the new loosely structured, democratic American nation, and there was a recurrent eagerness to exploit its schisms and potential sources of fragmentation. But there was no serious thought of returning the United States to colonial status. The War of 1812 confirmed this view, and it reconciled the United States to the continued British presence in Canada. The war with Mexico fixed the southern American border and opened the way to the Pacific; and by 1865 it was evident that the issue of the nation's continental integrity would not again be raised in the foreseeable future. In 1865 Sherman, one of the great commanders of the century, took his headquarters to St. Louis not merely to escape the pressures and intrigues of peacetime Washington but also to be closer to his only foreseeable field of operations--against the Indian tribes.

It was natural, then, that after fighting the first major modern war in the 1860's the United States should dismantle its military machine once again and maintain an establishment adequate merely for dealing with the last groups of resistant Indians. In one sense, with the boundaries firm, the way cleared for the transcontinental railways, and the South back in the Union, the causes of war over the previous century of American experience had been eliminated by 1865.

More than that, the United States had fought its two major wars over issues where total victory was meaningful--colonial status or independence; two nations or one. At one level of the nation's remembered history there was reason for its tendency to regard war as an instrument for settling issues once and for all.

Put another way, so long as the nation took the view of its relationship to the Eurasian power balance enunciated in Washington's Farewell Address, and given form and structure in the Monroe Doctrine, there was no truly persuasive basis for a substantial American military establishment; for that view assumed that the power struggle would continue indecisively in Eurasia, leaving British control of the seas intact; that potential American strength, retaliatory power, and common interests would render the British non-aggressive; and that, therefore, with the balance so peculiarly favorable, the nation could enjoy not only a series of easy diplomatic victories but also could do so while maintaining no substantial professional force and no adequately trained militia in being. Who, indeed, was there to fight under such assumptions?

Those who counseled the nation to maintain a more substantial permanent military establishment thus faced a difficult problem in advocacy. Of course, it could be--and was--argued that human nature had not changed and that war would come again as it had in the past; that the United States lived in a world of competing national states and that force in being was required to protect American interests.

Colonel Richard Delafield argued on the eve of the Civil War: ". . . it requires / no stretch of the imagination to look forward to a combination of the powers of those antagonistic forms of government to attempt to check the growing influence that constantly, though slowly, tends to crush the ruling

principle, and with it involve the governors, nobles, aristocracy, and monarchs in ruin. Their self-preservation must always cause them to look with anxiety and apprehension to our growth, and ere it becomes all powerful to combine in some way to protect themselves...."<sup>17</sup> <sup>RP</sup> But despite the resonance of Delafield's image in American folklore, it took a very great stretch of the imagination to accept any such danger as sufficiently real and urgent to justify substantial current expenditures out of taxation. Although the ideological trend in Europe after 1815 fluctuated; the trend was strongly in favor of democratic principle. The particular form of danger to the United States postulated by Delafield--an ideologically motivated hostile coalition--waned; on the other hand, Americans found it difficult to grasp the nature of the power equilibrium on which the nation's good fortune rested, and the role of British strength within it. Down to Captain Mahan no American military man developed even a reasonably clear concept of the strategic assumptions with respect to Eurasia on which the American position was based and on which a rational military policy could be built. The general grounds for maintaining a "respectable defensive posture" were too abstract and remote to persuade Congress to allocate the requisite resources in the face of alternative urgent claims.

On several occasions, in the immediate aftermath of war and, with memories of unpreparedness and its costs still fresh, Congress exhibited an apparent willingness to maintain a national military force, usually along lines consonant with Washington's five-point program of 1783; that is, a limited but well-prepared professional standing army and navy, a militia organized efficiently on the basis of a national plan, the maintenance of adequate stockpiles of military stores, the maintenance of appropriate military instruction, and provision for the manufacture of selected military production.<sup>18</sup> But the impulse quickly subsided with no specific enemy in mind; and the nation's forces were cut back radically.

### Military and Civil Power

There was another dimension to the problem of maintaining American military force in being; namely, that the American political tradition was hostile to a substantial regular establishment. Degrees of fear, suspicion, and dislike of standing armies arose from multiple sources. The cumulative lessons and prejudices derived from the struggle for liberty and the earlier difficulties over the quartering of British troops in colonial America. A substantial national military establishment would evidently strengthen the power of the federal over the state establishments; and so the state authorities fought and won the battle over the Militia Act of 1792, leaving the reserve forces of the nation under diffuse control and indifferently trained and organized. The values and organization of the professional military appeared at times to clash with those to which the majority of Americans were committed; and, as the nation expanded its industry and trade, military outlays and the concept of war itself clashed with the vision of endless material progress which took on reality as American growth unfolded. Huntington puts this position sharply as follows:<sup>19</sup>

Jeffersonian hostility to the military had been largely confined to the limited institution of the standing army as a threat to republican government. Jacksonian hostility had broadened this to opposition to a military caste as the enemy of popular democracy. Business pacifism now expanded it still further so that the conflict was no longer one of institutions or of social groups but the fundamental struggle of two entirely different ways of life.

Huntington's view, taken by itself, proves too much. It is true that excepting perhaps in the ante-bellum South, no substantial group in the United States has found in military life much positive attraction for the long pull. The nation was committed to civil values and goals, and it wished to minimize its military concerns and outlays. On the other hand, when it

confronted a problem believed to require force for its resolution, the nation did not draw back. The nation's performance was better attuned to reality than to its articulated ideology. In both principle and in fact it steadily recognized the need to provide for the national security. It successfully provided the facilities and, in the widest sense, the incentives to create and maintain an adequate corps of professional military men; it went to war when the national interest was judged to require the use of force; and both sides saw through a bloody Civil War in which great issues appeared to be involved.

The nation exhibited, it is true, an eagerness to minimize its military outlays in times of peace; but why should it have done otherwise under the fortunate strategic circumstances of the nineteenth century? Upton, of course, was correct even within that century in arguing that the nation's interwar carelessness with its military establishment was costly; but it was most costly in the one case where avoidance of cost was most difficult--namely, in the Civil War. Put another way, Delafield, Upton, and the other nineteenth century Americans who argued the case for preparedness seem important only from a twentieth century perspective. Although they correctly sensed, without supplying a satisfactory rationale, that continued loyalty to the persistent pattern of the nation's military performance would in time prove dangerous, they could be ignored in their own day without excessive cost.

#### Politics or Geopolitics?

Was American military policy in the nineteenth century determined by an unfortunate political attitude towards military force and the professional military? Or was it that, having mistaken geopolitical luck for virtue, having accepted Washington's conclusion without steadily asking whether his transient assumptions still held, the nation carried forward into the twentieth century inappropriate attitudes and policies that were reasonably sensible in the

nineteenth? On the whole, the latter seems the more persuasive conclusion.

On the whole, the anti-military bias in the national tradition had greater effect on the form of the nation's military organization than on its scale and discontinuity. For example, it certainly affected to a degree the character and distribution of authority within the Militia Act, the terms on which appointments to the military and naval academies were ultimately granted, and the organization of the war and navy departments. But even here it is difficult to disentangle suspicion of the military from competition between Congress and the Executive Branch, and between state and federal political interests. What one can say with conviction is that the nation's military organization in the nineteenth century was profoundly influenced by the abiding suspicion of any substantial concentration of authority over military force whether exercised by civilians in the Executive Branch or by the professional military themselves.

Whatever justification there may have been for American military and diplomatic policy in the nineteenth century, it is clear that a dangerous gap emerged between the public comprehension of the nation's problems and performance on the one hand, and what the nation, in fact, faced and did. The desperately difficult, incompetent, and costly early phases of American wars were forgotten or their memory suppressed. The myth of the skillful amateur turning with success from plough, factory, or office to field of combat was encouraged. The extraordinary difficulties of Washington and his successors in maintaining an adequate force of militia or recruits steadily in the field were set aside; and the low level of the nation's peacetime military establishment was taken to reflect the high virtue of democracy in contrast with the military preoccupation of the decadent rival



autocracies of Europe. Above all, the underlying circumstances that prevented major Eurasian military force from impinging on vital American interests were neither widely examined nor understood.

The Making of the Military Tradition

The Military in American Life

Although in both substance and professional style there is a real continuity in the American diplomatic tradition from Franklin and John Adams to Cleveland and Olney, that tradition caught up the lives of only a handful of Americans, for many of whom diplomacy represented merely a transient or partial interest and concern. The professional military tradition is a different matter. It was institutionalized at West Point and Annapolis and, before the century was over, at Leavenworth and Newport. It touched, if it did not dominate, the consciousness of many more Americans through the real if dilute ties of the regulars to the state militia; and it suffused the full-time career of a good many men and structured the lives of their families.<sup>20</sup> It was closer<sup>to</sup> the nation's consciousness than diplomacy if for no other reason than that war brings many non-professionals under arms whereas knowledge of diplomacy remains vicarious for all but the professional and a consciousness of diplomacy and its functions is confined to a few.

Not many Americans have passed through boyhood without identifying themselves at one time or another with passages and figures from the nation's military saga; there can have been few who dreamed their dreams of glory as Secretary of State.

Superficially, however, the American soldier would seem as much a stranger to the national style as the diplomat. The American professional military tradition was created in a society which concerned itself only sporadically with war, against an undertow of persistent national prejudices. From its colonial origins, American society had built into its political structure and prevailing sentiment a powerful hostility to a standing army. The normal workings of the American political system placed the military in a position of extreme weakness in relation to the civil authorities, who depleted its

resources (and corrupted its militia) in peace and meddled with its plans and operations in war. In a wider sense, too, one would expect the predominant values of American society, with their extreme emphasis on personal achievement, to work against the development of a stable and competent corps of professional military men. But despite his untypical role in American society the professional American soldier conformed neither in his quality nor in his relations to civil life to Tocqueville's prognosis:<sup>21</sup>

. . . When a military spirit forsakes a people, the profession of arms immediately ceases to be held in honor; and military men fall to the lowest rank of the public servants; they are little esteemed and no longer understood. The reverse of what takes place in aristocratic ages then occurs; the men who enter the army are no longer those of the highest, but of the lowest class. Military ambition is indulged only when no other is possible. Hence arises a circle of cause and consequence from which it is difficult to escape: the best part of the nation shuns the military profession because that profession is not honored, and the profession is not honored because the nation has ceased to follow it.

It is then no matter of surprise that democratic armies are often restless, ill-tempered, and dissatisfied with their lot, although their physical condition is commonly far better and their discipline less strict than in other countries. The soldier feels that he occupies an inferior position, and his wounded pride either stimulates his taste for hostilities that would render his services necessary or gives him a desire for revolution, during which he may hope to win by force of arms the political influence and personal importance now denied him.

The fortunes of the American military have varied mercurially in the course of American history; and military life has been generally conducted well off the main paths of the national experience, under a code of conduct sharply distinguished from that of civil life. And one can find (notably in the post-Civil War decades) much evidence of professional military disabuse with the nation's values and performance, articulated on grounds that include but transcend the nation's casual treatment of the soldier and his profession.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the American military have been neither and

incompetent nor an alienated group in the society; and they very early developed a distinct set of operational traditions which reflected general characteristics of the national style. From its beginning, American society was sufficiently flexible to generate a professional military class of competence and sufficiently pervasive to imprint its traditions with distinctively American strengths and weaknesses.

To understand this paradox it is necessary to modify somewhat the concepts created by the nation's overly pacific image of its values and evolution and by the professional military's occasionally excessive self-pity and sense of isolation.

#### The Links between the Soldier and his Society

The United States was created by a long successful war. Its first President was a soldier sensitive to the long-run security requirements of the nation and a steady advocate of a national military academy. The first quarter century of the nation's life was conducted against a background of war and the threat of war. The Military Academy at West Point was founded in 1802, the Naval Academy at Annapolis in 1845. The unity of the nation was confirmed by a major war; and its western frontier was extended by Indian warfare which hardly ceased for three centuries. Soldiering was a reality and a thinkable career to every American generation in the nineteenth century. There was always an ample supply of applicants for entrance who met standards which altered and developed over the years but by and large represented at each period a reasonable rigor.

Yet it is true that in many ways the existence of a corps of professional soldiers in American society was an anomaly. First, the prejudice against a substantial standing army as a danger to the democratic state went deep.

Second, the United States was a society without a formal stable aristocracy; and the European concept of a professional military career, ancillary to inherited social status, did not easily fit the American scene except to a degree in the ante-bellum South. Third, the major challenges of American life lay in the material development of the continent. In pursuing a military career, men were, in a sense, turning from the obvious and predominant paths of interest, challenge, and reward in the society. Fourth, military life as a social structure had built into it values alien to the prevailing cast of American life-- an hierarchical class structure, discipline, and overriding loyalty to the national interest as opposed to the interests of the individual, his family, and his state or region. Although many Americans, in diverse walks of life, dedicated their working lives to values and objectives which transcended material advantage, still "Duty, Honor, Country" were not conventional touchstones for day-to-day life in growing America of the nineteenth century; and promotion by seniority violated the American notion that men should rise as fast as their individual talents and energies permitted.

Why, then, did men enter the armed services over the long period when they were not only in a backwater in American life but also in one where the prevailing values appeared to run substantially counter to those which dominated the society itself?

The data available for firm judgment are by no means satisfactory. There are, however, certain clues which suggest that individual men were drawn into professional military services for widely differing reasons. The following elements, in various mixtures and proportions, certainly played a part.

Before the Civil War and to some extent even after 1865, despite methods of Congressional appointment to the service academies which guaranteed a high degree of regional representation in the armed forces, the Southern United

States, with its traditional aristocratic structure and explicit respect for the soldier and his classic virtues, furnished to the American military services a disproportionate number of professionals. Elsewhere, the fact that West Point and Annapolis offered full-scale scholarship and expenses for its students lent an attraction to young men who could perceive no superior method for getting an education and rising to professional status in a society. For some, a professional military training was regarded, initially at least, as a channel for vertical mobility either in or out of the military profession-- although in many cases undoubtedly the service academies indoctrinated their students deeply in the positive values of national military service as a career. Moreover, despite the normally peaceful life of the country, the military affairs in its past remained an important and romantic part of its history; and undoubtedly a certain number of young men with a natural bent for military affairs, inspired by the recurrence of military adventure in American life, sought to become permanent professional officers simply because they wanted to become soldiers. And this bent was sometimes reinforced by a more intimate connection with military life. There has been an element of inbreeding in the American armed services. In the period 1842-1899 something just under 10 per cent of the cadets entering West Point were themselves sons of army officers; and many, in addition, must have undertaken military careers under less direct family influence than that of the parent.

Another factor in American history, difficult to assess, may have made the military career more attractive than the peacetime status of the professional soldier would suggest. Despite the formal prejudices against the American military incorporated abstractly into basic American political ideology, the American people have exhibited a high if somewhat sporadic respect for their military leaders; or, put another way, the nation has appeared to attach a reasonably high political value to military service. In arguing the irrationality of Anglo-Saxon prejudice against standing

armies as a menace to liberty, Upton, somewhat overstating his case, pointed out that the United States had behaved somewhat paradoxically:<sup>23</sup>

Our own people, no less than the Romans, are fond of rewarding our military heroes. The Revolution made Washington President for two terms; the War of 1812 elevated Jackson and Harrison to the same office, the first for two terms, the latter for one; the Mexican War raised Taylor and Pierce to the Presidency, each for one term; the rebellion has already made Grant President for two terms, Hayes for one term, while the present Chief Magistrate, Garfield, owes his high office as much to his fame as a soldier as to his reputation as a statesman.

Long wars do not reward the highest commanders only. After the Revolution Knox, Dearborn, and Armstrong rose to the office of Secretary of War; Hamilton was Secretary of the Treasury; while Monroe, first Secretary of State, was finally elected President for two terms. During the Rebellion nearly 150 regular officers rose to the grade of brigadier and major general who, but for the four years' struggle, would have been unknown outside of the military profession.

Since the war, distinguished officers of volunteers have filled nearly every office in the gift of the people. They have been elected chief magistrates of their States, and today on both floors of Congress they are conspicuous alike for their numbers and influence.

After Upton's day (1880) there have been four more presidents whose political position derived in some part from a military past (Harrison, McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, and Eisenhower).

The choice of men touched by military experience for the office of President and for other high offices in the federal government is, in fact, a natural outcome of the relation between American society and the federal government. Historically, the national government was a distant, even minor element in the life of the society. Excepting times of war, Washington did not generally concern itself with issues central to the affairs of men in their daily life. The great challenges and risks, the points in the society where power was focussed, lay outside the federal government. Nevertheless, the federal government existed and with it the office of the President. When Americans turned to choose their President,

they found in military achievement--or even in a military connection devoid of ascertainable scandal--values and loyalties which symbolized well the accepted concept of the national government and its limited but overriding functions. The military were professionally attached to the nation as no other major group in the society. In war they incorporated the national purpose and supplied leadership at periods of heightened national consciousness. As the nation lapsed back to local tasks, it was altogether reasonable that professional politicians should recruit their presidential candidates--and other high national officials--from among those associated in some measure with national rather than more parochial symbols of success; and to this qualification the soldier often added political availability--that is, a record of few views on divisive political issues.

In short, a man entering the profession of soldier in the United States at a time of apparent peace need not have felt that his life would necessarily be spent wholly as a garrison soldier or peacetime sailor; nor need he feel that he be denied, in the course of his career, periods of major responsibility and even civil respect and authority.

And there were other less exalted but perhaps more substantial ways in which the life of the professional military was linked to the nation as a whole.

As Henry Adams pointed out, "American scientific engineering. . . owed its efficiency and almost existence to the military school at West Point established in 1802."<sup>24</sup> It was not until 1860 that a superintendent of the United States Military was appointed who was not a member of the corps of engineers. The development of competent engineering training linked the American military to the society as a whole in several ways. First, a good many of the instructors from the Academy went out to



other universities as the teaching of engineering spread in the United States. Second, American Army engineers even in peacetime were drawn into major national enterprises--the building of railroads, roads, bridges and the clearing of rivers.<sup>25</sup> Quite aside from controlling the menace of the Indian on the frontiers, the American Army in peace was thus directly involved in the physical extension of the country.

Finally, a great many of the ablest graduates of West Point went off to make their fortunes in civil life. Both Grant and Sherman returned to the Union Army in 1861 from civil life; and, West Point engineers (including McClellan) played a role in the great railway boom which preceded the Civil War.

The American Army, then, was quite closely linked at a number of specific points to the life of the nation. This is somewhat less true of the American Navy. The sailor performed functions at which the average American was less prepared to declare himself an expert than those of the soldier; the existence of a navy seemed less of a political threat than a standing army; and the peacetime function of an American navy required a less esoteric rationale in the nineteenth century than that of a substantial American standing army. All in all, the professional life of the American navy was permitted to develop in a pattern at once somewhat more remote from the main stream of the nation's life and somewhat less subject to mercurial political pressures.

But the professional sailor, as well as the soldier, was ultimately linked to the society by profound human ties which in their ultimate impact on the professional's outlook may have been more influential than proximate connections or the lack of them. The American military professional was, after all, the son of middle class (or, at least, land-owning) parents. By the time he entered firmly upon a military career his

attitudes toward his society and values were largely formed in the common matrix of American culture. His brothers and sisters pursued more conventional lives in American society with which the professional military man never wholly lost touch. The military professional may have chosen a somewhat odd career by the standards of his youthful contemporaries, but he was not part of a distinctive social caste.

Despite certain differences between the two services, Elting Morison's conclusions about the social constitution and outlook of the Navy in 1900 can be generalized:<sup>26</sup>

"Our officers in 1900 . . . were gathered together from all parts of the country and from every social class. Inclination, poverty, and the haphazard selective methods of congressional appointment all combined to recruit a heterogeneous collection of young men. Certain factors united to bind them together--common undergraduate memories, naval traditions, similar training, the problems, techniques, and standards of the profession, the apathy and occasional suspicion of the nation which they served. But their diverse origins and temperaments and their allegiance, as a group, to the democratic process prevented them . . . from developing that peculiar professional attitude and philosophy of which they are often accused."

It is possible, then, to account for the presence among the American professional military of a reasonable sample of able and even talented men drawn to the services by motives by and large in harmony with those of the society as a whole--with, however, a special link between the regional culture of the South and the values of a military career. It is possible to account for the maintenance of a professional military corps in the United States without assuming that its members were systematically hostile or alienated from the society as a whole.

#### The Training of Men for War

But there is a second question. How, did the American military make with as much grace as they did the transition from decision-making at the

at the relatively routine level of peacetime military affairs to the expanded stage of war, where in scale and importance, decisions were of a quite different dimension? How, for example, did the nation breed between 1783 and 1861 the distinguished professionals of the North and the South in the Civil War?

There are three separable elements in this transition. First, of its nature, a military training is designed to prepare men for this transition. War is studied in terms of principles and procedures which govern the making of decisions designed equally to apply to large situations and to small; and even peacetime military life afforded a chance for men to experience responsibility and to display their abilities to make decisions in terms of principle. Second, the hierarchical structure of military command, even under the confusions and diffused responsibilities of war, often permitted men of mediocre executive talent to perform reasonably well since, to a degree, the most searching decision could be passed upward, if necessary. Third, military training is designed purposefully to develop qualities of character necessary for responsible executive leadership where such qualities inherently exist. The taking of responsible, accountable decisions in terms of known principles but in circumstances where the meaning and significance of all the facts can never be complete and wholly clear is one of the most searching of human experiences. At best a military training is designed not merely to simplify that experience by reducing a maximum number of choices to bureaucratic rule but also to prepare men to take the steps in the dark which leadership under active changing circumstances always demands. Fourth, so far as the nineteenth century was concerned, the Mexican War, brief and limited as it was, served as a significant operational test for many of the young professionals later to bear major responsibility in the Civil War.

The American military was, then, made up of men pursuing a somewhat unorthodox profession, under uncommon conditions, subject to extreme irregularity in status and function within American society; but their entrance into the profession can largely be accounted for by motivations and values consonant with American life, and their life's work interwove with that of the society as a whole at many points.

### The Texture of Military Life

Like other military establishments the American vacillated between long periods of relative inactivity, under relatively unchanging circumstances, and periods of great activity when the military were confronted with new and rapidly changing problems and activities. A recent observer has remarked:<sup>27</sup>

It is not to exaggerate to point out that the ideal professional soldier has been seen in the past as a civil servant technician who in peacetime would isolate himself from civil society so as not to contaminate it; and who in wartime would reverse roles overnight and supply sensitive leadership, at home and abroad, not only for military operations but for many civilian sectors of life. Of course, with the end of hostilities, a moment difficult to define, he is again expected to revert to his former status.

In periods of peace the army and navy were a small disciplined bureaucracy. Their operating tasks were only mildly challenging--although the best professionals found interest and challenge in these lesser tasks; but the predominant mood of the ablest was certainly that of men biding their time against a day when they might be called upon to exercise their profession on the large stage of war. The recurrent obsession of the American military in peacetime was the struggle with Congress for money.

As a social organization, the professional military consisted of men who by and large knew one another as part of a small family, driven close together by the nature of their special tasks and standards and by their partial divorce from the main currents of a society which denied them funds,

prestige, and serious attention. Writing of the texture of life in the period 1904-1916, Colonel R.E. Dupuy describes some of the essential social characteristics of the post-Civil War army although his account is already touched by certain twentieth century developments:<sup>28</sup>

Class Conscious was this army; the hierarchy of rank and command a living thing--from the Chief of Staff down to the most junior corporal who every impressed his first upon a slothful recruit and from Mrs. General to Judy O'Grady, the corporal's wife. It was a class-consciousness that embodied a healthy professional and communal pride.

We should look well upon this aspect of military life at the beginning of the century for unless one can understand it, this attitude of RHIP--"rank has its privileges"--can be misunderstood by those outside the circle, and abused by some of those within. Here was a deep-rooted condition which would withstand the buffets, the ridicule and the hatred of the people who did not understand, until a very few years ago . . . .

What of the officer--the leader of this aggregation of professional soldiers--whose trade, as Kipling has it, was parade? In 1904 the officer corps--a cross section of our citizenry--was a formalized group, governed by a rigid etiquette and century-old customs of the service. Its segments were West Pointers, men from the ranks, men from civil life, and men who had come in from the Volunteers and the militia after the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection. The pattern was fixed; immutable some would say. . . .

One thing all these officers had in common: they were in uniform because they wanted to be in the Army; it was their chosen profession . . . .

Rectitude was one common characteristic possessed by this corps of officers. The corps was governed by a code--partly written, partly unwritten--some of whose principles reached back through the ages since the profession began and which may be expressed very simply. An officer and a gentleman was punished by dismissal from the service. So read the Draconian Articles of War. There was no quibbling; no sliding scale of punishment. Read it:

"Art. 95--Any officer or cadet who is convicted of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman shall be dismissed from the service."

This concept of honor by no means meant wearing a halo. Nor did it mean that every individual who took that solemn oath "to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies both foreign and domestic" was by that act endowed with this precious characteristic. Individuals from time to time fell short of the standard; the group itself did not.

Some of these officers--graduates of the U.S. Military Academy--had had this quality instilled in them by virtue of their four-year stern novitiate, governed by the precept of Sylvanus Thayer: 'A cadet does not lie, cheat or steal.' Others had attained it first through background and upbringing, retained it later by virtue of the unseen pressure on the West Point leaven on the Army.

Newton D. Baker, our World War I Secretary of War, expressed this essential quality in language explicit and crystal clear: '... Men may be inexact and even untruthful in ordinary matters and suffer as a consequence only the disesteem of their associates or the inconvenience of unfavorable litigation, but the inexact or untruthful soldier trifles with the lives of his fellow men and with the honor of his government.'

The very fact that this corps of officers lived in a close 24-hour-a-day contact--socially and professionally--made this code a living thing, not just a posture assumed during an eight-hour job and to be cast aside in leisure moments. Its expression cropped out in a thousand different ways, of which perhaps one example suffices: The officer's word was his bond. He did not--except for the initial act of accepting his commission and during the process of military justice (an inheritance from the common law)--take oath or make affidavit. He certified that such and such was the case when necessary. That was sufficient . . . .

Garrison life was pleasant, on the whole. Once in a while came field maneuvers--and always, of course, there was small-arms firing. But the mess, the bar, the club, with occasional trips to town, took up the bachelor's spare time. The married officer had his own home life. Both met on the frequent social occasions, garrison dances and card parties--ingrown affairs, one might call them.

The officers' mess was a formal association, with its own quite rigid rules of decorum. The seating of the senior officer present governed the opening of the evening meal; officers arriving late made stiff, formal apology to him before taking their chairs. Blues--or, in summer, whites--were worn; the officers of the day and guard alone might be excused for appearing in service olive drab; one appeared in civilian clothing only if he were hurrying off post on leave, or returning therefrom. The mess was a man's world, too, for although all officers on the post were members, ladies were accommodated only in a side room, and this but in emergency....

Among the officers of the garrison there was, of course, the normal cordiality to be expected in any group of gentlemen. There

were also, for all these men were human, the other cross currents and frictions of human relationships. And no matter how cordial the relationship, even if the senior did socially call the junior by his first name, rarely indeed would the junior call any officer of captain's grade or higher by his. In the first place, there was a wide disparity of age between captains and lieutenants; in the second, it wasn't done. And while the senior might call his subordinate "Jack" or "Bill" off duty, it was "Mr. Soandso," for the lieutenants and the rank for the others, on official occasions . . . .

Here at home, while big business spread, skyscrapers rose, and dynamos hummed, the Army drowsed in its isolation. Dot-and-dash telegraph was spanning land and sea, a national road system was evolving, to knit together an aggregation of American villages, towns and cities into an articulated whole. Automobile-building was becoming a national industry. But hitching posts still dotted the streets of Army posts, and garrison business moved on foot or behind clapping hooves.

From time to time the soldier did emerge, but it was momentary and quickly forgotten. The San Francisco earthquake, Mississippi floods, great forest fires, strikes, in turn brought it out to save, salvage and bring order. And, of course, the Army Engineers and Medical Corps were building the Panama Canal. Goethals and Gorgas--Walter Reed--were household names. . . .

Although there were modifications in the military tradition and round of life over the sweep of the nation's history, Dupuy catches many of the persistent characteristics of life in the American Army.

The society of the professional Navy was even more constricted and more sharply distinguished from normal civil patterns than that of the Army. At sea naval life was marked by a unique degree of authority and discipline; and naval careers were built around the goal of command at sea. Ashore, the naval establishments were limited to a few locations along the coasts. In times of peace there was none of the intermingling of service life with the expansion of the West and the building of the railroads. Despite the absorption of the ablest post-Civil War naval officers with the problems posed by the new age of steam, steel, and engineering, there was no naval equivalent to the Army Engineers as a link

to the nation's great domestic enterprises. In times of war the Navy had never expanded on the scale of the Army and, down to 1941, never had to confront the problem of mobilizing and training enormous drafts of civilians drawn from the full range of American civil life.

### The American Military Style

These partially isolated social groups, sporadically charged with massive problems of operation, developed characteristics which accurately reflected the operating style of the society of which they were part. These persistent general characteristics can usefully be grouped under the familiar military headings of personnel, intelligence, operations, and supply.

There is, of course, a conflict between the standards by which men rise in a relatively stable bureaucracy and those which justified promotion and responsibility in the heat of war itself. In the Civil War the North experienced protracted difficulties in sorting out from its professional officers those leaders capable of organizing the region's human and material potential and driving the North to victory. In the South a corps of first-class men found their way to responsibility at a much earlier stage, under Jefferson Davis' (West Point) hand. Although subject to normal human error in judgment--as well as political interference--the military establishment seems to have been capable of selecting under peacetime circumstances, often without the opportunity to test men in battle, those with qualities capable of sustaining the field responsibilities of major war.

In war, as in other high executive circumstances, the real contribution of men must be measured in terms of a few key decisions taken correctly or incorrectly, under great pressure, where the selection of one alternative rather than another profoundly affects the future course of events. The normal flow of day-to-day decisions may be made well or badly but their



impact on events is cushioned by the narrow range of their impact or by the ingrained power and weight of the bureaucratic machine through which they must be put into effect. The decisive problem of personnel in war is to find and to promote men who will have the capacity to make the right choice at the few decisive moments when their choice will matter. Although a margin of error in the judgment of human beings is natural in any institution, it is generally true that the characteristics that make men effective under large historic circumstances can be discerned under lesser circumstances as well; for they hinge on persistent qualities of character and judgment.

Be that as it may, it would appear that notably after the Civil War the military establishment was able to rate the men coming forward under a double standard: first, the formal standards of seniority and bureaucratic efficiency, by which promotions took place more or less automatically; second, the standards of ultimate competence and reliability in the making of command decisions under pressure. Somehow the American military establishment did not permit itself to be so bemused by the routines of peace and the requirements of orderly routine in a stagnant bureaucracy as to lose sight of the human requirements for command under the dynamic circumstances of war. The criteria of selection were, however, dominated by the skills of field operations. In the nineteenth century there was within the American military tradition virtually no general staff concept.

With respect to military intelligence, the American professionals were notably weak, and there were historic roots for this weakness. First, the American professional attached an overriding premium to operating performance in the field. The engineers were the Army elite

corps through and beyond the nineteenth century.<sup>29</sup> Intelligence, with its requirement to study and to understand other foreign military organization and foreign societies, to collect and to sift painstakingly elusive data, was too bookish and reflective a task generally to draw into its service first-class military men. In both the Army and the Navy an assignment to intelligence was regarded as prima facie evidence of low standing in the military hierarchy and dim future prospects. When men were assigned to intelligence they generally sought, by whatever means were available, the earliest possible return to command over troops. The American professional who concerned himself seriously in intelligence was often a man of independent means, drawn by the social attractiveness of attache posts abroad, equipped with independent means--a rare bird indeed.

A second reason for the low estate of the American intelligence service was the obscurity of the strategic intelligence function for the United States. Throughout the nineteenth century the nature of a future engagement by American ground forces was extremely unclear, Indians aside. To a degree, American military institutions and technology were influenced by what professional soldiers and sailors learned abroad: Thayer, Dennis Mahan, Delafield and McClellan, Upton, Sims, among others. But the first duty of intelligence is to study the intentions and capabilities of enemies and potential enemies; and such were somewhat difficult to define. The Navy could (and did) follow with reasonable competence the order of battle, the technology, and the tactics, of the navies of the world; but where was it to be expected that the Army would fight? The notion of an expeditionary force in Europe, with all it implied for a direct American concern with the European balance of power, was scarcely thought of until the First World War was upon the nation. And down to 1898 there was, outside a narrow

circle of Americans, no systematic concept of a military interest in Asia. Lacking a clear concept of the national interest there was no traditional enemy to watch.

During military engagements, of course, tactical intelligence had to be built up. In the Civil War both the North and the South created reasonably competent intelligence units, collecting order of battle information; although that war yielded some famous intelligence failures.<sup>30</sup> In general, whenever American troops have been engaged in the field, their commanders, faced with a practical operational problem, did develop working intelligence of passable quality; although American forces in Europe relied heavily on allied intelligence sources and analysis in the First World War and for most of the Second World War as well. It was not until the Second World War and especially its aftermath that the problem of a mature strategic intelligence system was fully faced by the United States as a continuing problem and national responsibility.

It was on operations--the command of men in the field or of a ship at sea--that the American military placed their greatest premium. In this area the indoctrination of the American ground forces starting with Dennis Hart Mahan at West Point in the first half of the nineteenth century, was generally up to standards of professional armies elsewhere. Certainly Mahan's pupils ultimately performed with high professional distinction by any standards, on both sides in the Civil War; and his precepts may well have influenced directly many of the key command decisions of the war.<sup>31</sup> D.H. Mahan drew heavily from the French military schools and the Napoleonic example, following Sylvanus Thayer's acceptance of the Ecole Polytechnique as a model for the Military Academy. The American operational tradition did not, however, remain derivative,

despite its evident French roots. Certain persistent ways of doing things developed consonant with the American character, which have persisted down to the present day. These centered around the concepts of attack, concentration of a massive thrust against the enemy's main strength, and simplicity in operational concept.

To these essentially classical strategic concepts was added the tactical canon of "celerity": the rapid movement of force to achieve surprise. From Washington's retreat across New Jersey forward, American troops in war had also to face, from time to time the difficult problem of retreat; but the ruling doctrine inculcated into the American ground forces was that of rapid attack designed to strike the enemy's main strength, while he was off balance. This concept has been systematically associated with field operations in which speed of movement and surprise were developed. Celerity was the concept pounded into the American professional soldier by the elder Mahan and practiced with success by his students in the Mexican War. In the Civil War Jackson and Lee on the one hand and Sherman on the other performed what were by European standards extraordinary feats in the rapid movement of force. And that concept carried forward beyond the nineteenth century.

On one major point the American military outlook and experience somewhat shifted during the nineteenth century; that is, the terms by which war is to be brought to a close. Down to 1861 the American ground force and naval tradition was, distinctly, one of limited engagement for clear, limited purposes. The British main strength was not destroyed in the Revolution; not even its main strength in North America. Yorktown was a tidy tactical victory; but the objective of war was American independence, not total victory in some technical

military sense. And so also with the French navy in 1799, the Barbary Pirates, the War of 1812, and the Mexican War. The United States used force for limited purposes and was prepared to make peace either when those purposes were achieved or (as in the War of 1812) when they were modified or abandoned. Even the warfare against the Indians, despite its occasional massacres, was fought step-by-step, for limited stakes, not as a once-for-all war of extermination. The Civil War, too, was a limited war in Lincoln's mind and policy and in the terms of surrender as softened by Grant and Sherman; but, still, it was fought out bitterly around the concept of unconditional surrender. For most Southerners it was an unmitigated defeat and, for the North, it had the illusory feel of total victory.

Aside from its civil context, the War between the States was distinctively different in its scale, objectives, and outcome than anything the nation had known before. And it may well have helped create a persistent strand of thought; namely, that the fully mobilized power of the United States is capable of clean, definitive, and total victory; that this demands the destruction and surrender of the enemy's main strength; and that such unambiguous victory should be sought, once the enemy is engaged, quite independently of the political object of the engagement.

On the whole, the notion of total military victory disassociated from political objectives--the concept of force not proportioned to the limited task it is designed to serve--is more foreign to the American military tradition that is often supposed; but the Civil War--or, at least, the popular image of its denouement--may well have left a distinctive mark.

American naval theories were affected by a somewhat similar transition. The old American coastal fleet was, evidently, a force to be used for limited purposes to attain limited ends. But when the nation came to construct a major battle fleet, towards the end of the nineteenth century, Captain Mahan equipped the navy with the concept of total naval supremacy to be achieved and held by a clear balance of strength in capital ships. The concept of clear-cut capital ship supremacy, to be asserted against the enemy's main capital ship strength, in an offensive show-down, came increasingly to dominate formal naval thought even when logic and the experience of the first half of the twentieth century made convoying, anti-submarine patrol, and amphibious operations the central tasks for an American Navy.

The American tradition in military supply was compounded of two elements in the experience of the nineteenth century: one recurrent, the other a product of the Civil War. The recurrent element was the tendency of Congress to starve the armed forces in times of peace and to be tolerant of waste in times of war. Congressional open-handedness during war with respect to finance seemed a form of conscience-saving for failure to supply in peace the minimum essentials for training and maneuver of an adequate force at readiness. Since the limits of the nation's resources were never approached (except perhaps in the South during the Civil War) American military commanders developed, in reasonably good conscience, a reciprocal carelessness. This was particularly evident in the Civil War which was the first American engagement in which munitions (as opposed to men, food, uniforms, blankets, and medical supplies) were a truly significant element in supply.

The tendency of American commanders to behave a little like men who have suddenly struck it rich, careless of their margins of supply, confident that wastage as well as battle losses would be replaced proved consistent with some striking innovations in supply. These reflected the character of the American economy and its capital-intensive technology, and sprang directly from the requirements of a rapid-moving offensive. The Civil War was the first railroad war, in the sense that supplies were moved by rail to the front line area on a large scale, and the sequence of battle was shaped by the strategy of denying rail routes to the armies of the South.

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The American military style--like American diplomacy--took its rise from an international setting and an international tradition. Washington had been a British soldier in his time; Steuben strongly left the imprint of Germany eighteenth century experience; and the cast of West Point, in its formative stage (rather more than Lafayette) reflected French thought and practice. In any case the Western military tradition is as highly international as that of any of the more pacific professions, drawing its rules of war and battle, its heroes, goats, and (usually civilian) fools from the same lore, starting with the organized bloodshed of the Greeks and Persians. And this continuity persisted throughout the nineteenth century, despite the operational cast of the American professional's interests, and his generally scant knowledge of history and the world beyond American shores. It persisted mainly because the fundamental concepts taught American soldiers derived from a common foundation of experience and doctrine; and to some extent also because a relatively few men of influence--notably, the two Mahans,

Delafield, Upton, Luce, and Sims--maintained touch with the evolution of military affairs outside the nation.

Despite the wide area of concept, organization, and manners shared between American and other military men there was much distinctive in the American military tradition by the end of the nineteenth century. After Washington, it was a tradition virtually devoid of high-level strategic thought about the nation's military position in the world. Captain Mahan, when he emerged, was not only unique; but both he and the Navy agreed that he had probably chosen the wrong profession. Sims spoke for generations of American military men--and, indeed, for the whole society of which he was a part--when he wrote to his wife concerning his assignment to the Naval War College in 1911, following a mild scandal: "It may even be that things will blow over to such an extent that I may get some duty I would like better--something in closer touch with practice and less on the theoretical side."<sup>32</sup> The best American military man was, par excellence, an able engineer, with a firm grasp on the basic principles of battle, a gift for applying them effectively under the confused conditions of the field, a quality of courage and resilience in the face of the unexpected problem, and a special flair for the bold outflanking maneuver. Both symbolically and, in fact, he was a man of the age of railways and of gadgeteering that immediately followed the railway age. The vicissitudes of Stephen Luce in founding the Naval War College accurately catch the predominant biases and interests of the post-Civil War naval man, the professional in general, and of the nation.<sup>33</sup>

It was the transition period of our navy, when we were pressing from wooden ships to iron and steel; from sails to steam; from simple engines to complicated machinery and



electricity. The majority of officers on shore duty were engaged with inspection of steel, powder, guns, engines. It seemed as if every one was eager to be identified in some way with the building of the new navy. 'Thus mental activity' says Mahan referring to this period, 'was not directed toward the management of ships in battle, to the planning of naval campaigns, to the study of strategic and tactical problems nor even to the secondary matters connected with warlike operations at sea.' It was therefore natural that the idea of going to school was to most officers absurd.

But the predominant biases and interests were already undergoing change in the 1880's; for the Naval War College was established just as the new graduate schools took hold at Johns Hopkins and elsewhere.

### III. An Interim Summation

9

#### The National Style in the Nineteenth Century

Having surveyed briefly certain key dimensions of the nation's experience in the nineteenth century in both domestic and foreign affairs, it is time to take stock of the national style that emerged.

#### The American Household

A national style--like the performance of a unique human personality--is likely to be the product of a variety of different elements rather than deducible from any one element or factor. W.H. Auden once described T.S. Eliot not as a man but a household: a high church archdeacon, a wise and passionate old peasant grandmother, and a young boy given to slightly malicious practical jokes, all living, somehow, together. The performance of nations is like that of individuals in that it combines discrete fortuitous elements of heredity and environment, interacting, effectively coming to terms with problems (or failing to do so) in a recurrent fashion, building up over time stable patterns of performance. To understand the content of the American style in the nineteenth century one must, therefore, establish the nature of the American household.

Out of what basic elements did a distinctive American style emerge, and what was their consequence? Essentially, the American style of the nineteenth century emerged from the interaction of three powerful and persistent elements in the nation's experience: a nationalism and sense of community achieved by explicit commitment to particular ideal concepts of social and political organization: a day-to-day life challenged and dominated by the extraordinarily rich

material potentials of the American scene; and a sequence of national life the continuity and success of which appeared progressively to validate the initial commitments in the nation's culture and values, permitting innovation to take the form of a sequence of relatively minor, piecemeal, compromise adaptations of a stable basic structure.

These components of the American style are now examined in turn as they revealed themselves in the period between the Battle of New Orleans and the Spanish American War, the era framed, if you like, by the insights of Tocqueville and Turner, John Quincy Adams and Captain Mahan.

#### The Unifying Function of American Ideals

Many great nations have linked their nationality to a sense of mission which transcended their borders--in different ways and at different times, the Chinese, Russians, Germans, British, French, and Spanish. The various concepts of national mission have generally been associated with pride in race, culture, cumulative national achievement, effective power, religion, and so on. For limited periods the nationalism of several powers has been associated with a set of abstract ideas about how societies should be organized; for example, that of France and Russia in their post-revolutionary phases. American nationalism is special--in degree at least--because in both its domestic and external manifestations it has been strongly colored by the principles in terms of which American independence was asserted and towards which American society was subsequently to aspire.

In certain of the colonies the coming to America itself was associated with religious mission; and, down to the present, American nationalism has been suffused with a sense of higher sanction for the particular

concepts of social individualism, political democracy, and private enterprise which Americans evolved. As Wiebuhr has pointed out, the Calvinist and Deist traditions converged in this matter, permitting Americans to derive higher sanction from either divine or natural law.<sup>34</sup>

It is particularly remarkable that the two great religious-moral traditions which informed our early life--New England Calvinism and Virginian Deism and Jeffersonianism--arrive at remarkably similar conclusions about the meaning of our national character and destiny. Calvinism may have held too pessimistic views of human nature and too mechanical views of the providential ordering of human life. But when it assessed the significance of the American experiment both its conceptions of American destiny and its appreciation of American virtue finally arrived at conclusions strikingly similar to those of Deism. Whether our nation interprets its spiritual heritage through Massachusetts or Virginia, we came into existence with the sense of being a "separated" nation, which God was using to make a new beginning for mankind. We had renounced the evils of European feudalism. We had escaped from the evils of European religious bigotry. We had found broad spaces for the satisfaction of human desires in place of the crowded Europe. Whether, as in the case of the New England theocrats, our forefathers thought of our "experiment" as primarily the creation of a new and purer church, or, as in the case of Jefferson and his coterie, they thought primarily of a new political community, they believed in either case that we had been called out by God to create a new humanity. We were God's "American Israel".

The nation's communal rituals conventionally open with a prayer followed by the salute to the flag. The Plymouth colony--with its special sense of pilgrimage--has been elevated to a place in the common folklore quite disproportionate to its objective role in the making of New England the nation.<sup>35</sup> In the minds of Americans--and of others throughout the world--the concept of the American nation retains a dimension of ideological experiment and leadership.

The "liberty and justice for all" towards which Americans were committed took on a special importance and power. These goals were the essential device for unifying a society otherwise fragmented by

acute individualism, regionalism, and race. The nation lacked the cement of hierarchical political and social institutions, a long history, a common race, or even a common religion. But it fashioned unity out of a mixture of seventeenth century Protestant values, the dreams of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, and then, as time moved on, the experiences and myths built upon them.

The commitment to govern by methods which left maximum individual freedom and to organize social life on the principle of equality of opportunity have not only given content to American nationhood but, perhaps more important, they have also served at all levels as the essential solvent, the source of compromise, the common meeting place in a society otherwise dedicated to the proposition that its affairs should be conducted by vigorous conflict and competition among individual, group, and regional interests. It is clear that conflict (rather than a conscious consensus) has been the engine which drove the nation forward; but the limits within which such conflict has been generally contained and the content of the compromises painfully, even reluctantly, reached have reflected an abiding and widely shared commitment concerning the fundamental character of American society.

The vagueness of conventional articulation of the national ideals in itself served the important function of permitting a maximum sense of association with the national ethos by groups whose more immediate interests and even whose cultures widely diverged. Historically, American values, like the nation's political institutions, have been federalized; and, in the midst of the diversity of the continent, the narrow but exalted area of national consensus has mattered greatly. From the addresses of the President to the after-dinner speech of the most narrowly

focussed special interest group, the articulation of the society's common values and an evocation of the drama of successful American growth within their orbit have played a role which in older societies is covered by the rituals of ancient legitimized tradition.

Shared values and a sense of participation in the special adventure of America have been more than a substitute for a conventional patriotism. They have played an intimate human role as well. Americans, living with the heavy weight placed on the individual by Protestant theology and in a society denied (like most other Protestant societies) the cushioning effects of a medieval heritage, have had to fashion alternative ways of mitigating the burdens of isolation and personally answerable responsibility. There was some truth in D.H. Lawrence's designation of American democracy as a negative creed: "Henceforth be masterless."<sup>36</sup> Some truth but not the whole truth; for men are lonely and need connections beyond themselves.

From the beginning of the nation, American individualism meant, in a sense, merely that the nation created a different structure of "masters" from that of the clans and the hierarchies, the clearly defined social rituals, and the comforting familiar traditions of the Old World. Among the nation's "masters" were a narrower but, perhaps, more intense family; a tendency overtly to conform to the will and manners of the political and social majority; a written Constitution elevated to a peculiar sanctity; a nationalism associated with an ambiguous but, in the end, meaningful idealism; a marvellously complex array of voluntary associations, built on the tradition of cooperation

and compromise among like-minded equals, a variant of the English concept of liberty. And, as Tocqueville perceived, the heroic image of the nation's adventure and an identification with it were peculiarly important instruments for unifying a society of detached individuals.<sup>37</sup>

I readily admit that the Americans have no poets; I cannot allow that they have no poetic ideas. In Europe people talk a great deal of the wilds of America, but the Americans themselves never think about them; they are insensible to the wonders of inanimate nature and they may be said not to perceive the mighty forests that surround them till they fall beneath the hatchet. Their eyes are fixed upon another sight: the American people views its own march across these wilds, draining swamps, turning the course of rivers, peopling solitudes, and subduing nature. This magnificent image of themselves does not meet the gaze of the Americans at intervals only; it may be said to haunt every one of them in his least as well as his most important actions and to be always flitting before his mind.

Since virtually all cultures create ideals of behavior to which the individual cannot fully or regularly conform, there is nothing unique about the commitment of the American to values which he must, to a degree, violate in order to live in the world as it is. In most societies, the political and social life of the community--and its diplomacy--are not so directly tied to explicit moral purposes. Despite the early defeat of theocracy in New England and the lack of an established national church, there remains a sense in which we have continued to identify church and state. This identification of nationhood with a commitment to strive for good purposes accounts for the "moral overstrain"<sup>38</sup> which, as Myrdal noted, remains a peculiarly powerful engine within American society. It led a less friendly foreign observer to conclude:<sup>39</sup>

Americanism is not merely a myth that clever propaganda stuffs into people's heads but something every American continually reinvents in his gropings. It is at one and the same time a great external reality rising up at the entrance to the port of New York across from the Statue of Liberty and the daily product of anxious liberties.

### The Operator's Way with Ideas

Counter-poised against the society's active commitment to great ideal goals was the character of American life in the nineteenth century: a life of hard, absorbing, material pursuits executed substantially on the basis of individual initiative and conducted to individual advantage.

The nation was extremely rich in land and other natural resources in relation to its population. It was enormous in scale relative to means of communication in the nation's formative period. It presented for more than two and one-half centuries the challenge and possibility of an open frontier; and, for a full three centuries, the American environment made economically attractive to Americans as well as foreigners a virtually unobstructed flow of immigration. In this setting individual effort and competence yielded high returns in economic welfare, the attainment and expansion of which attracted the bulk of the society's talent and energies.

The attraction of economic life was, however, negative as well as positive. In the nineteenth century--and notably after the Civil War--the society's internal structure and relations to the outside world were such that positions in neither church nor state represented roles of great national prestige and authority, let alone of affluence. Men came to seek in the adventure of the American economy--in the test of the market--not only material advantage but also the sense of power, achievement, and status elsewhere granted by a more heterogeneous scale of values.

In addition, the mobility of American life, the lack of stable connection with family and place, heightened the attraction and psychological



importance of individual achievement. And the divorce of the individual from a sense of direct connection with a stable, structured community was further increased by the flow of immigrants. The problems and pace of adjustment varied, of course, with each wave, source, and social class of immigration as well as with the region and community within which the immigrant settled. Despite great variation, however, between the hungry forties and 1914 each wave of immigration faced a pattern of adjustment to the prevalent values and culture of the nation which was, by and large, accomplished by generational stages. In this process of adjustment the demonstration by the individual of effective performance in the market place or local forum played a substantial role. Thus the man who could solve urgent material problems, organize and operate profitably a productive enterprise, deal effectively with the day-to-day compromises and accommodations of local social and political life rose in status; the American scene came to be dominated by his operational cast of mind, a cast of mind biased towards the assessment by individuals of concrete, particular problems, empirical in method, pragmatic in solutions.

But men have a need and instinct to generalize their experience, to organize, somehow, the chaos around them; and when Americans, busy with the limited practical chores of building a new continental society, reached out for larger abstractions they tended to balloon out concepts derived from personal practical experience. They generalized what they intimately knew. Tocqueville described how it came about that a nation of individualist empiricists were powerfully drawn to a particular use of highly abstract concepts:<sup>10</sup>

The Americans are much more addicted to the use of general ideas than the English and entertain a much greater relish for them.... He who inhabits a democratic country sees

around him on every hand men differing but little from one another; he cannot turn his mind to any one portion of mankind without expanding and dilating his thought till it embraces the whole. All the truths that are applicable to himself appear to him equally and similarly applicable to each of his fellow citizens and fellow men. Having contracted the habit of generalizing his ideas in the study which engages him most and interests him most, he transfers the same habit to all his pursuits; and thus it is that the craving to discover general laws in everything, to include a great number of objects under the same formula, and to explain a mass of facts by a single cause becomes an ardent and sometimes an undiscerning passion in the human mind.... When I repudiate the traditions of rank, professions, and birth, when I escape from the authority of example to seek out, by the single effort of my reason, the path to be followed, I am inclined to derive the motives of my opinions from human nature itself, and this leads me necessarily, and almost unconsciously, to adopt a great number of very general notions.... Men who live in ages of equality have a great deal of curiosity and little leisure; their life is so practical, so confused, so excited, so active, that but little time remains to them for thought. Such men are prone to general ideas because they are thereby spared the trouble of studying particulars; they contain, in a little time, a great return. If, then, on a brief and inattentive investigation, they think they discern a common relation between certain objects, inquiry is not pushed any further; and without examining in detail how far these several objects agree or differ, they are hastily arranged under one formula, in order to pass to another subject.

The American mind, devoted to arduous practical tasks, came, then, also to be equipped with an arsenal of general concepts--often legitimate but partial insights--not rigorously related to each other or to the bodies of fact they were meant to illuminate.

On balance there was little in American life--its content and its values--that encouraged the care and contemplation required to array the intermediate structure of abstractions, test them for internal consistency, and to make orderly patterns of thought. Regions, towns, and families, did, it is true, exhibit something of the Buddenbrooks dynamics--that is, a third generation (symbolically or in fact) born

to both money and social status, turning to the life of the mind or spirit. But such enclaves of reflective leisure could not hold up for long in the vortex of American life. Even in the older more stable sections of the East Coast the proportion of first-rate talent that could be drawn and held in intellectual pursuits--as against the claims of business and finance, railroads and the West, shipping or the law--remained small, down to and beyond the First World War.

The national style reinforced itself, moreover, by coming to suffuse the widening process of public education. The principle of free public education was fought through in the North during the pre-Civil War decades; and the new elementary schools reflected a bias towards practical, usable thought, as did the high schools which carried the educational revolution forward from about 1870. In a sense the gospel of education for practical purposes had been written into national law by the Morrill Act of 1862, which, in itself, set in motion a reinforcing process in the land grant colleges. This process did not achieve a simple triumph for the vocational conception. In secondary schools the idea of education in the classics gained ground in the 1890's; and spreading out from the universities of the East Coast were transatlantic intellectual currents and conceptions which, in the end, mingled biology with the pursuit of animal husbandry--symbolically and in fact. And it was the mingling of these strands that was distinctive in American education.

When American institutions of higher learning moved towards maturity at the close of the nineteenth century, the architects of the new graduate schools were instinctively drawn to German university models. The Germans--who had left an imprint on American education earlier in the century--placed a high premium on facts and their ordering

by precise rules of evidence. Their concept of professional hard-working scholarship harmonized with the instincts of a nation of empiricists entering into an age of industrialism and specialization. The nineteenth century Germans, when they came to generalize in the social sciences were, like Americans, prone to broad concepts only loosely linked to the bodies of fact they so painstakingly compiled. On the whole, Americans pulled up short of the cosmic level of German abstractions, mainly steering clear of universal systems; but a family resemblance remained. In a substantial part of the nation's intellectual life Americans continued "to explain a mass of facts by a single cause."

The dominant, if changing, mode of advanced education in America came to be a specialized empiricism, the fragmented results of which were bound into unity, if at all, by vague high order generalizations. American intellectual and scientific life produced many knowledgeable men; a number of creative insights; and, at its best, figures of wisdom, with great sensibility about the nature of the physical world or about how human life is really conducted. But it yielded few general theoretical structures of distinction.

In both its dimensions--a devotion to the ordering of fact in terms of low-order abstraction and a certain vague disorder at high levels of abstraction--the American intellectual style of the nineteenth century reflected the operator's biases and fitted his needs.

The American manner of dealing with ideas in relation to reality in the nineteenth century was by no means unique; but it was distinctive. The nation steadily remained a part of the Western European intellectual and philosophical tradition; but, cut loose from the surviving medieval traditions and institutions of Western Europe, devoted overwhelmingly to building a rich modern society out of an empty continent, nineteenth

century America developed an empiricism more acute and energetic than that of its contemporaries.

Continuity, Success, and the Ad Hoc Formula

How in the nineteenth century was the gap bridged between a heightened reliance on idealism to define and maintain a sense of nation and community and a heightened reliance on the vigorous interplay of individual, regional, and group interests to do the day's work? How was the gap bridged between a concentration of effort on particular chores perceived in terms of low-order abstraction and the rich but somewhat disorderly kit-bag of higher abstractions into which Americans reached for their general organizing principles?

The answer appears to be that the nation built its style around the task of solving problems. Americans were content to leave implicit the moral and philosophic ambiguities which flowed from the method of compromised conflict and experiment. Relatively little attention in formal thought or articulation was given to the common law formulae which emerged from these ardent living processes because of two massive facts: first, the extraordinary continuity of the American experience over the nineteenth century; second, that as a national society the United States was a distinct success. Men are more inclined to examine with intellectual refinement a complex system of which they are a part which is confronted with radically new problems or which is failing, than a going concern. And when towards the close of the nineteenth century some Americans became more reflective and articulate about their society, they tended to elevate "life, experience, process, growth, function" over "logic, abstraction, deduction, mathematics, and mechanics."<sup>41</sup> Holmes' dictum embraced more of the national style than the law: "The life of the law has not been logic; it has been experience."

### The Dimensions of Continuity

The continuity and success of the national experience had a number of distinct dimensions which converged to produce the result.

First, of course, was the frontier. From the earliest stages of the Massachusetts and Virginia colonies down to the twentieth century--that is, for almost three centuries--the existence of an accessible and productive frontier gave a special reality to the individualistic values of the society, strongly coloring its institutions, from the family to politics, and its culture. The frontier was a long historical process, not a piece of real estate; and American economic, political, and social life consisted in good part of the interplay and balancing of interests between the frontier areas and the more stable communities and institutions that moved in behind the frontier. Certain political patterns are continuous from one end of American history to the other--for example, the conflicts of interest between soft-money indebted farmers and hard-money urban property owners; between those who sought the state's intervention on behalf of public improvements and those who sought lower taxes. Americans became expert at living with such conflicts and working constructively with them in their many variants. More than that, the concept of the frontier, its existence somewhere to the West, imparted a continuing sense of promise, possibility, and adventure to those who lived their lives out in more ordered urban settings in the East.

Despite the expanding frontier, however, the task of maintaining unity was, in one sense, eased as time went on. The scale of the nation was roughly matched and then outmatched by the development of communications capable of binding the regions together and giving them unity. In terms of the central problem of achieving and maintaining nationhood

among a group of regions with power distinctive interests and attitudes, the working techniques of federalism proved essentially viable with, as it were, only gradual modification.

Similarly, the initial tour de force of generating effective (even if barely effective) national action from a dispersed and locally oriented population--in the 1770's and 1780's--was somehow maintained despite the increase and physical spread of the population, the impact of diverse immigrations, and the emergence or sharpening of class groupings as industrialization and urbanization proceeded. The attachment of American nationalism to certain overriding principles of social and political organization served adequately as a rallying point for nationhood, surviving the crucial test of civil war. The structure of private social groupings continued to ramify and to weave a highly individualistic and mobile population into a firm social fabric; for those groupings came to share a widening area of common values. Above all, the canny insights of the Founding Fathers yielded a constitutional structure which, when supplemented by the intermediation of a two-party system, a Supreme Court, and an Anglo-American system of law, weathered the gross changes in the scale and character of American society in the nineteenth century.

The maintenance of national unity was eased by the degree of vertical mobility American society continued to offer. Social mobility in the urban industrial settings which increasingly characterized the nation as the century drew to a close was, of course, a quite different phenomenon from that form of social mobility which consists mainly in the possibility of acquiring cheaply an agricultural homestead. Nevertheless, Americans made the transition from one to the other without ceasing to envisage as possible for themselves--and especially for their children--a marked rise in social and economic status on the basis of individual capabilities

and performance. The nation's evolution steadily confirmed and re-confirmed the central unifying concept of equality of opportunity in a sufficiently meaningful way to maintain loyalty to the nation's social system.

Both the adjustment to conflicting regional and group interests within the continental society and the process of social mobility were enormously aided by the sustained growth and high output per head which marked the history of the modern American economy. The growing economy not only gave reality to the concept of progress but also permitted men to achieve compromises in which they shared increasing communal wealth without the bitter, corrosive conflicts which come about when men feel they can rise only at the expense of someone else's decline. In one sense it was precisely because the land to the West was more easily colonized by men from the North than from the South, and popular sovereignty would evidently work in the North's favor that the Civil War ensued: the South did, indeed, feel that the nation's extension to the West Coast could only be at the expense of decline or loss of its way of life. The great exception here reinforces the general rule.

Above all, the cast of American values and institutions and the tendency to adapt them by cumulative experiment rather than to change them radically was progressively strengthened by the image of the gathering success of the American adventure, whether it was judged on economic grounds, on grounds of political workability, or in terms, even, of international status. The nation, founded in defiance of a major power, living for a time at bay in both a military and a political sense, came early in its history to feel that its initial concept of a transcendent



ideological destiny was justified by its own performance in relation to the turn of events in the world outside.

#### A Major Limitation

How, then, did the national style solve for Americans the inescapable moral and philosophical problems of social organization? The moral issue was solved by an incessant process of compromised conflict and evolutionary adaptation taking place within a continuous framework of institutions, hammered out of a colonial life and a revolution rooted in inherited British values. The philosophical issue was solved by dealing vigorously with concrete problems as they arose and permitting economic, political, and social processes to unfold in the wake of a sequence of apparently ad hoc solutions. With certain notable exceptions, the accidents of history and the American environment made it possible in the nineteenth century for these processes of extension to be conducted by incremental modification arrived at by widespread debate and experiment. The whole cacaphony of American articulation about politics, social values, economics, and ethics had a real importance in keeping alive the nation's unifying values; but more significant for how the nation actually worked were the subtly balanced concepts left implicit in the working processes of a society blessed for most of its life by the possibility of solving its essential problems in relative continuity with its past experience. American ideals had a living place within these working processes of conflict and negotiation, but a place more compromised and less innocent than conventional modes of articulation would allow.

The intellectual content of a process is immensely complex. It involves many factors interacting over time. The normal forms of rigorous logical exposition can grip only elements within the process

and are likely to give them a more rigid and static cast than, in fact, they have; the number of unknowns is likely to be greater than the number of equations that can usefully be formulated. Men successfully operate processes by accumulating experience, feeling, and judgment, by sensing recurrent patterns rather than by isolating clear-cut logical connections of cause and effect. This is how good captains of sailing vessels have worked, good politicians, good businessmen. This was the typical American style in operating and developing the nation's society in the nineteenth century.

Its success, however, was dependent on two conditions which are, to a degree, alternative. First, the problems confronted must be in their essence relatively familiar, and thus capable of solution by only moderately radical innovation on the basis of existing principles or institutions. Second, there must be sufficient time for the experimental exploration of possible solutions and the osmotic process of accepting change. The more the time permitted, the greater the workability of a technique of problem-solving by empirical experiment.

It was, therefore, in the less radical orders of innovation--in science, industry, and politics--that the nation excelled. Or, put another way, the American style which emerged from the nineteenth century was least effective when it confronted issues which required prompt and radical innovation.

#### IV. Prelude to the Twentieth Century

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#### IV. Prelude to the Twentieth Century

10

##### The Watershed of the 1890's

On July 12, 1893, in his famous paper read before the American Historical Association at Chicago, Frederick Turner announced that "the frontier is gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history."<sup>42</sup> On April 11, 1898 a reluctant President McKinley, responding to forces against which he was unprepared to set his face, sent a message to Congress which started war with Spain and launched the United States into explicit status as a world power. On September 14, 1901 Theodore Roosevelt, one of the architects of the Spanish American War, succeeded McKinley as President, opening an era in which the powers of the national government came to play a progressively expanded role in relation to the American economy and to American society as a whole. Short of revolution or major war, history rarely affords a turning point more clear cut, both at the time and in retrospect, than that which occurred in American society in the decade climaxed by Roosevelt's fortuitous accession to the Presidency.

The notion of the watershed of the 1890's is, however, like most such benchmarks in history, both legitimate and illegitimate. It is legitimate in the sense that the dominant conception in American foreign and domestic policy shifted at about the turn of the century. Self-reinforcing trends were set in motion that created new institutions and policies and irreversibly altered the character of the old; and, perhaps most important, the war with Spain and the temperament and character of the new President helped to create an image of the nation--of its

domestic character, of its relation to the world, and of its future path of evolution--perceptibly different from that of the nineteenth century.

The concept of a turning point in the 1890's is illegitimate in the sense that the forces which yielded the Spanish-American War and the progressive domestic policies of Roosevelt and Taft and of Wilson's first term had been gathering strength since about the time of the end of the Civil War. Precision of dating fades away on close examination of the trend of affairs at home and abroad in the 1870's and the 1880's. In the first years of the twentieth century, the processes at work over the previous three decades clearly accelerated; but they were not new, nor were they created by the Spanish-American War and Theodore Roosevelt.<sup>43</sup>

The purpose of the next four chapters is to consider the underlying forces at work in American society and in its world setting which in the latter decades of the nineteenth century were altering the choices open to Americans and the nature of the problems they perceived as urgent; and then to suggest the initial impact of these changes on the components of the national style.

## The Changing Setting of National Life

### Some Arithmetic of Economic Maturity

At the turn of the century, the output of producers goods was increasing at a rate of about 11 per cent per annum, leading the way in economic growth; and iron, steel, and their products almost doubled in value during the 1890's. In 1900 the United States was producing as much steel as Britain and Germany combined and accounted for about 30 per cent of the world's total industrial output. American exports of grain were declining rapidly as the requirements of American cities, swollen with the tide of immigration, competed against the demands of Western Europe, thus opening an opportunity for profitable railway building and grain exports in other parts of the world. American manufactured exports had gone from about 35 per cent to 55 per cent of the total over the three decades preceding 1900; but more important, exports of finished manufacturers had begun to gather momentum in the 1890's. American foreign trade, moreover, was shifting away from the old predominance of Europe towards increased exchanges with Asia, Latin America, and a Canada moving rapidly along in its take-off. American net capital imports were at a low level, with the flow shortly to reverse its direction; and the proportion of Americans living in urban areas (8,000 inhabitants or more) had moved from a fifth to about a third since 1870. But, again more significant, in the 1890's the trolley car had begun suburbanization in earnest, a process that was to restructure the character of American society over the next half century.

### The Final Shift in Balance

The attainment of industrial maturity which these developments reflect changed irreversibly the balance of the nation's life; and it

is in the light of this basic shift in balance that the ending of the frontier is to be understood.

The process by which American society evolved has long been seen as a series of stages which, as Turner pointed out from Loria, recapitulated in quasi-geological layers the stages of European development.<sup>44</sup>

"The United States lies like a huge page in the history of society. Line by line as we read this continental page from West to East we find the record of social evolution. It begins with the Indian and the hunter; it goes on to tell of the disintegration of savagery by the entrance of the trader, the pathfinder of civilization; we read the annals of the pastoral stage in ranch life; the exploitation of the soil by the raising of unrotated crops, of corn and wheat in sparsely settled farming communities, the intensive culture of the denser farm settlement; and finally the manufacturing organization with city and factory systems."

Down into the twentieth century, all these layers of economic activity--and the regional social structures and cultures that tended to accompany them--could be found within the United States; but during the nineteenth century, although none was eliminated, the balance among them altered. While there were still fresh territories to be opened in the West, industry could expand, cities could grow, the immigrants could pour in; but there could still be maintained in the nation's life a wholesome sort of balance between the old primitive Jeffersonian activities and those decreed by the foreseeable emergence of an America more nearly conforming to Hamilton's image of an industrial society.

On one view, the significance of the end of the frontier was extremely limited: it merely decreed some acceleration in the shift of balance from rural to urban life already long under way. Despite the rise of the urban proportion in the population to about a third, the nation in 1900 was still rural in its predominant cast, including its image of itself.

On the other hand, with the end of the frontier, the time when the "manufacturing organization with city and factory systems" would dominate all the rest, including agriculture, became suddenly foreseeable. The process which had first occurred on a regional basis in the northeast and which had then gradually moved west was finally to overtake--once and for all--the nation as a whole. The changing character of American life and the power of the trends bringing about those changes could be read in census returns much earlier than those for 1890; but once Turner pointed out what the Superintendent of the Census for 1890 had said, men were forced increasingly to look at their circumstances in terms of where the lines of projection pointed rather than in terms of a familiar balance from the past. The end of the frontier in the 1890's was a psychological rather than a physical or economic fact.

It is in this general setting, of a nation having moved from its take-off into industrial maturity, in which the pace of modernization was rapidly altering the old proportioning between urban and rural life, that the familiar issues of the post-Civil War period are to be viewed-- issues arising from the passing of the frontier, the scale and organization of the railway system, the scale and concentration of industry, and the status and efforts to organize industrial labor.<sup>45</sup>

#### The Emergence of Industrial Bureaucracy<sup>46</sup>

A major and pervasive consequence of the transition to maturity was the emergence of large-scale industrial units. The building of a continental railroad net immediately after the Civil War created a unified continental market; and <sup>the</sup> rate wars of the 1870's and 1880's



led to the consolidation of the railroads into massive groupings. In the 1880's a group of innovators in the consumption goods industries built up nationwide organizations to purchase supplies and to distribute their products--Swift in meat-packing, Duke in Tobacco, Pillsbury in flour. Simultaneously, the McCormick Harvester organization and the Singer Sewing Machine Company emerged, leading the way in consumers durables on a mass production and distribution basis. Under pressure from over-production and excess capacity, as well as from the inducements of the continental communications net, national combinations were created also in the oil, sugar, and corn products industries. And then, in a surge of consolidation, the great present day corporations were created in the producers goods sectors between 1898 and 1902; notably, in steel, copper, and coal.

In two decades the organization of American industrial and commercial life was transformed. Americans worked increasingly not in firms run by single men or single families but in great bureaucracies structured functionally. Their distant chiefs became the vice-presidents in charge of such functions as production, purchasing, manufacture, sales, and finance.

As Chandler concludes:

"...the sudden growth of huge, departmentalized, centralized business structures affected the nature and scope of men's activities on all levels of business operations. The entrepreneurs who created these great enterprises, by integrating purchasing or production of raw materials, manufacturing, and marketing, under one corporate roof, developed much broader horizons than had their predecessors. They continued to watch and adjust to changes in the nature and location of markets and raw materials, and the development of manufacturing processes. They spent less time in supervising a single function, and more on coordinating the activities of the over-all industrial process. In this work, they became adept at analyzing and acting on voluminous daily, weekly, and monthly reports. Such men as Rockefeller, Duke, Swift, Frick, George Westinghouse, Piere DuPont,

Andrew Preston, Hugh Chisholm, and Charles E. Coffin began to control their business as much through statistics as through personal contacts."

Following the pattern of life and work first created in American society by the long-range railroads of the 1850's, men found themselves in narrow specialized functions with successful or unsuccessful performance defined in terms of generally inflexible bureaucratic rules.

The emergence of large-scale industry posed many problems which began to engage Americans in the latter decades of the nineteenth century and which were to preoccupy political life in the fifteen years before 1917: the rise of the American Federation of Labor; the implementation of the Sherman Act; the creation of a banking system to match the new, mature, interacting continental market; the creation of national regulatory commissions; and, in general, the effort to free the political process from the disproportionate control and influence quickly achieved by the new concentrations of economic power. But equally fundamental was the fact that the bureaucratization of the economy drastically and permanently altered the setting within which an increasing proportion of Americans could express their individuality at work.

#### The Turn in Farmers' Affairs

There was a chronic tendency of farm prices to fall from about the end of the Civil War to the mid-1890's.<sup>47</sup> Under such circumstances the farmer reacted with particular sensitivity to monopolistic railway rates and to real or believed monopoly elements in the prices of things he bought. Thus the farmer launched as early as the 1870's the counter-attack on large-scale industry--beginning the long process of reconciling

modern industry with older values and aspirations Americans have sought to retain in the society. In that effort the farmer was joined increasingly by men representing business and labor in the East, creating, as early as 1890, a political environment which yielded the Sherman Anti-Trust Act.<sup>48</sup>

The position of the American farmer continued to reflect world-wide phenomena. The decisive stage of the American take-off had been launched by the reversal of world prices in the 1840's. European population then came to outstrip world grain output at existing prices; and the cotton price rose as well. The rise of prices made the wheat fields of the Middle West exceedingly attractive, as well as the further extension of cotton culture to Texas and beyond; and the railway boom of the 1850's followed, drawing, in a sense, hungry Europeans to create the possibility of American exports to feed those left behind.

After the Civil War the full potentialities of American grain export were developed, shipping rates fell radically as the age of steel and steam won out on the sea as in land transport, and agricultural prices on a world basis rapidly fell, notably in grain. For twenty years the American farmer lived under a regime of falling prices, not quite bankrupt like many of his fellows in Western Europe, mitigating the effect of falling prices on profits by the increased use of farm machinery and fertilizer, but uneasy, with a sense that the market prices and the currency and banking systems were systematically denying him the legitimate fruits of his labor and enterprise.

Down to about the summer of 1896 the American farmer was something of a radical and a reformer; but in the mid-1890's there was a turning

point in the world economy similar to the turning point of fifty years earlier. Once again the demand for foodstuffs (and certain key raw materials) outstripped existing supplies at the existing level of prices; farm prices rose, launching, notably in Canada, Russia, and Argentina a process similar to the opening up of the American West a half century earlier. In the quarter century that followed, the trends in prices, interest rates, and income distribution were quite radically reversed from what they had been over the previous several decades.

Thus, although the spread of industrialization was a relatively continuous process, there was a significant reversal of the trends in the world economy as the nineteenth century came to an end. That reversal was to have the effect of making the American farmer once again a reasonably contented and conservative fellow down to about 1920. On the other hand, rising costs of living denied the industrial worker any significant rise in real wages. The reversal of trends within the world economy in the 1890's thus helped create the tensions which began to yield after the turn of the century the first clear outlines of the welfare state.

#### The International Connections of the American Economy

It was the potentialities of the British cotton market in the 1790's which furnished the incentive for a mechanical cotton-picking machine to which Eli Whitney responded, thereby helping to create the southern empire based on a slavery that might otherwise have withered. The vicissitudes of American industry in its early stages were tied to fluctuations in the British connection; and it was from Britain that Lowell derived his machines to launch industrialization firmly in New England. The post-1815 surges westward into new cotton lands reflected the interplay of American supply and British demand; British capital

played a large part in the development of the West in the 1830's and again in the 1850's. And the vicissitudes of the post-Civil War grain farmer were only slightly less tied to the international economy than those of the antebellum cotton farmer had been.

As American industrialization proceeded, even more profound structural links developed between phases of growth in the United States and in Europe. The pull (and, in some parts of Europe, the push) of local economic conditions helped determine the scale and rhythm of the flow of immigrants to the United States. The American take-off was completed, a good deal of the new farm land put to work, the railways pushed to the Pacific, and the basic modern industries initially manned with a substantial and essential contribution from the immigrant labor which began to flow with new momentum in the 1840's from Ireland and Northwest Europe and from Southern and Eastern Europe in the century's latter decades. The rhythm of the immigration flow helped determine the character of the world's investment and the pace of national growth rates. Specifically, a close link emerged between surges in immigration and surges in American construction of producers durable goods.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, there was a tendency for surges in construction to follow those in immigration and industrial investment as if the society had somehow to slow down the pace of its industrial growth in order to build minimum housing and other urban overheads for its enlarging city populations. In Britain expanded capital exports paralleled periods of surge in immigration to the United States, and investment at home expanded when Americans were balancing up their economy with construction.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the American connections with the world trading area widened out to the less developed areas outside Europe both as markets and as sources of essential American imports. The

intimacy of the European connection remained, however, despite the virtual ending of American dependence on capital imports. The gap that had existed since Washington's day between the nation's economic links to the world and those it was prepared to acknowledge in the world of military power and diplomacy thus persisted.

## Types of Aggression and the Emerging World Arena

### The Breakdown of the Settlement of 1815

As the nineteenth century moved towards its close, the surface of relative peace among the major powers which had marked the era since 1815 remained, and the popular habits of mind and expectations that went with it; but tension rose in the chancelleries as new forces began to emerge and clash in the international arena. In Europe the mid-century conception that colonial connections would wither away gave way to a new concern to hold or to acquire colonies. Germany, having asserted itself in Central and Western Europe in the years before 1871 and then having settled down to the tasks of industrialization, exhibited a new ambitious forcefulness in the 1890's, while Japan moved out from the islands to stake its first claims on the mainland. A few men at least in Britain, France, and the United States began to examine the world power balance afresh; and outlays on armaments everywhere increased.

The frictions and clashes among the powers towards the close of the nineteenth century are conventionally grouped under the heading of "imperialism"; and, under the influence of Hobson, Lenin, and others they have come to be associated with changes in the world's economic structure and the motives of those charged with economic policy. A relationship does exist between the economic stages of societies and military aggression; but it is a somewhat different relationship from that usually implied. To explain the changes at work in the world arena during the latter decades of the nineteenth century and to lay the basis for analyzing the era of chronic military struggle which was to follow, it is useful to distinguish sharply three kinds of

aggression which can be related to the stages of growth.

### Colonies

The first form of aggression to consider within this framework is that connected with colonialism. Both ends of the colonial problem are likely to involve some bloodshed; that is, both the initial intrusion of a more advanced society on a traditional society and the moment when the colonial area, moving through the preconditions towards modernity and growth, forces a withdrawal of the metropolitan power.

Colonialism arose in part because from the fifteenth century on a world arena of power existed in which the European nation states competed for trade, for bases of military advantage, and for what was then military potential: bullion, naval stores, and the like. In large part, however, colonies were initially established not to execute a major objective of national policy but to fill a vacuum; that is, to organize a traditional society incapable of self-organization (or unwilling to organize itself) for modern import and export activity. Normal trade between equals would have fulfilled the initial motivation of the intruding power, and in many cases normal trade would have been tidier, more rational, and less costly. In the four centuries preceding 1900, however, the native societies of America, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East were structured and motivated neither to do business with Western Europe nor to protect themselves against Western European arms; and so they were taken over and organized.

Colonies were founded often because some economic group wanted to expand its purchases or sales, encountered both difficulty in arranging the conditions for efficient business and gross military weakness, and persuaded its government to take responsibility for organizing a suitable



political framework to ensure, at little cost, the benefits of expanded trade.

But once colonial responsibility was accepted by the nation concerned, the whole affair was transformed. It moved from the essentially peaceful terrain of business to the area of national prestige and power where more primitive and general national interests and motives held sway.

Two specific consequences flowed from this transfer. First, certain non-colonial powers came, as a matter of prestige and style, to desire colonial possessions as a symbol of their coming of age. Nothing in the capital markets of the Atlantic world or in their trading patterns justified much ado about colonies, on strictly economic grounds, from, say, 1873 to 1914. A bit more could be said for certain colonial positions on military or strategic grounds. But the competition occurred essentially because competitive nationalism was the rule of the world arena and colonies were an accepted symbol of status and power within that arena.

The second consequence of shifting colonies from a limited economic to major symbolic status was that withdrawal became a matter of national prestige and, therefore, extremely difficult. Almost without exception, colonial positions were acquired at relatively little cost and at the behest of limited interests which could not have commanded national support if much blood and treasure had been initially required for the enterprise. The exit from imperial status, with a few exceptions, took the form of bitter warfare or was accompanied by major political and diplomatic crisis. The experience of colonial administration created not merely ties of economic advantage but also human memories of cumulative effort, achievement, and status--as well as of national power and prestige--extraordinarily painful to sever.

The ability of a colony to force the withdrawal of the metropolitan power was also related to the dynamics of colonial rule. Although imperial powers usually set up administrations and pursued policies which did not optimize the development of the preconditions for take-off, they could not avoid bringing about transformations in thought, knowledge, institutions, and the supply of social overhead capital which moved the colonial society along that path; and they often included modernization of a sort as one object of colonial policy.

In any case, the reality of the effective power that went with an ability to wield modern technology was demonstrated, and the more thoughtful local people drew appropriate conclusions. Ports, docks, roads, and railways were built, and a centralized tax system was imposed. Some colonials were drawn into the minimum modern economic activities which were necessary to conduct trade and to produce both what the colonial power wished to export and what could profitably be sold in the expanding urban and commercialized agricultural markets. Some modern goods and services were diffused sufficiently in the colonial society to alter the local conception of an attainable level of consumption, and the opportunity for a western education was opened to a few. Sooner or later a concept of nationalism, transcending the old ties to clan or region, inevitably crystallized around an accumulating resentment of colonial rule.

In the end, out of such semi-modernized settings there emerged local coalitions which generated political and in some cases military pressure capable of forcing withdrawal; but the coalitions and policies appropriate for achieving independence were rarely capable of meeting the subsequent needs for completing the preconditions and launching the take-off into economic growth.

In the late nineteenth century most of the colonial areas were still traditional societies or not far advanced in the preconditions stage, and, except for sporadic gestures of defiance, they were not yet prepared seriously to contest colonial rule. The pattern of colonialism was still spreading as Britain was joined by other major powers anxious to assert their sense of enhanced authority by acquiring hegemony over the traditional societies which still remained unattached to metropolitan states. Thus the major powers confronted each other in the Pacific, the Middle East, and Africa.

#### Local and Regional Aggression

The political process likely to precede or accompany the early stage of take-off can be directly linked to a numerous second category of wars in modern times--local or regional aggression.

Before an economy can take off into sustained growth an effective national government must be formed. That government must be capable of organizing the nation as a unified market, of creating and maintaining a tax and fiscal system which diverts resources into modern uses, and, in general, of leading the way through the whole spectrum of national policy from tariffs to education and public health towards a modernization of the economy and the society of which it is a part.

Such governments have usually had to be formed in the face of opposition from powerful political and social groups rooted in regionally based agriculture. These regionally based groups were, in the normal case, finally overthrown by a coalition whose elements shared only one solid common conviction: namely, that they had a stake in the creation of an independent modern state. Historically, the coalitions (essentially similar to those which forced the colonial withdrawal) have

often had a political (or military) wing and an economic wing, each wing representing somewhat different motives and objectives in the formation of the new or modernized nation. In Germany there was the coalition of Junkers and the Western men of commerce and industry; in Japan the samurai and the grain merchants; in post-1861 Russia the commercial middle class and the more enterprising civil servant and soldiers.

Once the new modern state is established and the economy develops some momentum, nationalism can be turned in any one of several directions. It can be turned outward to avenge real or believed past humiliations suffered on the world scene or to exploit real or believed opportunities for national aggrandizement which appear for the first time as realistic possibilities. It can be turned inward and focussed on the political consolidation of the victory won by the national over the regionally based power. Or it can be turned to the tasks of economic, social, and political modernization which have been obstructed by the old regionally based, usually aristocratic societal structure, by the former colonial power, or by both in coalition. Thus, once modern nationhood is established, different elements in the coalition may press to exert the power of the newly triumphant nationalist political sentiment in different directions; the soldiers may look abroad, the professional politicians to driving home the triumph of the center over region, the merchants to economic development, the intellectuals to social, political, and legal reform.

The cost of policy in newly created or newly modernized states hinges greatly, then, on the balance of power which emerges within the coalition and on the degree to which there is a balance between alternative objectives of nationalism.

Historically, it has proved extremely tempting to divert a part of the energies of the new nationalism to external objectives, notably if such objectives seemed to be accessible at little real cost or risk. Such early aggressive exercises have been generally limited in objective, aimed at territories close to the new nation's own borders rather than directly at the balance of Eurasian power: thus, Bismarck's neat military operations against Denmark, Austria, and France from 1864-1871; the Japanese acquisition of substantial political control in Korea in 1895; and the Russian drive through Manchuria to Vladivostok, which lead on to the test of strength with resurgent Japan in 1904-05.

Nationalist ventures in local aggression often have substantial political support, in part because an ebullient nationalism is widespread irrespective of social interests and in part because special interests believe they will directly benefit from the new territorial acquisitions. In addition, of course, an externally directed "bloody shirt" policy can help maintain cohesion in a society where the concrete tasks of modernization raise difficult and schismatic domestic issues which the leader of the coalition would seek to evade if possible.

The early limited external adventures associated with late preconditions or early take-off periods appear generally to have given way to a phase of absorption in the adventure of modernizing the economy and the society as a whole. The next dangerous age comes with the approach of economic maturity.

#### The New and Precarious Power Balance in Eurasia

It is the differential timing of the approach to economic maturity that best illuminates those changes in the world arena of power in the

late nineteenth century which disrupted the settlement of 1815 and set the stage for the great struggles of the twentieth century.

The nineteenth century arena of effective power that Britain held in balance consisted mainly of Western and Central Europe and the maritime fringes of Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Russia lurched from one side of its Eurasian cage to the other, first to the west, then to the east; but in the nineteenth century it could be held within that cage with reasonable economy of force, as the Crimean and Russo-Japanese Wars indicated. And the Western Hemisphere emerged as a special sphere, closely related to but still separated from the major power game by the Monroe Doctrine and by the complex implicit understanding with Britain which gave it vitality.

In the three decades after the Civil War the four great areas-- Germany, Japan, Russia, and the United States--whose coming to maturity was to determine the world's balance of power in the first half of the twentieth century were at stages which did not lead to major aggression. The world balance of power which emerged after 1815 was being rapidly undermined; but this fact could largely be concealed except from those professionally concerned with the problem of force and potential force. After the Franco-Prussian War, Germany settled down under Bismarck to consolidate its political position and to move from a remarkable take-off into economic maturity. Japan, after the Meiji restoration, took about a decade to consolidate the pre-conditions for take-off, and, less dramatically than Germany, moved into the first stages of sustained economic growth. Russia also slowly completed its pre-conditions and, from the 1890's forward, moved into a take-off bearing a family resemblance to that of the United States a half century earlier.

The twentieth century arena, clearly beginning to form up in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, assumed, then, this form. Stretching East from Britain were new major industrial powers in Germany, Russia, and Japan, with Germany the most advanced among them. In the face of this phenomenon, Britain and France were moving uncertainly towards coalition, with Britain also beginning to look West across the Atlantic for further support. And, poised uncertainly on the rim of the world arena, groping to define a position consistent both with its tradition and with its new sense of world status, was the enormous young giant, the United States, its economic maturity achieved.

But the sweep of industrialization across northern Eurasia was not uniform. Eastern Europe and China did not move into take-off. They were still caught up in the early, turbulent, transitional phases of the pre-conditions; and they were to provide peculiar difficulty.

Why should this have been so? Each of these two regions, if attached to any major power, had the geographic location, population, and long-run potential capable of shifting radically the Eurasian power balance; but, lagging behind their neighbors in the growth sequence, they lacked the political coherence and economic strength to defend themselves.

In the end, it was the relative weakness of Eastern Europe and China when flanked by industrially mature societies--their vulnerability to military, political, and economic intrusion in their protracted stage of pre-conditions--which provided the occasion for the great armed struggles of the first half of the twentieth century. Put another way, it is unlikely that the world arena of competitive power would have yielded major continental struggles to the death if colonial stakes

and the impulses for local and regional aggression alone were at work. It was the structure of Eurasia, where the control over Eastern Europe and China threatened to determine the destiny of all the major mature states, that primarily shaped war and diplomacy after the turn of the century.

But in the 1890's the implications of the differential stages of growth in a competitive world area were still latent. Despite occasional gunfire from the Yalu to Cuba, from South Africa to Manila Bay, it was not too difficult to view the world as still held in balance by a British relationship to Eurasia which prevented any one power or coalition from dominating or threatening to dominate that area.



Intimations of Change in American Diplomatic and Military PolicyThe Pacific and the Caribbean

While forces in the world arena began to stir in many new directions and the foundations of the existing balance of power were being altered by the locus and pace of industrialization in Eurasia, the United States was primarily absorbed in bringing a continental economy to maturity. Nevertheless, as with other sectors of the nation's life, diplomacy and military affairs were marked by a series of events in the 1880's and 1890's which forecast the break-up of the nineteenth century pattern of American performance.

The diplomatic events which in later perspective take on significance were the Samoan affair, in which the United States was willing to take some military risk to assert its rights in the islands but (for the decade 1889-1899) was unwilling to accept direct imperial responsibility in a share-out with Britain and Germany; the annexation of Hawaii, accepted in 1898 after five years of acute (and almost half a century of chronic) vacillation; and the Cuban insurrection. The latter, which had stirred the United States irregularly since 1868, moved the nation into war with Spain when a powerful set of forces converged between 1895 and 1898: a peculiarly cruel suppression of insurrection; the generation of widespread interest and heat through the popular press; the blowing up of the "Maine"; a sluggish Spanish diplomacy; and an American President both weaker than his predecessor and burdened with a higher proportion of expansionists in his party.

All of those events had in common four elements. First, the nation's sentiment or prestige was caught up in the area by old ties

of commerce or missionary effort. Second, there was an actual or potential challenge from an imperial power, raising the question of a vacuum which some potentially unfriendly (or competitively commercial) power might fill if the United States remained aloof. Third, there was an ardent and articulate minority urging that American duty, American interest, and American destiny all required the acceptance of new responsibility. Finally, both before and after the event, the nation confronted and openly wrestled with the problem of reconciling its new responsibility with its abiding commitment to the principle of national self-determination. An American commercial interest was present in each case; but in none does it appear to have been decisive.

When the ideological concepts of the new imperialism clashed with those of the old virtuous hemispheric isolation, McKinley successfully defended the new empire with a negative rather than a positive formula: "Don't haul down the flag."<sup>50</sup> And, however cynical the Teller Amendment, disclaiming intent to annex Cuba, may have been regarded by some, the self-denying ordinance built into American history and values which it represented was to prove immensely powerful in the subsequent half century.

To the diplomatic incidents in the Pacific and Caribbean can be added the early suggestion of a possible new American relationship to Britain resulting from the rise of Germany. The vigor with which the German consular and naval units played the game in Samoa in 1889 for the first time defined Germany as a potential threat to American interests; and, although the Berlin negotiation ended the affair in reasonably good order, the flare-up left some memories in the United States. In July 1895 Cleveland and Olney asserted an American right,

under the Monroe Doctrine, to insist on arbitration of the boundary dispute between Venezuela and British Guiana; and they did so in language designed at least as much to assert a general rise in American power vis a vis Britain (and to outflank Republican expansionists) as to achieve a successful resolution of the dispute. The long-delayed reply from London brought about a flare-up of anti-British feeling in the United States which was evidently dangerous to the peace. Moderates on both sides were aided, however, by the Kaiser's famous telegram to Kruger which, by reminding Britain of the growing pretensions of Germany in Eurasia, made easier the acceptance of arbitration in Latin America.

The emergence of the possibility of armed clash with Germany forced on both sides of the Atlantic a re-evaluation of the contemporary significance of Anglo-American relations which helped prepare the way (certainly in Britain, perhaps also in the United States) for the alliance of the first half of the twentieth century.

### Military Policy

In 1875 a naval officer was dispatched to Europe to survey the state of naval architecture.<sup>51</sup> His report in 1877 posed a vivid contrast between the rapidly evolving European navies, using the new technology permitted by steel, and the American coastal fleet made up primarily of wooden sailing vessels of Civil War construction. For the next two decades successive administrations and the Congress were torn between an instinct to maintain some kind of naval parity with the European powers and a concept of the nation's strategic position in which coastal defense was virtually the only abiding naval task the

Congress was prepared to acknowledge as legitimate. The upshot was a series of expanded naval appropriations, starting in 1883, which permitted the United States to have in hand a fleet of five capital ships at the outbreak of the Spanish-American War.

Over the fifteen years between 1883 and 1898 there was some acceptance of the concept that the Navy's usefulness might extend beyond a rigid adherence to coastal defense. It was acknowledged, in pale reflection of Mahan, that the fleet might be required to protect American citizens and commercial interests abroad; and, indeed, during the 1890's the new longer-range vessels moved about the hemisphere and the world, Dewey being at Hong Kong when war with Spain began and Roosevelt's standing order was executed.

Nevertheless, the development of the new American Navy in the 1880's and 1890's reflected a considerable gap between professional and popular thought. The first American battleships were rationalized and initially presented to the public as instruments for coastal defense wholly consistent with a national commitment to isolation; but the post-Civil War generation of American naval men felt themselves ready to assume a place of professional and technical equality beside their European counterparts. They studied European naval trends with attention. Lagging Sherman's creation of the advanced training school at Leavenworth by only three years, Luce set up the Naval War College at Newport in 1884.

Aside from Captain Mahan, the men advocating a new navy were not primarily interested in a new American military and naval strategy based on a new concept of the American national interest. They were interested in being first-rate operating professionals, part of a first-rate show,

playing a role of dignity on the world scene. They sensed, vaguely but surely, that the self-evident maturing of the American economy would (and should) somehow result in the nation's taking its place among the great powers, and that this required (and justified) an enlarged and modernized navy at the earliest possible moment. But their concerns were primarily tactical and technological rather than strategic; and their primary goal was enlarged appropriations. Stephen Luce could argue in broad terms the case for a Naval War College; but, one suspects, it was that part of his argument which hinged on the "revolutionary" implications of "steam and the telegraph" that carried the day.<sup>52</sup>

The Congress and the public were by no means prepared to support a prompt transition from coastal defense to peacetime status as a major naval power in the 1880's and 1890's. They were prepared, however, to stretch a little the old concepts of naval defense of the United States and the hemisphere. In this setting, a combination of ardent support from a purposeful minority, a vague tolerance for a somewhat bigger and better navy within the Congress, and the self-evident need to replace obsolescent vessels yielded the Great White Fleet.

Thus the trends which made a naval victory in Manila the most striking engagement in a crusade to free the Cubans from Spanish oppression were discernible well before the event; but, on the whole, the evolution of modern technology probably accounted as much for the vitality of the navy at the close of the century as the emergence of new doctrines of the national interest and of the navy's role in protecting it.

Like the naval officer, the professional American soldier emerged from the Civil War knowing that he had met with success a test at the limits of modern war. He resented the rapid collapse and subsequent neglect of the military establishment; and, like his fellow American scientists and scholars, his mind and aspirations were stirred by post-1865 developments in Europe--notably the rise of Germany and the General Staff concept.

In Upton the army produced not a Mahan but a professional who carried forward ardently the organizational principles of Washington's "Sentiments", and in Colonel Wagner an officer who gave vitality and distinction to the new, essentially tactical school at Leavenworth. Unfortunately for the soldier, however, there was no technological development in ground warfare equivalent to steel, steam, and the torpedo; there were merely a new rifle and smokeless powder. There was no ground force equivalent for the navy's elastic claim for an enlarged order of battle to cover commercial interests abroad. No ground force enemy could be identified in these decades except the Indian; and by the 1890's even the Indian Wars were over. In consequence the Army entered the Spanish-American War grossly unprepared and served with little distinction--but it emerged with enlarged permanent garrison responsibilities in the new American empire.

Whereas the Navy of the twentieth century got its start in the Romantic last twenty years of the nineteenth century, the beginning of the modern American Army dates from the appointment of Elihu Root as Secretary of War in 1899 and his response to the dour set of practical problems in administration after the fiasco in Cuba.

Mahan and Mahanism

The strand of naval romanticism was important and powerful because it was associated with the articulation of the first new conceptions of the nation's relation to the world since Washington, in which process the writing and influence of Captain Mahan played a unique role. Mahan's work developed from the requirement of teaching naval history at the Naval War College, and he used the occasion of preparing his lectures to present a whole series of propositions about sea power: mystical, geo-political, economic, strategic, and tactical.

Mahan's mixture of themes, generally presented ex cathedra or as lessons to be drawn from history or contemporary situations, struck responsive chords in the emerging generation to which the Civil War was a part of recorded history rather than an inescapable personal memory and fixation. Those whose thoughts were stirred or crystallized by Mahan's writings came generally from the East and from a background of advanced intellectual training and extensive transatlantic experience. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge and Theodore Roosevelt were his two most famous and influential disciples; but among those concerned with the nation's external affairs a knowledge of his doctrines spread through magazine articles, congressional references, and word-of-mouth as well as through his series of historical volumes.

The principal elements in Mahan's thought can be rearranged and summarized in the following sequence:

1. The balance of the world's power lies in the land mass of Eurasia; and it is subject to unending competitive struggle among nation states.

2. Although the balance of world power hinges on the control of Eurasian land, the control over the sea approaches to Eurasia has been and can be a decisive factor, as the history of many nations, most notably Britain, demonstrates.

3. In the end, naval power consists in the ability to win and to hold total dominance at sea, which, in turn, requires a naval force in being capable of meeting and defeating any likely concentration of counter-force. A naval power must, therefore, maintain as a concentrated tactical unit at readiness an adequate fleet of capital ships with adequate underlying support.

4. Support for such a force includes forward bases, coaling stations, a merchant fleet adequate for overseas supply, and, perhaps, certain territories whose friendship is assured at a time of crisis. It follows, therefore, that a naval power should be prepared actively to develop an empire as well as a substantial foreign trade and pool of commercial shipping.

5. The United States stood at a moment in its history and in its relation to the geography of world power when its full-scale development as a naval power was urgent.

6. The pursuit in times of peace of the prerequisites for naval power would have the following ancillary advantages: the challenge of commercial and imperial competition would maintain the vigor of the nation; acceptance of responsibility for Christianizing and modernizing the societies of native peoples within the empire would constitute a worthy and elevating moral exercise; and the whole enterprise would be commercially profitable.



Before 1900, at a time when the Germans had still not moved seriously towards continental dominance, and when the Japanese had not yet defeated the Russian fleet, it was difficult to dramatize the underlying shifts in power within the Eurasian land mass that were taking place; and it would have been even more difficult to make Americans accept consciously the notion that the build-up of naval strength was ultimately required in order that American influence be exerted not merely defensively in the Atlantic and the Pacific but also on the structure of power within Eurasia. In Mahan's own writing the full significance of propositions 1 and 2 were thus obscured and slighted; for, if they were taken seriously, what was called for was not an exuberant American effort to assert itself unilaterally on the world scene but an expansion in its total military power--Army as well as Navy--in alignment with those other nations which shared its interest in avoiding a dominant concentration of power on the Eurasian land mass.

Mahan was, it is true, steadily an advocate of Anglo-American understanding, and later, as the First World War approached, he helped articulate the nature of the American power interests in its outcome; but, generally speaking, propositions 3 through 6 became detached from 1 and 2, leaving Mahan, in his net influence, mainly a propagandist for the expansion of the American Navy and its forward bases, for the creation of the Isthmian Canal, and for the concentration of the battle fleet rather than a consistent philosopher of the nature of the American interest and expositor of its strategic position on the world scene.

Projected out into national policy the comfortable ambiguities left in the exposition of Mahan and his followers had an important

consequence. Whereas the technical requirements of the American strategic position called for the rapid development of the concepts and attitudes of alliance, the new doctrine was shaped to fit the mood of national assertiveness which welled up towards the end of the nineteenth century. Not only such figures as Senator Lodge but also many key American naval officers permitted themselves, for example, the luxury of being both advocates of Mahan and twisters of the lion's tail.

The ambiguity between Mahanism and a correct interpretation of Mahan's principles was crystallized, in a sense, by the somewhat ironic role of the American Navy in the First and Second World Wars; when a force whose thought for long had been focussed around a decisive direct engagement of battleships had to devote itself overwhelmingly to convoying, anti-submarine patrol, submarine operations, and amphibious landings. The aircraft carrier did, it is true, assume in the Second World War many of the old functions of the battleship; but the last American battleship was put in mothballs before the first major battleship engagement was fought.<sup>53</sup> History in the twentieth century required, in short, that the United States, in its own interest, exert power directly on the Eurasian mainland with massive ground force units. The American Navy played an indispensable and effective role in support of this process; and this outcome was in no way inconsistent with Mahan's fundamental propositions. But as Mahanism and the large view gained ground, towards the end of the nineteenth century, there were no premonitions of the trenches of 1917-1918; of the battles of North Africa, Italy, France, and the Pacific Islands of 1941 to 1945; or of Korea.

Nevertheless, despite the inevitable concealment of the full implications of major power status for the nation in the emerging new world power structure,

Mahanism was only partially accepted as national doctrine after the Spanish-American War; and it appeared to be reversed with Wilson's election in 1912. The Spanish-American War, and especially the responsibilities that followed it, ended--or at least radically deflated--the mood of naval romanticism. There were hard and nasty problems to be faced in the Philippines and elsewhere. But, more important, the advocates of the Large View had to compete for public interest and attention with the domestic problems and the pacific values brought to bear on them in the Progressive period.

Continuity and Change in the National Style

The Shifting Balance of American Life

By 1900 the transition of the United States to industrial maturity and the related shift in the balance of national life had a perceptible impact on the national style. Some elements within it were reinforced and heightened by the changes which took place; certain characteristics of the national style persisted but their content and point of focus altered; and certain quite new American performance characteristics began to appear.

The new elements by no means dominated the scene at the turn of the century. The national style which emerged in the period between, say, 1815 and the Eastern railway boom of the 1840's proved reasonably appropriate to the era of industrialization. Neither urban nor industrial life was a new feature of American society in the late nineteenth century. Tocqueville's characterization of the United States in the 1830's revealed his awareness that there were already American qualities stemming from substantial commercial and industrial activity; and his analysis included a warning which would have sounded familiar to troubled reformers sixty years later.<sup>54</sup>

"As the conditions of men constituting the nation became more and more equal, the demand for manufactured commodities becomes more general and extensive, and the cheapness that places these objects within the reach of slender fortunes becomes a great element of success. Hence there are every day more men of great opulence and education who devote their wealth and knowledge to manufactures and who seek, by opening large establishments and by a strict division of labor, to meet the fresh demands which are made on all sides. Thus, in proportion as the mass of the nation turns to democracy, that particular class which is engaged in manufactures becomes more aristocratic. . . . The small aristocratic societies that are formed by some manufacturers in the midst of the immense democracy of our age contain, like the great aristocratic societies of former ages, some men who are very opulent and a multitude who are wretchedly poor...."

"The territorial aristocracy of former ages was either bound by law or thought itself bound to usage, to come to the relief of its serving-men and to relieve their distresses. But the manufacturing aristocracy of our age first impoverishes and debases the men who serve it and then abandons them to be supported by the charity of the public. . . .

"I am of the opinion, on the whole, that the manufacturing aristocracy which is growing up under our eyes is one of the harshest that ever existed in the world; but at the same time it is one of the most confined and least dangerous. Nevertheless, the friends of democracy should keep their eyes anxiously fixed in this direction; for if ever a permanent inequality of conditions and aristocracy again penetrates into the world, it may be predicted that this is the gate by which they will enter."

The problem posed for analysis by the United States at the turn of the century is not that of a shift from a rural frontier society to an industrial urban society but of a shift of balance within a society which throughout contained both elements. Nevertheless, this shift of balance had identifiable consequences for each of the three basic components of the national style.

#### Ideals and the New Dimensions of Nationalism

American ideals maintained their unifying function, but they were brought to bear as a check and counter-weight to a somewhat new set of special interests. In particular, the test of equality of economic and social opportunity began to be applied to the new industrial combinations, yielding as its main results, at the level of national policy, the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. Typical of the general process whereby American ideals have been made effective, these and other pieces of reformist legislation--national, state, and local--were fought through in generally bitter struggles. On balance, the reformist groups gathered strength in these decades as the gap between American ideals of economic and social equality and the consequences of uninhibited large-scale industrialism became increasingly clear.

On the other hand, for some the triumphant industrial achievements of American capitalism led to a substantial identification of the nation's ideals with the maintenance of a system of private enterprise free of political restraint. As political life became centered on the form and degree of governmental guidance, restraint, and control over the economy, the concept of economic freedom as central to the nation's life was reasserted with new force by those who saw no end to the new road of reform short of the destruction of private markets and private property.

In addition to these contrapuntal applications of the nation's ideals, nationalism itself assumed a somewhat new dimension. Down to the moment when the flag was fired upon at Fort Sumter, American nationalism was a limited and latent emotion. It had flared up on occasion; but there was a sense in which down to the Civil War the United States maintained its initial character as a somewhat precarious coalition among states and regions sharing a glorious tale of how they came to live in freedom but associated for few positive common enterprises. The victory of the North in the Civil War and the willingness of the nation to expend so much blood and suffering for its maintenance created at least in the North and West a new and more conventional nationalism.

Both these new elements--a heightened concern with the maintenance of economic and social opportunity and a more self-conscious and conventional nationalism--were reinforced by the vast flow of immigrants to the United States after the Civil War. Their initial attachment was to the United States rather than to the regions in which they settled. To them, as to the generation that had fought the Civil War, the national flag became a powerful symbol. At the same time, the immigrant gave increased vitality to the concept of the American nation as an ideological

rather than merely a geographical entity. Whereas the older stock might come to take for granted the virtues and potentialities of continental democratic society, with its opportunities for social and economic mobility, these opportunities had peculiar meaning to the immigrant as he found his feet in American life and especially as he surveyed the possibilities that might open for his children and grandchildren.

Finally the tentative and partial abandonment of isolationism with the Spanish American War, the acquisition of the Philippines, and the Open Door Notes posed, as it had not been posed since the 1790's, the question of how American ideals should relate to the American military and diplomatic performance beyond the Western Hemisphere.

#### From Agrarian to Industrial Pragmatism

The second characteristic of the national style--its absorption in concrete, material tasks and the philosophic consequences of that absorption--was, in one sense, heightened by the experience of the post-Civil War decades. The drama of driving the railways over the Rockies to the Pacific, of exploiting the cattle ranges, grain lands, and mines along the way, combined with the equal drama of pressing on to world supremacy as an industrial power gave these years a peculiar physical intensity, with a consequent lack of time or will for reflection.

The extent to which material pursuits were concentrated in industry rather than on frontier and rural life increased. American pragmatism moved, as it were, from a field of action focussed on the skills of the frontier farmer to one in which it focussed on those of the railway and mining engineer, the scientific farmer, and, as one moved to the older East,

those of the fundamental scientist, inventor, and philosopher.

At the expanding but still thin upper margin of intellectual life the drama of American industrialization and the forces that it set in motion produced refinements of thought and reflection--in harmony with or in protest against what was taking place--which were new to America-- at least since the initial generation of eighteenth century gentlemen had passed from the scene. In philosophy there were Pierce, James, and Dewey. The first Ph.D. was granted at New Haven in 1861; Eliot took over Harvard in 1869; and the formidable experiment in graduate education at Johns Hopkins was launched in 1876. It was not only farmers meeting within the Grange who contemplated the significance for American life of the rail-ways--and who sought the best way to reconcile their size and concentrated power with the abiding values of a free society--but also, from a somewhat different perspective, the President of Yale.

In all this ferment, key Americans were stimulated by direct contact with the life of Europe, not as observers, awed or arrogant, but increasingly as equals concerned with similar issues. The spread of industrialization-- its techniques, problems, and institutions--was making the Atlantic world more nearly kin than ever before. The underlay of feudal heritage in the one case and of a still not extinct frontier in the other remained. But it was significant of the times that Germany, the new nation of Europe, rather than Britain or France, was the most powerful direct influence on the flow of American students and travellers who found congenial the German emphasis on the practical applications of science and on the orderly energetic pursuit of fact.

Thus, despite a new interest in abstractions larger than the American scene or the terms of the immediate job, the center of gravity of American



life remained heavily empirical; and, despite Gibbs and a few other distinguished basic scientists, American technology and science remained continuous with the shrewd practicality of the style symbolized a century or so earlier by Benjamin Franklin and Eli Whitney.

#### New Dimensions of Continuity and Success

The third basic element in the national style in the nineteenth century was taken to be the fact of success achieved through the progressive unfolding of relatively continuous processes. American problems had generally proved capable of resolution by gradual change; and the compromise solutions to conflict implicit in this method were cushioned by visible material progress sufficient to provide rising standards of welfare per head.

The post-Civil War sweep into industrial maturity fitted well this aspect of the nation's operating style, confirming its validity, physically fulfilling a destiny of continental completion and (in one limited dimension) world primacy long latent in the nation's heroic image of its future. The United States, as one of a special category of nations which benefitted from the early fruition of an individualistic society in Britain, was not forced to undergo a fundamental shift in political institutions, social structure, and values before industrialization could take hold and gather momentum. Despite alteration in scale, there was an underlying continuity in the expectations of the nation and in its cumulative experience from Hamilton's premature industrial experiments of the 1790's to the status of world primacy in industrial output a century later.

Embedded in the processes under way at the turn of the century were certain issues for American life which in time were to alter its context quite fundamentally--the ending of the frontier; the spread of large-scale

bureaucratically organized institutions; the converging pressures, generated at home and from abroad, to enlarge the functions of the national government. But down to the turn of the century these changes in physical and institutional environment, although recognized by a few, did not dominate men's thought about the national scene. America roared into economic maturity brushing the Grangers, Populists, and Bryan aside. Only then the balance tilted, and the nation turned for a decade and a half to the first phase of reconciling the conflicts in values which resulted.

Thus the national style which Tocqueville could define in the 1830's, on the eve of the first great phase of American industrialization, was still highly recognizable in the 1890's. The nation's commitment to strive for a group of ideal solutions persisted and continued to serve as the principal unifying force in a sprawling society which was absorbing immigrants at an unprecedented rate. The direction of striving shifted, and the Civil War as well as the war with Spain added new dimensions of self-consciousness to the concept of nationhood; but there was continuity in fact and in rhetoric with a less urban and industrial, more isolated past. The tendency of American life to be dominated by material pursuits was, on the whole, heightened; and the nation's dominant philosophical cast was simply applied on a wider range and articulated with greater clarity and sophistication than before. Finally, the resumption of steady progress after the Civil War, within the framework of old institutions and methods, dominated by incremental change and compromise, made the period just before 1900 the golden age of the national style in the nineteenth century. But, as in other golden ages, the conditions for radical change were present and observable just beneath the surface of affairs.

BOOK TWO

THREE UNCOMPLETED TRANSITIONS: 1900-1940

## I. Introduction

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### Ideas and Reality: The Inevitable Gap

Sir Lewis Namier has written:<sup>1</sup>

"A neurotic, according to Freud, is a man dominated by unconscious memories, fixated on the past, and incapable of overcoming it: the regular condition of human communities."

And Namier adds from Tocqueville: "One is apt to perish in politics from too much memory."

The pace of change at home and abroad in the first four decades of the twentieth century give these observations a special relevance. The new elements in the structure of American society generated in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, clearly definable in the 1890's, came to dominate the nation's affairs. At home the United States had to adjust its economic life, the underlying ideas of which were based on self-adjusting market processes of competing atomistic units, to the reality of massive industrial and labor groupings; its social life began to shift from the setting of the farm and concentrated urban areas out to suburbs where the automobile became a central instrument holding together vast metropolitan constellations; the political process accumulated from many directions new functions of control and allocation for which the rhetoric of neither Jefferson nor Hamilton sufficed. A depression was encountered so deep and intractable as to shake the nation's confidence in propositions about the society hardly questioned in a hundred and sixty years.

Fixations derived from the past, obscuring the character of current reality, affected the course of domestic events in these decades, much of the story of which can be told in terms of an effort to narrow the gap between instinctive responses and new problems. But the most important gap lay in military and foreign affairs.

The United States moved in the direction of a new view of its relation to the world arena; but it moved at a pace which did not conform to the rate at which new dangers and challenges to the national interest emerged. Memories from the century of hemispheric isolation continued strongly to influence the nation's performance. Aided by luck, the still limited nature of weapons, and the will and strength of its allies, the United States did not perish from its fixation on the past; but for it the nation paid a stiff price.

As the nation came to confront after 1900 a radically changed external environment it was, indeed, to be expected that time would have to pass before a widely accepted set of ideas appropriate to its new situation were developed. Such time lags are not unique in the contemporary world. During the whole interwar period, for example, Britain was haunted and rendered inefficient at home and abroad by (somewhat inexact) images of pre-1914 normalcy. The British Foreign Office persisted in a pattern of diplomatic performance based on inappropriate memories of the nineteenth century balance of power in Europe which led to a tragic conflict between British and French policies toward Germany, Eastern Europe, and the European continent generally. France is to the present day

still struggling to redefine its role in the world, imprisoned by memories and conceptions which antedate 1870 at least. Where clear notions of the national interest develop and are translated into operating military concepts they have generally developed out of a long and recurrent and usually bloody national experience: for example, the British sensitivity to the control of the Channel ports, the French sensitivity to the avenues for German invasion, Russian sensitivity to the military control of Poland. It is not surprising, then, that a nation which had lived successfully for over a century under the banner of continental isolation should require some decades of bitter experience before creating and accepting a new concept of its interest and role on the world scene and translating that concept into a stable military policy--notably since its new role was more demanding than the old.

A second reason for this lag is, again, general and obvious enough. American domestic society offered its citizens an exciting and rewarding set of challenges and tasks. Moreover, the values of American society placed a high premium on success at these domestic tasks, and, relatively, a low premium on those associated with military life and diplomacy in times of peace. The United States is by no means the only modern democratic society which turned from war to peace with excessive zeal and which during peace failed to devote serious and sustained thought and energy to clarifying the abiding nature of the national interest and acting in a sustained way to support it with vigorous diplomacy and military strength in being. As compared to other democratic

societies in this century, the American confusion about the national interest may have been more profound and its degree of unpreparedness extreme; but its indifferent military performance between wars was not unique.

There is a third element, however, in the American experience of the twentieth century which is unique and which accounts in substantial part for the acuteness of the nation's difficulty: the problem of finding an alternative to the concept of continental isolation as an agreed definition of the national interest. The continental concept had united in a quite specific and delicately balanced way the power interests of the nation and the ideological image of its domestic commitments in relation to the world. In the twentieth century the nation did not merely have to adjust to a new constellation of power; it also had to redefine the relation of its domestic values and aspirations to those of the rest of the world.

There are, thus, two strands, related but distinguishable, in the nation's search to protect the national interest over the period from the Spanish-American War to the definite break-up of isolation and isolationism with the Fall of France: the problem of finding and articulating a concept of the national interest that would relate the instinctively felt power and ideological interests of the nation; and the problem of assessing accurately the nature of the concrete dangers which the nation faced as a result of the changing contours of power in Eurasia.

The story traced out here--of the nation's domestic evolution and of its military and foreign policy performance between 1900 and 1941--is both the story of a nation wrestling with its history--its image of itself--and the story of a nation seeking to understand and to cope with an increasingly threatening world arena of power.



II. The Two Domestic Transitions: The Welfare State and the  
Age of Consumers' Durables

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The Disposition of Expanding Wealth and Welfare

The Foundations of the Welfare State

The accommodation of American society to large-scale industrialization has been accomplished by methods wholly in keeping with the national style which emerged as distinctively American in the nineteenth century. This underlying continuity exists because the problems posed by industrialization were in fact new and heightened versions of conflicts built into the foundations of a society dedicated to the greatest good for the greatest number when the power to define that good is left to reside to the maximum possible with the individual citizen.

To operate societies on the principle that individual men are the best judge of their own interest--the individualist-utilitarian creed--is a powerful and pervasive commitment; but it poses as many problems as it solves. The concept that each man, a unique soul sovereign in taste and preference, stands equal before God, the law, and the society's opportunities for self-expression, immediately sets up conflicting criteria for public policy.

On the one hand, the individualist-utilitarian creed sets up a strong presumption in favor of a competitive economy guided by consumers preference, allocating monetary reward on the basis of individual performance in the market, guaranteeing the security of private property--in short, a presumption in favor of private capitalism as the dominant mode for maximizing the general welfare.

On the other hand the same premises immediately raise quite aside from those which derive from the imperatives of military security in a world of sovereign nation states.

1. To what extent is it legitimate to interfere with a free market economy in order to maintain equality of opportunity: negatively through inheritance taxes and the control of monopoly; positively by mobilizing income in the hands of the state for purposes of education, public health, etc. ?
2. To what extent should the state act in order to perform those economic functions necessary for the general welfare which the incentives of a private economy do not necessarily induce on a proper scale and at the proper time: for example, the construction of roads, canals, railroads?
3. To what extent should the state interfere in private markets to accelerate or to cushion processes of structural change judged either necessary or harmful to the general welfare: for example, by tariff protection or other forms of subsidy, by efforts to control the general level of prices, by a counter-cyclical policy to deal with excessive unemployment?
4. To what extent should the state recognize that the most natural (if psychologically ambiguous) assumption is that it is possible to compare satisfaction as between individuals; that the law of diminishing relative marginal utility applies; that a dollar of income means less to a rich man than to a poor man; and that, therefore, the general welfare may be increased by the transfer of income, through progressive tax-

ation, from those relatively rich to those relatively poor?

In addition, other values within the common Western creed counsel simple human compassion, raising the real but quantitatively lesser question of the extent to which the state (as opposed to individual charity) should allocate resources to the poor, the aged, the overworked, the insane, and to others in need from whatever cause.

In certain matters the problem of balance was already familiar in pre-revolutionary times--for example, the inflationist bias of back-country farmers set off against the hard money interest of their urban creditors. And key elements in the problem were, of course, at the center of thought and controversy over the American Constitution, which sought both to preserve a stable legal environment for private capitalism--in whose markets power could be acquired according to talent, energy, and luck--and, at the same time, to give acceptable meaning to an individualist political system in which each man had one vote. From that time forward reconciliation by compromise remained the central theme of American politics, moving on from one range of concrete issues to the next as the scale and technical method of the society gradually altered specific solutions being found after protracted debate and experiment and struggle.

In politics, as opposed to abstract analysis and prescription Jefferson's acceptance as President of the major Hamiltonian institutions set the initial frame of national compromise, which soon embraced Marshall's concept of judicial review as well. And down to the period of accelerated industrialization that settlement

(leaving slavery aside) left only three major areas of conflict: the tariff, the National Bank, and the role of the state in financing public improvements or social overhead capital as they would now be called. These were good big political issues, capable of generating strong feeling; and they posed significant problems in political rhetoric.<sup>2</sup> In the case of South Carolina and the tariff there was even a touch of danger to the unity of the nation. But the conflicting regional interests, which lay behind these controversies were an old American story in the second quarter of the century and (excepting slavery) clearly compatible with the society's basic presuppositions. The Jeffersonian vision of a nation avoiding acute conflict between an atomistic electorate and concentrated economic power by remaining predominantly a society of land-owning farmers, of mechanics, and competing merchants maintained its vitality.

With the surge into mature industrial status after the Civil War, the problem Jefferson feared came fully to life. A whole range of major issues of imbalance emerged and were increasingly recognized: the concentrated power of the railroads and of the emerging new industrial combinations; the protracted vicissitudes of the commercial farmer when caught in a downward trend period of the world trading area;<sup>3</sup> the unequal status of the industrial worker when forced to bargain individually with a large scale modern enterprise; the lapping over of concentrated economic power into the courts and legislatures and even into the executive branches of state and national governments; the inappropriateness of a tariff policy designed to protect

infant industries in an age of American industrial primacy; the inadequacy of a fragmented banking system the criteria of which centered on the expected profitability of the individual loan to cope with the aggregate financial problems of a modern continental economy the parts of which interacted with increasing intensity on each other and responded to the cyclical and trend movements in the international economy.

Poets and politicians, journalists and novelists, preachers and newly emancipated women, immigrants and college presidents spoke the nation's uneasiness as it watched the day-to-day performance of the society and its institutions drift steadily from the creed to which the nation was supposed to aspire. Powerful interests could be rallied behind some of the measures of the Progressive period; but it was a majority consensus that reform was in order.

What the reformers were saying was this: The mere expansion of output was not enough; a society as rich as the United States had become had the duty not merely to unfold the productive possibilities of a mature industrial economy but also to make the society of which that economy was a part decent and livable in terms of non-economic criteria. Above all, the doctrine of equality of opportunity had to be reasserted in the face of the new concentrations of power; and the political powers of the state were an appropriate instrument for bringing about this new balance.

The reformers were in substantial measure to have their way; but meanwhile the economy itself moved on, driven irregularly forward by the power of compound interest; and the individual American,

voting through the market place as well as at the polls, decided how these more or less regular additions to output should be used in ways at least as revolutionary for the society as those brought about by the reforming politicians.

### From Industrial Maturity to Consumption

The high level of income per head (relative to Western Europe) which had always characterised the resource-rich American continent and the consequent bias towards the abundant use of machinery in manufacture combined with the scale of the American market and the egalitarian mood of the society made it natural for the United States to be the first nation to move beyond economic maturity into the phase of growth centered on expanded mass consumption.

As income expands, men seek not merely better food, shelter, and clothing but also greater security (in the form of higher savings), the machines which make life easier and more mobile, and the enrichment of life for themselves and their families through education, travel, entertainment, and leisure. This drive for quality and refinement in consumption and for more non-material satisfaction on a mass basis had profound material consequences. It gave added momentum, for example, to the automobile, radio, moving picture, and rayon industries, the growth of which reinforced the tendencies which fostered their initial expansion by altering the composition and distribution of skills in the working force.

The proximate basis for this self-reinforcing transition-- partly cause, partly result--can be seen in the changing character

## I

The American Labor Force, 1900-1940

	<u>1900</u> <u>(in millions)</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>% Increase</u>
Employed workers:	27.4	46.7	70
of which:			
Agriculture, forestry, and mining	10.4	11.6	11
Manufacture, construction, and transport	9.1	15.1	66
Utilities, trade, service, etc.	7.9	20.0	154

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	<u>1910</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>% Increase</u>
Total Labor Force:	37.3	52.0	40
of which:			
Professional persons	1.6	3.4	112
Farmers	6.1	5.3	-13
Other dealers, managers, officials	<u>2.4</u>	<u>4.0</u>	<u>67</u>
sub-total	10.1	12.7	26
Clerks, and kindred workers	3.8	8.9	134
Skilled workers and foremen	4.4	6.1	39
Semi-skilled workers	<u>5.5</u>	<u>10.9</u>	<u>98</u>
sub-total	13.7	25.9	89
Farm laborers	5.4	3.7	-32
Non-farm laborers	5.5	5.5	--
Servants	<u>2.5</u>	<u>4.2</u>	<u>68</u>
sub-total	13.4	13.4	--

## II

Class Divisions in the United States, 1870-1940  
(in thousands)

	<u>1870</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>1940</u>
I. Farmers	3,100	6,132	5,265
II. Working class	6,035	19,730	29,518
III. Middle class-old	1,532*	3,261	3,863
Middle class-new	756	5,609	12,769
IV. Upper Bourgeoisie	---	-----	240
V. Total	11,423	34,732	51,655

"This tremendous growth of the new middle class is an integral part of basic economic changes in the structural set-up of capitalism:

1. The growing technical-scientific nature of industry, which calls for constantly greater numbers of technical employees.

2. The increasingly complex nature of production and distribution, and the separation of ownership from management in collective enterprise, which calls for constantly greater numbers of managerial employees.

3. The growing amount of planning, regulation, and control within industry, and the consequent need for more administration, which calls for constantly greater numbers of clerical employees.

4. The multiplication of goods and leisure, which calls for more employment in distribution and trade and for more personal and professional services, the performers of which are primarily members of the new middle class. The proportion of people employed in the production of physical goods fell from around 75 per cent in 1870 to 50 percent in 1940. If incomes and leisure go up again, as they can, it will mean more employment in the performance of services.

5. The growth in the economic functions of government and of public services, which has brought the grand total of all public employees, federal, state, and local, from around 175,000 in 1870 to 3,100,000 in 1930 and 3,200,000 in 1940, exclusive of relief workers. The small increase shown in 1940 over ten years earlier was due to contraction in state and local employment; federal employees rose from 580,000 in 1930 to 1,000,000 in 1940. Around one-third of public employees are workers (including mail carriers); the balance of two-thirds are technical-managerial, professional, and clerical employees."

\* Estimated.



of the working force in the early decades of the twentieth century, exhibited in the following two tables which compare 1940 with 1900 for major categories of employment and 1940 with 1910 for the level<sup>4</sup> and character of skills.

The disproportionate rise of employment in utilities, trade, and services in support of an expanded level of consumption per head clearly emerges, as does the concentration of increase among professional persons, white collar workers, and the semi-skilled.<sup>5</sup>

Grouping the census figures by class division, Lewis Corey has dramatized the rise of what he describes as the new salaried middle class in the following calculations.<sup>6</sup>

Within the categories of manufacturing the shift to automobiles, high grade foods, textiles, and other items of consumption emerges from the following table showing relative growth rates in physical output between 1899 and 1937 for major industrial sectors.<sup>7</sup>

American society thus shifted not only from a farm to a city base but also from unskilled labor (rural and urban) to white and blue-collar jobs, the latter increasingly in highly mechanized light industries.

#### The Rise of Research and Development

The shifting structure of American industry yielded a new dimension in its organization and posed a new administrative problem, that of systematic research and development. Two rapidly unfolding sectors of the economy, electricity and chemicals, were directly linked to rapidly unfolding branches of science. In fact, General

Electric and Westinghouse originated as research units rather than as manufacturing companies, and DuPont had long maintained orderly and respectful relations with the world of chemistry. The automobile industry in its first phase of growth was dominated by gifted mechanics and it has continued to bear this mark of its origins. Nevertheless, with Sloan's reorganization of General Motors in 1920, a new pattern was set, embracing a research department. And the example spread into other branches of the economy. During the interwar years the industrial research laboratory became an increasingly common feature of the national scene. The first generation of inventors and brilliant gadgeteers gave way to a flow of competent professionally trained engineers who both staffed the laboratories and, following Sloan's example, rose to posts of executive responsibility carrying with them the tools and perceptions of organized innovation. Outside of the chemical and electric industries the average quality of industrial research was not high, being directed mainly to short-term commercial objectives. But the concept and habit of bringing the fruits of science and engineering to bear on practical problems spread, and along with it the beginnings of systematic collaboration between research conducted in industry, the universities, and government.

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There is, in retrospect, a real measure of structural continuity in the period 1900-1940 centered on the creation of the welfare state and on the development of the potentialities for consumption of a modern industrial system and modern technology. These processes

## III

Individual Manufacturing Industries  
Ranked According to Percentage Change in Physical Output, 1899-1937

Industry

Automobiles	+180,100	Cotton goods	+101
Cigarettes	+4,226	Cane-sugar refining	+101
Petroleum refining	+1,920	Fish, canned	+96
Milk, canned	+1,810	Hats, wool-felt	+90
Beet sugar	+1,688	Shoes, leather	+87
Hosiery, knit	+1,202	Salt	+82
Cement	+838	Cane sugar, not elsewhere made	+67
Fruits and vegetables, canned	+792	Meat packing	+66
Chemicals, not else- where classified	+741	Cottonseed products	+63
Ice	+668	Leather	+61
Silk and rayon goods	+512	Woolen and worsted goods	+60
Pulp	+505	Liquors, malt	+60
Printing and publishing	+494	Underwear, knit	+52
Paper	+465	Carpet and rugs, wool	+52
Rice	+416	Lead	+51
Outerwear, knit	+393	Cordage and twine	+38
Paints and varnishes	+391	Hats, fur-felt	+26
Coke-oven products	+380	Gloves, leather	+16
Zinc	+318	Cigars	0
Liquors, distilled	+315	Pianos	-5
Steel-mill products	+313	Tobacco products, other	-6
Butter	+309	Flour	-8
Tanning and dye materials	+292	Clay products	-15
Copper	+272	Ships and boats	-17
Explosives	+267	Cars, railroad, not else- where made	-22
Wood-distillation products	+259	Lumber-mill products, not elsewhere classified	-32
Fertilizers	+248	Turpentine and rosin	-32
Blast-furnace products	+171	Linen goods	-44
Cheese	+158	Locomotives, not else- where made	-79
Jute goods	+134	Carriages, wagons and sleighs	-95
Wool shoddy	+116		

unfolded, however, in stages which can be distinguished from each other in both their economic setting and their political and social mood: The Progressive period, roughly dated from Theodore Roosevelt's accession to the outbreak of the First World War; <sup>9</sup> 1917-1929, the years of the First World War and of the subsequent decade of prosperity and relative respite from reform; and then, finally, the prewar decade of depression and New Deal.

The Sequence of Domestic EvolutionThe Progressive Period

The Progressive period translated into national policy the critical attitudes and concepts, the dissident political pressures which had been building since the end of the Civil War. But it was also an interval marked by quite distinctive economic trends.

The quarter century starting in 1896 was colored by a chronic rise in prices and, especially, in the cost of living. From the 1890's to 1941 Douglas estimated the rise in living costs at some 40 per cent; measured to its peak, in July 1920, the rise was 195 per cent.<sup>10</sup> This rise, disproportionately centered on food prices, had two powerful effects. It gave to agriculture and the farmer a sustained phase of relative prosperity, reversing the trend of the three post-Civil War decades; and it placed industrial real wages under chronic pressure.

Despite the rapid increase in total output, there was no increase in the full time earnings of labor between the 1890's and 1914; and in manufacturing there was a net loss of about 5 per cent between 1900 and 1914. It was not until 1921 that the purchasing power of a full-time week's work in manufacturing rose above the 1890-1899 level. The relative stagnation of real wages resulted not merely from rising costs but also from a rapid increase in the working force derived from relatively unrestricted immigration, which ran at a high rate down to 1914. The pressure on real wages was, it is true, mitigated by the rise in real wages outside of manufacturing and by shifts in structure of the working

force in favor of higher income groups. Moreover, during these the average hours of work decreased, as did the average size of families. Nevertheless, the restraint on urban real wages was a serious fact of American life; and it had the consequence of encouraging the urban citizen to look outside the market place for means of redressing a balance in income distribution which appeared to be chronically unfair.

Thus in the first two decades of the twentieth century the relative importance of the rural element in the American reform movement somewhat diminished, the role of the urban working man and his aspirations increased. <sup>11</sup> The farmer, increasingly skillful at making his power felt as an organized minority group at the close electoral margin between the major parties, maintained a strong influence; but it is no accident that it was in these years that organized labor rapidly expanded in the more mature industrial nations of the world. And in Britain as well as in the United States the income tax was passed into law. The Progressive period was much more than a response to pressure on urban real wages; but it was given some of its political strength and cutting edge from that fact.

Politically, the Progressive period presents something of a paradox. There is no doubt that in these years a sense spread through the country that the nation must set goals for national policy independent of the workings of the market place and that the national government must insure that the workings of private capitalism did not violate political and social values. There is no doubt that the controversy between Progressives and conservatives was deeply felt, couched often in terms of what was, for American political discourse, ideological extremes. On the other hand,

the legislative fruits of this ardent period--notably at the national level--were modest: a mild reduction in the tariff, a limited exemption of labor from prosecution under the Sherman Act, an overdue central banking system of limited power, a cautiously administered Federal Trade Commission and so on. It is indicative of these years, dominated rather more by strong moods than strong policies, that the most important of the reforms, the income tax, rejected in a bitter struggle as unconstitutional in 1894, slipped through the Congress quietly under the administration of President Taft in 1909, to be ratified four years later. Put another way, at the level of national policy, the Progressive period translated its mood into significant precedents rather than into powerful new institutions. At the level of state government there was variation in progressive strength and initiative; but in some cases legislation went far beyond that accepted nationally, providing experience and precedent for later New Deal efforts.

#### The Wartime Experience

The concept that the nation had larger objectives to which the market economy must conform was applied in new directions with great force in 1917-1918. The contentious debate on the balance of domestic policy (trailing off, in any case, since 1914) was dropped or suppressed; and the nation's full powers of organization were used to mobilize resources around a common task. Manpower, agriculture, and industry were geared to the requirement of developing, equipping, and supplying mass armies. A high proportion of the American war effort never had impact on the European battlefields because of the timing of the war; but the

experience of mobilization for war, including the experience of businessmen in government, cross-cutting as it did the peacetime image of the state's proper relation to the world of affairs, left a mark on the nation's thought and performance characteristics which was in its way as profound as that of the Progressive period.

### The 1920's

The next major stage into which the nation's evolution in this century falls is that from 1920 to the onset of the depression in 1929-- the famous twenties, the exploration of the literature and mores and the politics and personalities of which has already yielded a vast library. Economically, the trends reversed which had dominated the years since the mid-1890's; that is, agricultural prices tended to be low and falling;<sup>12</sup> but the industrial real wages surged forward. Under these circumstances the industrial working force was relatively complacent, and trade union membership, after its sensational rise in the first two decades of the twentieth century, ceased to expand. Once again the American farmer-- notably in the basic crops--was in a reformist mood; but he failed to rouse the country sufficiently or to control the political balance in such a way as to force Coolidge's hand on the remedial legislation which he could still exact from Congress but was regularly vetoed.

The nation remained essentially complacent with regard to the economy. The most significant initiatives were those of the confident, constructive Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover, who sought to use the powers of the government actively to improve the setting of business decisions and business life in general. It is in these years that



the cheap automobile, the electric ice-box, the radio and the familiar durable consumers goods of the twentieth century became mass phenomena; and, structurally, the industries which produced them or which (like petroleum and rubber tires) were closely linked with them surged forward. And the process of suburbanization accelerated to match the range and flexibility of the automobile; the peak rate of urban growth shifted in the 1920's from the zone 0-5 miles at the center of metropolitan areas to the 5-10 mile zone, which remained the zone of maximum metropolitan area population increase for the following two decades as well.

## IV

Per Cent Change of Population in the  
United States, in Metropolitan Areas,  
and in the Area Outside of Metropolitan  
Areas, 1900-1950

<u>Type of Place</u>	<u>1940- 1950</u>	<u>1930- 1940</u>	<u>1920- 1930</u>	<u>1910- 1920</u>	<u>1900- 1910</u>
Total United States Population	14.5	7.2	16.1	14.9	21.0
All Metropolitan areas reported	22.0	8.1	28.3	26.9	34.6
Central cities	13.9	5.1	22.3	25.2	33.6
Satellite areas	35.6	15.1	44.0	32.0	38.2
Area outside metropolitan areas	6.1	6.5	7.9	9.6	16.4
Number of Metropolitan areas	108	140	97	58	44

## V

Per Cent Change of Population in  
Standard Metropolitan Areas, by type  
of place and distance from central  
city, 1900-1950

<u>Distance Zone</u>	<u>Standard Metropolitan Areas</u>				
	<u>1940- 1950</u>	<u>1930- 1940</u>	<u>1920- 1930</u>	<u>1910- 1920</u>	<u>1900- 1910</u>
All areas	19.7	8.0	24.9	24.5	29.4
Central cities	11.8	5.1	21.4	25.9	31.5
Satellite areas	31.6	12.6	31.0	22.2	26.0
0-5 miles	23.6	10.4	26.3	29.3	27.9
5-10 "	36.3	15.0	41.2	23.4	29.4
10-15 "	32.2	11.6	25.4	20.3	24.9
15-20 "	32.9	13.4	32.7	21.8	22.9
20-25 "	30.6	13.5	34.9	20.8	24.1
25-30 "	23.2	9.6	24.2	19.0	23.7
30-35 "	36.8	11.0	17.5	15.6	14.2
35 miles and over	27.2	9.5	18.7	9.3	25.2

### The Great Depression

The decade of depression after 1929 poses two key questions: Why did the slump go so deep?<sup>14</sup> Why did the upswing fail to yield reasonably full employment? Unemployment was an unprecedented 25 per cent of the civilian labor force in 1933; it was still 17 per cent in 1939, after six years of purposeful effort by the government to expand the level of employment.

Despite the profound influence of the economic collapse of 1929-1933 on the nation's history, the analytic literature on the problem is relatively thin; and almost two decades later there exists among professional economists no agreed answer to the two questions.<sup>15</sup>

My own view on these issues, which relates directly to one of this book's basic concepts-- the stages of growth-- is as follows.<sup>16</sup>

The Background. The American business expansion from 1921 to 1929 was essentially a normal trade cycle expansion. The fact that it was not marked by an inflationary rise in commodity prices was (contrary to the contemporary view) quite normal for an expansion taking place in a downward trend period. Like all cyclical expansions, it was rooted in certain specific leading sectors appropriate to the stage of growth and profitable at the time--notably, housing, automobiles, and the industries and facilities associated with their rapidly expanded use (including roads), electricity, and electricity-using consumer goods.<sup>17</sup> The leading sectors of the United States in the 1920's differed from those of the past (for example, railway construction, the application of steel in ship-building and machine construction, etc.) mainly in their relatively direct dependence on an expansion in consumers'

income and on consumers' confidence. Installment and mortgage credit underlay the expansion in good part; and the areas of expansion in consumption were substantially postponable if not actually non-essential.

Although marked by a financial boom and crash of peculiar amplitude, the downturn of 1929 was in no way unique and in no way determined in itself a depression as deep and intractable as that which followed. But given modern history, a period of depression was to be expected after so prolonged a boom. If nothing else, the waning of the postwar housing boom (from about 1925) made likely, if not inevitable, some form of downturn and rechanneling of enterprise.

Why So Deep? The depth to which depression proceeded was due primarily to three special circumstances, each of which resulted in the breakdown of fundamental economic institutions in the course of the slump; and each breakdown in turn drove the process of depression to new low levels--both because incomes were lowered and because the confidence of men in one another and in the economic institutions of which they were a part was damaged.

First, the farm situation. The First World War drove farm prices and output, as well as farm values, to levels which could not be sustained in the 1920's; and the slump after 1929 hit agriculture at a moment of chronic over-supply as well as financial vulnerability. The fall of farm prices, income, and values in the period 1929-1933 was thus quite abnormal, leading not only to severe reduction in effective demand from that quarter but also to severe damage to the credit and banking structure that hinged on the market value of basic crops.

Second, the financial system in general. Starting in the second half of 1930, a series of failures occurred in the badly fragmented and vulnerable American banking system, each of which further damaged confidence and contributed to still lower levels of employment. Similarly, the progressive decline in stock and real estate values lowered consumption outlays based on high expected yields and, more generally, damaged confidence and the willingness of men to accept the risks of long-term enterprise.

Third, the international system of finance and trade. The international trading system became dependent after 1919 on a flow of American loans, notably to Germany. These dollars permitted reparations and war debt commitments to be honored--after a fashion; and, more generally, they supplied to the international system an infusion of dollars which was necessary for convertibility, given limitations on dollar-earning capacity. American capital exports began to decline as early as 1928, funds being kept at home to exploit expected high rates of return in domestic industrial investment and stock market speculation. Under depression conditions American capital flows were further reduced, notably from 1931 when the international financial structure broke down with crises in Central and Western Europe. In Britain, Scandinavia, and the sterling area generally recovery can be dated from the last quarter of 1931; but Germany and the United States spiralled into a further year of depression.

Confronted by a depression which was breaking through basic institutional floors and spiralling to progressively lower levels, governmental authorities in Washington (as in Berlin) made no determined

effort to reverse the course of economic events as opposed to cushioning certain of their consequences; and unemployment rose to a level close to the likely maximum (in a system not yet actually chaotic), given the limits set by the proportion of income spent on consumption and by technical limits on the possibility of running down inventories and consuming capital.<sup>18</sup>

Why So Long? Why was there still 17 per cent unemployment on the eve of the Second World War, a decade after the depression had begun? Although many ancillary forces undoubtedly played a part,<sup>19</sup> the central reason for the intractability of the depression was that the leading sectors of this phase of American growth--the automobile, suburban home-building, road-building and the extension of the automobile and other durable consumers goods to an increasing proportion of the total population--required full employment and an atmosphere of confidence to become reactivated on a scale sufficient to induce expanded investment in the industries which served these consumption sectors. When, in earlier stages, the momentum of growth hinged on the continued extension of railroads or on the introduction of cost-reducing industrial processes or new products, investment could be judged profitable even at low current levels of effective demand. This could also be true of circumstances in which a postponed demand for basic housing or the expansion of acreage for grain were the leading sectors. But when investment came to center around industries and services based on expanding consumption, full employment was needed, in a sense, to sustain full employment;<sup>22</sup> for unless consumption levels press outward,

capacity in consumer goods industries and those supplying them will be under-used, and the impulse to invest will be weak. The housing boom of 1921-1925, with its special dimension of requirements postponed by war, lifted the economy to a relatively full employment level; and the expansion of real incomes, supported by expanding installment and mortgage credit, held it there to 1929 even though support from housing waned.

Thus once depression had been permitted to proceed to the depths of 1933, a much larger and bolder government program of income expansion than that undertaken by the New Deal would have been required to reactivate the leading sectors which sustained the American economy in the 1920's and were to do so again (with certain modifications) a quarter century later in the decade after the Second World War. The Second World War pulled the American economy back to full capacity as no other force could so easily have done.

If this view is correct, a downturn about 1929 was, in some meaningful economic sense, inevitable; but there was nothing economically inevitable about the depth of the depression or the intractable character of the slump. In the face of a decelerating population increase, a fall in immigration, and a recent housing boom, the maintenance of relatively continuous full employment would not have been easy. It may well have required quite massive government intervention or subsidy, for example, with respect to slum-clearance and to low income housing. But the basic problem did not lie in the nation's economic setting. It lay in its thought about the economy.

The nation was neither intellectually nor politically prepared to deal with unemployment on the scale required in the period 1929-1933. The business cycle had been present over the whole of the nation's life;<sup>21</sup> and it had been accepted as a rhythm outside the scope of public policy to correct--even though the fortunes of American politicians had been intimately tied to that rhythm.

From the first decade of the twentieth century an increasing amount of research on the business cycle had been proceeding on an orderly academic basis, with suggestive, if occasionally odd, proposals from the nonprofessional wings; but it had yielded no coherent general view of the dynamics of the economy and no persuasive concepts for public policy.<sup>22</sup> There was no consensus, no framework of accepted ideas and institutions, within which Americans could bring the national gift for operational vigor effectively to bear on a major depression. The theories that were brought to bear both by Hoover and by the New Deal on the problem of recovery were an extremely confused mixture.

Hoover was committed to the doctrine that the economy would right itself, as it had often done in the past, if its central processes and private institutions were not tampered with and if the government helped from the sidelines with a posture of confidence supplemented by advances of credit to cushion the impact of deflation on certain major business institutions. As compared to some in his Cabinet (notably, Mellon), Hoover was an activist, as indeed he had been during his period as Secretary of Commerce;<sup>23</sup> but he feared that the occasion of depression would be used by reformers unsympathetic to



capitalism as he understood its institutions and working mechanisms to make radical change in the nation's economic and social life and in its values. Under these circumstances it was inevitable that Hoover's posture would appear negative and the actions undertaken by the national government late and inadequate, although he felt at the time and has continued to feel that his administration acted boldly and with vigor.<sup>24</sup> Hoover's dilemma was similar, in a sense, to that of the German democratic politicians who were his contemporaries, men so deeply marked by memories of post-1918 inflation that they were rendered incapable of dealing vigorously or wholeheartedly with deflation, and who thus helped substantially to prepare the way for Hitler. In both cases men of less strength and integrity, more opportunistic and less confident in their understanding of the economic process, might have been more effective agents of their nation's interests.

### The New Deal

Frustrated by this ideological semi-paralysis, the nation responded positively to Franklin Roosevelt's statement in 1933 that he recognized the existence of a major national crisis and proposed to act with vigor and confidence in the face of it. So far as unemployment was concerned, he lacked a program, notably since he had campaigned on the principle of a balanced budget; and his program was vague in other directions as well. In a deeper sense, however, the concept of a program of action had quite concrete meaning given Roosevelt's administrative method; for he gathered around him in the Executive Branch--and released in the Congressional Branch--every variety of activist. There was no

national plan; but there was a competitive contest to apply every partial insight or national experience which seemed relevant to the nation's crisis. Roosevelt's first term is a climactic bringing together--an orchestration--of men, ideas, and policies formed over the previous half century's national debate, study, experiment and experience.

The New Deal broadly combined the mood and heritage of the Progressives and that of the War Industries Board of 1917-1918. Looked at closely, however, one can detect more particular elements -- from the Grangers and bi-metallists to labor leaders, from the disciples of Veblen and Wesley Mitchell to those of Irving Fisher, from social workers to bankers. Men who learned how to operate in the setting of state capitals, who had operated in Wall Street, who had never operated before outside a college campus and academic politics, who had never before held a job -- all were put to work side by side in the feverish setting of Washington in 1933.<sup>25</sup> Roosevelt released and organized in the New Deal the national gift for action in the face of palpable problems guided by ad hoc theories of limited generality.

In two specific respects the New Deal can be regarded as a major success of the national style. Leaving the problem of massive unemployment aside, the nation made a series of limited, specific innovations, each with a substantial history of prior thought, debate, and, in some cases, state-level experiment behind it. This was so with respect to farm policy, social security legislation, banking and securities legislation, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and even the

enlargement of labor's rights to organize and bargain collectively. Behind what sometimes appeared the hasty and casual labors of the Executive Branch and the Congress in New Deal days were men with long-accumulated knowledge and concrete particular purposes which were shared by substantial constituencies and backed by serious staff work. It is for that reason that so much of the legislation passed in a flood during the first New Deal phase proved, with minor modification, acceptable in the subsequent generation. The New Deal altered the balance of power between the Federal Government and the private markets and among the major social groups competing for shares in the national income along lines that conformed to powerful trends of thought and feeling which--the depression of 1929-1933 having occurred--could have been further frustrated only at increasing danger to the society's stability.

Technically, the New Deal performed successfully a second task. It strengthened the institutional foundations of the economy in such a way that it was likely to be less vulnerable to a cyclical downturn. The government became committed automatically to cushion declines in farm incomes as well as income losses due to unemployment; the banking structure was given an adequate insurance basis; and the capital markets were put under rules and a surveillance that were to prove wholesome. The institutional floors within the United States which had caved in during the decline of 1929-1932 were not only repaired, they were also strengthened. The measures that accomplished their repair were also, of course, measures of reform; and as such they involved the

alteration or extension of familiar institutions or the creation of institutions long canvassed. Here, too, then the New Deal was at home with its problems, and it could draw on concepts, men, and experience directly relevant.

With respect to the problem of recovery policy there was no equivalent body of experience or consensus. In his 1933 mood of mixed determination and profound intellectual uncertainty Roosevelt reached back to the last great national crisis the nation had faced, the First World War, and created the National Recovery Administration on analogy with the War Industries Board. Its underlying conception—that price stability and wage increases achieved by negotiation would stimulate recovery—was incorrect, tending to raise the costs without in fact increasing the level of effective demand. The NRA absorbed and dissipated in the course of 1933 a good deal of the nation's initial emotional response to the new President's mood and probably slowed down the process of recovery. It was removed from the scene by the Supreme Court in 1935, leaving behind the Wagner Act and a substantial additional heritage of reform, but otherwise only relief that the way was cleared for a more rational and effective approach to revival. Gradually, however, out of the maze of debate and experiment it did emerge that the central task was to increase effective demand; and the national budget was used in various ways to this end. The powers of government were never used, however, on a scale and with a conviction capable of bringing the economy back to full employment.<sup>26</sup>

As the 1930's wore on government and private economic institutions

appeared to settle into a kind of acceptance of substantial unemployment as a way of life. With no clear understanding of the deflationary impact of current government policies, and with 14 per cent still unemployed, leaders in and out of Washington appeared to panic in 1937 at a modest tendency of prices to rise; and the nation plunged into a sharp recession from which it had not fully recovered by September 1938.<sup>27</sup> It took the war--and the war in its most desperate stage (1942-1943)--to make the nation rediscover its full economic potential and to alter the dour expectations on which private investment decisions in the 1930's appear to have been made.

#### The Depression, the National Style, and the National Interest

The New Deal exercises in employment policy--a problem requiring radical innovation in a short period of time--thus saw the American style yield a quite mediocre result.

American society was, however, sufficiently unified on essentials and sufficiently resilient to carry the burden of chronic unemployment without fracture; and the existence of a high level of unemployment at the outbreak of the Second World War made the relative burden of the war economy light; for increased military output could come substantially from increased employment rather than decreased consumption. If one were to apply merely the criteria of domestic performance to the American experience of the Great Depression, one might say that this shocking affair was successfully weathered and the American style vindicated; for out of the New Deal experience, the Second World War, the growth of conceptual knowledge, and a gathering popular conviction

that severe unemployment was unnecessary there emerged a remarkable postwar consensus both as to the character of the employment problem and the techniques for dealing with it by public policy in a political democracy.

But from at least 1917 forward an assessment of American domestic policy has an extra dimension; for the manner of solving or failing to solve domestic problems came increasingly to affect the world environment of American society and ultimately, the American national interest. From this perspective, in all its many ramified consequences throughout the world and back on th the United States, the confusions of the Hoover and Roosevelt administrations in dealing with the problem of unemployment proved costly. The national style failed to grip and to solve promptly a problem in radical innovation.

### III. The Third Transition: World Power Status

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#### The National Interest in Concept and Action, 1898-1920

##### The Rise and Decline of the Large View

The American wars down to the Spanish-American War fitted well into the ideological (as well as the power) framework of the continental policy. The concept that the United States had a mission to pioneer in North America a democratic society different from and better than those of Europe gave moral sanction not only to the Revolutionary War and to the War of 1812 but also, to some extent, even to the Mexican War and to the progressive decimation of the Indians. In the North the ruling rationale for the Civil War as articulated by Lincoln also conformed to a persistent image of American purposes; that is, the notion that a Northern victory was required to demonstrate that a society based on the American democratic creed could survive on a unified basis.

Of course, none of the American wars, even the Revolution, was fought out wholly in terms of such high and fundamental motives. An element of civil and class strife ran through the Revolution; and the enterprise was decisively supported by the alliance with autocratic France. New England by and large opposed both the War of 1812 and the Mexican War on grounds which united local economic interest and a measure of idealism. The Northern war effort during the Civil War was maintained only against a powerful drag of antiwar sentiment, and it was supported by regional economic and political interests quite distinct from large ideological objectives. Such a mixture of motives, some converging, some at cross-purposes with large national

conceptions, attend all human affairs. It is, nevertheless, true that the military engagements of the United States from the Revolution down to 1898 converged with the nation's ruling conception of its destiny: to protect a unique experiment in the organization of free men by dominating this continent and hemisphere and maintaining a distant and detached relation to the rest of the world.

The Spanish-American War was a different case, despite the wave of feeling evoked against Spanish imperialism in Cuba.<sup>28</sup> Among the forces which led to that war was a vaguely expressed and widespread sense that the United States was emerging into a world power status

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<sup>28</sup> The dilemma of a conservative, in the cool tradition of Quincy Adams, on the eve of the Spanish-American War, is well illustrated by Elihu Root's statement:

. . . Fruitless attempts to hold back or retard the enormous momentum of the people bent upon war would result in the destruction of the President's power and influence, in depriving the country of its natural leader, in the destruction of the President's party. . . . I deplore war. I have earnestly hoped it might not come. I deny the obligation of the American people to make the tremendous sacrifices which it must entail, not only of the treasure but of life, for the purpose of aiding the Cubans or any other people. I agree with the President that it is not his duty to sacrifice his own people for the benefit of others, but I cannot doubt that if the American people wish to make war upon Spain because of her acts in Cuba, if they are willing to make the sacrifices required, they have a moral right to do so. The Cuban cause is just. The Cubans are exercising their inalienable rights in their rebellion. . . . When we take up their just quarrel we are doing no wrong to Spain and violating no law divine or international. I prefer that we should not do it; I don't think we are bound to do it; I would prefer it if I could; I think the President has been right in trying to prevent it; but if it is to be done, then every American ought to be for the war heart and soul, and first and foremost and without the slightest question should be the President of the U. S. "

P. Jessup, Elihu Root, New York, 1938, Vol. I., p. 197.



which transcended the limits of the Monroe Doctrine; and the course of the war was affected if not determined by a quite precisely defined set of strategic concepts and tactical objectives held within a small well-placed group of Americans who had come to think of the American naval interest and responsibility in the Atlantic and Pacific along lines laid down in the Mahanist doctrine.

The so-called Large View was not without its ideological component. Mahan himself had deep religious convictions, and through his writings runs the theme that mutually beneficent moral results would flow from the new American imperialism. It is hard to read Mahan without feeling a sense of happy accident which united a Christian mission, economic advantage, and American military interest. But in the late Victorian Anglo-Saxon world, Mahan was not unique in views which his biographer summarizes as follows:<sup>29</sup>

It was a short step from his philosophical imperialism to the humanitarian imperialism involved in the concept of the "white man's burden." Mahan emphasized beneficence to the subject people. "Materially," he said, "the interest of the nation is one with its beneficence; but if the ideas get inverted, and the nation sees in its new responsibilities, first of all, markets and profits, with incidental resultant benefit to the natives, it will go wrong."

This Christian expansionist saw involved in the nation's answer to the call to assume the burden of beneficent imperialism its possible growth or decadence. Said he: "To right what is amiss, to convert, to improve, to develop, is of the very essence of the Christian ideal; . . . comparative religion teaches that creeds which reject missionary enterprises are foredoomed to decay. May it not be so with nations?" After the signal acquisitions by the United States at the turn of the century, Mahan wrote, "What the nation has gained in expansion is a regenerating idea, an uplifting of the heart, a seed of future beneficent activity, a going out of self into the world to communicate the gift it has so bountifully received."

Such a sense of paternalistic responsibility undoubtedly had meaning to some of those who first undertook the American administration of the Philippines; and, although imperialism was vigorously opposed within the country, Bryan was wrong in thinking that resistance to the annexation of the Philippines was a sufficient force to turn the election of 1900. Nevertheless, the deeply rooted concepts which determined the American view of the nation's role in the world ran counter to Mahan's vision of the United States as a paternalistic imperialist power. The nation was always somewhat awkward as a keeper of colonies on the British model. It evaded full responsibility for the administration of Cuba by 1905; and, although the United States stayed in the Philippines, it was within a clear and urgent commitment to Philippine independence and a chronic sense of uneasiness and even of failure at home.

However, in the first decade or so after the Spanish-American War, the Large View was not dependent either on any particular conception of the American interest or on an American version of the imperial views of Joseph Chamberlain and Rudyard Kipling. It arose from a widely held and widely expressed judgment that history--in some indefinite but meaningful sense--had moved the nation towards a maturity which required a new and more professional approach to military and foreign policy.

Elihu Root, perhaps more than any of his contemporaries, reflected this instinctive workmanlike acceptance of new tasks and responsibilities without an elaborate or precise rationale. Up to 1899 Root exhibited a minimal interest in foreign affairs. Unlike Lodge, Mahan, and

Roosevelt, he had not shared either in fact or in sympathy the adventure of the Spanish-American War. He was brought into the War Department by McKinley as a competent and widely respected lawyer to take over an establishment which had left a trail of scandal as well as victory behind it in the Spanish War and which was charged with administering the Philippines. The latter proved a task not merely of great difficulty but of some political unpopularity as well.

Root studied the War Department afresh, without initial concept or prejudice beyond those which arose from his experience as architect of certain large business mergers in the 1890's. In four years he carried out major reforms which left a permanent imprint on American military administration:<sup>30</sup> the substitution of Chief of Staff for Commanding General, the subordination of the bureau chiefs to the Chief of Staff, the creation of a General Staff, the founding of the Army War College, the creation of an Army-Navy Board, and, above all, a memorable assertion of the overriding responsibility and authority of the civil authorities in the executive branch (the President and Secretary of War) over the Army. The experience of this reorganization and of administering the Philippines during these troubled years left a deep imprint on those who shared it.

Root was the fore-runner of many Americans in the twentieth century who, called from civil to military tasks, entered into them with a sense of discovery as well as responsibility. Above all, he left in Stimson a link to mid-century America and its problems; and Stimson in turn introduced and indoctrinated almost a whole new genera-

tion of Americans who were prepared to accept civil responsibility for the conduct of military affairs.<sup>31</sup>

The issues of foreign policy and military administration did not dominate national thought in the early years of the century; and the underlying humane and hopeful objectives of the Progressive movement clashed with Mahan's dour perception that the armed struggle of rival powers was an unavoidable feature of international life which the United States must come to accept. Although the nation went along with the Spanish-American War and the exercises in global foreign policy conducted by Theodore Roosevelt, the new concepts of America as a world power and a serious concern for the scale and organization of the American military establishment were confined to a relatively small group of Easterners--in political terms, mainly to one wing of the Republican party.

Down to 1914, building a navy, fighting the Spanish-American War, administering the Philippines, and dabbling in the great power politics of Europe and Asia constituted a somewhat shallow national experience. These exercises were not expensive in either blood or treasure. Although there was much that might have been learned, the nation could accept them almost as an observer without altering in any fundamental way its outlook on the world scene or its basic priority for domestic tasks and problems; and as the first decade of the century wore on, even as an observer the nation became bored.<sup>32</sup>

"While America was under the spell of expansionism, an inflated national ego, infused with a crusading ardor, sustained a certain popular interest in the advantages to be reaped from playing the game of power politics. However, that interest

proved to be insubstantial and largely emotional. It collapsed when nationalistic exuberance waned and idealistic professions became difficult to reconcile with seamy deeds. Theodore Roosevelt stirred up the ashes of national self-assertiveness, but he could not revive the flame. To change the metaphor, his success in prolonging the thrill of imperialism was a tribute to his preaching rather than his teaching. He carried the national congregation with him, but he failed to inculcate the basic lessons of international politics. At that, he dramatized America's enlarged role in world affairs not so much by an exhibition of aggressive energy as by striking two well-publicised blows for world peace. It was a sign of the times that the man who had been distinguished for his bellicosity in 1898 was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1906.

"American imperialism continued, but it continued because of public apathy, not because of popular enthusiasm. As high expectations of commercial and strategic gain failed to materialize, it became increasingly difficult to justify imperial holdings on grounds of self-interest; and national philanthropism, unsupported by self-interest or bellicosity, was rapidly absorbed in the inertia of less extreme and, in the long run, more compelling ends and motives of national conduct.

"By the end of Roosevelt's first term imperialism had lost its claim to moral leadership and had gone on the defensive. Henceforth the proponents of empire were to direct their arguments not toward expanding national power but toward preserving its outward manifestations. The fire had gone out of the old champions. . . ."

#### Wilson's Crusade and Its Failure

In 1912 the nation elected a president who acknowledged his lack of experience in foreign affairs and whose New Freedom was a wholly domestic program. Wilson's general view of foreign policy was dominated by a conviction that America was great and creative only when it was true to its highest ideals; that, in a sense, the values of the Progressive program at home were a sufficient basis for the nation's foreign relations. Bryan, his Secretary of State, was a confirmed anti-imperialist whose view of the American destiny as a moral force on the world scene, disassociated from the politics of power, paralleled

Wilson's. If Wilson had a positive operating foreign policy, it was initially one which looked to arbitration treaties, increased trade, and a general American posture of benignity on the world scene rather than to the harsh clarity of Mahan's concepts of the world power system. Wilson had viewed the Spanish-American War as a legitimate manifestation of American idealism but deplored efforts to capitalize on victory for lesser American purposes.

In formal pronouncements Wilson sought to disassociate himself from the imperialist positions and attitudes built up under the two previous administrations. But the imperatives of the American position in Latin America were not so easily denied by an administration that bore the full weight of day-to-day responsibility. American commitments were, in fact, maintained or extended under Wilson in Nicaragua, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic; and Wilson countenanced, as well, the punitive mission against Pancho Villa. The conflict between Wilson's aspirations for the projection of American ideals on the world scene and the political realities was thus evident before 1917. Caught in this dilemma, he foreshadowed the conception of democratic crusader which he was later to seize as the ultimate solvent; he would "teach the South American republics to elect good men."<sup>33</sup>

When it came time to go to war and then to make peace, Wilson formulated the American position in terms which almost wholly by-passed the power concepts developed by the Large View group in the two pre-war decades, and which by-passed as well the concepts which some of his closest advisers brought to their assessment of the situation in

Europe and the American interest in it.

The United States, in fact, went to war in 1917 because unrestricted German submarine warfare challenged the historic neutral claim to freedom of the seas and because it threatened Anglo-American control of the Atlantic and the allied position on the European Continent. German policy thus simultaneously heightened the case for supporting actively the Allies and weakened the purely nationalist case for continued neutrality. The balance of opinion tipped sufficiently in favor of belligerence to make a declaration of war possible if not overwhelmingly popular.

But Wilson did not present the war as an American struggle to preserve American power interests either in the Atlantic or on the European mainland. He characterized it as a crusade to make the world safe for democracy. Reaching deep into the American past and into his own previous formulation of its meaning, he evoked the sense of ideological mission toward Europe and the world which had always been latent in the American view, which had found many outlets in missionary work and in the private expression of Americans, but which had been suppressed or rigidly limited in the nation's formal diplomatic behavior. And when Wilson came to the peace table he again evaded the issues of power and the problem of linking them in an orderly way to moral principle. He nailed his own and the nation's flag to a formulation of a postwar world in terms of the high abstract principles rooted in the American creed and in an interpretation of that creed which only partially reflected the American national experience. As

Lippmann has said:<sup>34</sup>

The Wilsonian principles are prejudices formed in the Age of Innocence, in the century of American isolation. Wilson wished American isolation. Wilson wished America to take its place in a universal society. But he was willing to participate only if the whole world acted as the United States had acted when it enjoyed isolation during the nineteenth century. The United States had then no need to arm, no need to find alliances, no need to take strategic precautions; Wilson's principles were a demand that the whole world take vows to live for ever after on the same terms. He supposed that international relations could then be conducted verbally by meetings at Geneva.

Military power, strategic positions and connections, alliances, the unity of historic states and their spheres of vital interest—all these instruments of international life—have, no doubt, been used frequently for aggression and domination. And that is why the Wilsonian gospel seemed at first to be the promise of salvation itself. But the gospel did not bring salvation. It was followed by, and it had a large part in bringing on, the terrible paralysis of the democratic nations.

The two new conceptions which related America to the world-- the Large View and the crusade for world order -- came into mortal combat in Wilson's struggle with the Republican leadership in the Senate; and in a major tragedy for the United States and the world they both foundered. On any objective reckoning a reconciliation of Wilson's and Lodge's views of the appropriate postwar role for the United States on the world scene should have proved compatible. More than that, the evidence on the balance of political opinion in 1920 is that the nation was prepared to accept an increase in its responsibilities which transcended this hemisphere. While the League in itself was not an issue capable of swinging the election of 1920 to the Democrats, there was nothing in the balance of opinion in both parties that would have precluded American entrance, if Wilson



and Lodge had not exercised their powers of leadership as they did. In the upshot, however, the views represented by both Lodge and by Wilson were largely lost and discredited in the 1920's. Borah and his neo-isolationism was the victor over both.

There were, of course, progressives who were prepared in a part of their minds to acknowledge the reality of power, the reality of the national interest in military victory over the Central Powers, the need to under-pin the League of Nations with a continuing structure of effective power, the need to make a working compromise with Lodge and all he represented; and there were Large View Republicans who were profoundly moved by Wilson's vision of a peace which would bring to the world the principles of liberty under law translated directly out of the nation's experience of continental federalism. But the fusion of idealism and power, the acknowledgment of both good and evil in human relations, to be both faced and built on, did not occur. The great act of innovating leadership was not brought off. It failed in part because Wilson acted in terms of a moralism which, in the national style at its best, was diluted, tempered, and fused with respect for harsher facts of life; and because Lodge acted in terms of the harsh logic of domestic political power which, in the national style at its best, was tempered by an awareness of larger national interests and purposes. Thus, by placing in conflict rather than balance two abiding strands in the national style, Wilson and Lodge frustrated their own aspirations, the nation's interests, and the world's hopes.

### The Ambiguity About Eurasia

While in the first two decades of the century the nation sought to redefine the relation between its interests and its mission on the world scene, it also faced the narrower, more technical problem of assessing the extent and meaning of shifts in power on the Eurasian continent. The solution to this second problem was made difficult because the nation had been somewhat spoiled by the diplomacy of the nineteenth century, when it generally confronted major powers on issues they regarded as secondary. After 1898, when American diplomacy undertook initiatives beyond the Western Hemisphere, it met other major powers on issues to which they attached primary importance. American diplomatic victories could no longer be achieved simply as a by-product of major power clashes. An American diplomacy not backed by force was no longer likely to be effective.

The gap between American policy and the conditions of force required to make it effective was clear--but not widely understood--in the situation which developed soon after the enunciation of an American intent "to preserve Chinese territorial and administrative entity," incorporated in the Open Door notes of 1899 and the circular of July 3, 1900. Kennan describes the aftermath as follows:<sup>35</sup>

As for Hay himself, in December, 1900, only five months after his proclamation of devotion to the principle of upholding Chinese territorial and administrative 'entity,' he secretly instructed our minister in Peking to try to obtain for the United States a naval coaling station at Samsah Bay in the Chinese province of Fukien. But when, a few weeks later, the Japanese, alarmed by the increasing pace of Russian encroachment in Manchuria, inquired politely whether the United States would be inclined to join them in using force to assure the observance of the principles it had enunciated, Hay replied that the United States is 'not at present prepared to attempt

singly, or in concert with other Powers, to enforce these views in the east by any demonstration which could present a character of hostility to any other Power.'

There is every reason to believe that the Japanese took the most careful and attentive note of the significance of this statement. They were interested then, as always, in real military allies, not half-hearted ones. One year later they signed the Anglo-Japanese alliance on which their security was to be based for many years to come. Three years later they took up arms and threw the Russians out of Manchuria. In doing these things, they neither expected our aid nor feared our opposition. Had not Hay said that our views about China were not ones which we would enforce by any demonstration which could present a character of hostility to any other power?

The prompt American statement of unwillingness to enforce the Open Door did not, of course, end the matter. The nation's commitment to "Chinese territorial and administrative entity" went deep both in American sentiment toward the Chinese people and in an instinctive sense of where the nation's interest lay. Despite Hay's unwillingness actively to check encroachment on Chinese sovereignty--and in this Hay was to have a long line of successors in American diplomacy--the Open Door concept remained a powerful force in American diplomatic behavior. It was, however, from the beginning a confusing touchstone for American diplomacy because it mixed up inextricably two elements: an ideological and sentimental American aspiration to see the Chinese people develop into a dignified modern nation, and a sense that American security as well as economic interests would be endangered should the vast and strategically located area of China fall under the influence of another power.<sup>36</sup> A China standing on its own feet and protecting its own borders was a serious American security interest; for such a China would make difficult, if not impossible, the development of a power coalition capable of dominating Eastern Eurasia. But the romantic vision of naval power which flowed from Mahan's influence--although not sanctioned

by his underlying analyses---concealed the extent to which the nation's interest lay on the Eurasian mainland.

The gap between profession of national intent and objective and day-to-day performance which opened up so promptly in the wake of the enunciation of the Open Door symbolized much of the nation's diplomatic problem in the twentieth century. It was some time, however, before the full consequences of this gap were to be revealed; and, in the meanwhile, the Open Door appeared to be a successful American initiative. And so also with certain other diplomatic enterprises of the first decade of the century.

Theodore Roosevelt's apparent success in two major diplomatic interventions in the Eurasian balance of power without the use of American force strengthened the illusion fostered by the Open Door incident that the United States could participate in large and distant affairs without deep commitment and steady assumption of responsibility.

At Portsmouth in the summer of 1905 the United States appeared as the peacemaker between Japan and Russia; and it is possible that, to a degree, Roosevelt's intervention limited the extent of the Japanese victory and prevented the balance of power from shifting a bit further against Russia than it did. In fact, the integrity of China was not substantially advanced by this American initiative. At that moment the balance of forces in the world was such as to permit the United States to act as an arbitrator and to influence marginally the terms of the agreement without the use of American

force or the commitment to use it; but, given the clash among Japan, Russian, Britain, and Germany then under way in Northeast Asia and the seriousness of the interests (notably Japanese and Russian) at stake, the steady presence of American power would have been required to have made stick a balance of power concept built around the Open Door.

Whatever the long-run educational value to the nation of observing its President negotiate on American soil a temporary settlement in a chronic Eurasian struggle, the superficial success of American diplomacy at Portsmouth almost certainly did harm by permitting the American public to believe that American interests in Eastern Eurasia could somehow be maintained over a period of time without a willingness to apply force there. The Portsmouth exercise encouraged the United States to sustain the illusion that on the Eurasian continent, where major power interests of the first order were at stake, continued easy diplomatic victories might prove possible.

Something of the same may be said of Theodore Roosevelt's intervention in the Algeiras Conference of 1906. Just as the American weight had been thrown marginally against Japan and for Russia at Portsmouth, the weight of American diplomacy strengthened to a minor degree the French hand against Germany at Algeiras. Once again, however, the equilibrium symbolized and confirmed (rather than created) by negotiation proved short-lived. Between 1906 and 1914 the United States did not pursue the interest implicit in its Algeiras role--namely, to avoid a degeneration of the European power struggle into major war. But that transient American appearance on the scene and

its apparent success may have further encouraged the notion that American diplomacy could usefully be applied to the major power struggles of Europe without serious national commitment.

There was, indeed, a legitimate rationale for the American interventions at Portsmouth and Algeciras. The United States had a triple interest in Eurasia: an interest in the preservation of peace, an interest in the avoidance of a shift in the balance of power such that a single potentially hostile power or power grouping dominated either Western or Eastern Eurasia and an interest that the area not be dominated by societies organized around doctrines incompatible with democratic principles. In progressive stages, each of these interests dominated American policy during the First World War.

In the period 1914-1916, somewhat in Roosevelt's earlier tradition, Wilson's objective was to use American good offices (backed by American economic power and military potential) to bring about an early peace acceptable to both sides. The course of battle, however, did not make this a possible policy; in fact, the military situation in 1916 led Germany, in a mixture of hope for early victory and fear of defeat by attrition, to attempt all-out submarine warfare. The effects of submarine blockade, as estimated by the German Navy, would be so swift American military force--still essentially unmobilized--was not judged a decisive factor in Berlin's calculus.

This German decision confronted Wilson squarely with the second question: that is, the character of American power interests in relation to Eurasia. He had to decide whether or not it was an American

interest to see a major European power other than Britain develop such stature as to be able to challenge Anglo-American control of the Atlantic. It was essentially on this issue of power, dramatized by unrestricted submarine warfare, that the United States went to war--a step made easier by the fact that the U-boat was a direct challenge to the nation as well as to its implicit alliance with Britain and France.

Once the commitment was made that Americans would fight and die in Europe, the third strand--American ideological interest--was radically elevated in national policy. It had helped determine American sympathies before 1917; but now it was heightened for two reasons. When battle is joined, men wish their sacrifice to be associated with the highest and most permanent values to which they are attached. In addition, the United States, as a belligerent, had to clarify its objectives in the subsequent peace. Thus, given the nature of war and the national tradition it was inevitable that ideological considerations would be heightened as the United States became a belligerent and assumed a measure of responsibility for Allied post-war objectives. It was not inevitable that these considerations exert the peculiar weight they did. Wilson, with a considerable range of choice open to him, articulated the nation's long-run interests and purposes in extreme ideological terms which were not meshed with the realities of the Eurasian power structure abroad and the political process at home.

Specifically, Wilson failed to understand that the maintenance of European peace--inside or outside a League of Nations--required in

the first half of the twentieth century a structure of organized relations on the European Continent that would make Eastern Europe effectively independent of both Russia and Germany; and that this objective could not be achieved simply by applying in that area the principle of national self-determination. What was required was a major American commitment to guarantee the military security of the area--against both its great neighbors--combined with a sustained effort to help modernize its economy and its political life as part of a viable Europe. As in the case of China over the previous two decades, the nation underestimated, at Versailles and afterwards, the depth of its interests in Eastern Europe and the seriousness of the problems of political and economic development on the solution of which those interests depended.

Thus the First World War was for the United States a less maturing experience than it might have been. The nation failed to find the balance between power and ideological interests on a world basis needed to establish an effective policy; and it failed to understand the meaning for the national interest of the disruptive forces still gathering strength on the Eurasian mainland in 1920. If the First World War is judged to have been caused by situations arising from the rise of Germany and Russia relative to the Austro-Hungarian Empire on the one hand and Britain and France on the other, the outcome of the war and post-war events in no sense ended the possibility of a recurrence of struggle for the Eurasian power balance. That possibility was, in fact, increased by the active groping of still weak China towards a nationhood which aroused the hopes and fears of the Soviet Union and which Japan



was strongly tempted to forestall. Formally, the application of national self-determination in Eastern Europe and the Nine Power Treaty of 1921 protected the two soft spots of Eurasia; but these were barriers only as strong as the American understanding of their strategic meaning for the American interest and the American will to make them effective.

The National Interest in Concept and Action, 1920-1940

The Illusory Equilibrium, 1920-1931

From 1920 to 1931 no nation or group of nations sought actively to seize the Eurasian balance of power, which lay unconsolidated in the hands of the quickly separated victors of the First World War; and, despite the interim character of the Versailles settlement, for more than a decade the world enjoyed peace of a sort. Thus primary American interests were not put to the test; and the nation proceeded with apparent success on the world scene despite its withdrawal from any serious commitment to ensure either peace or stability beyond American shores.

The defeated nations were preoccupied with the rehabilitation of their domestic life and the internal problems of restoring the basis for major power status. Germany, exploiting Anglo-French cross-purposes, inflation, and American capital and good will, shook its reparations down to easily tolerable levels; and, after 1925, it rebuilt its economy and established a position of respectability in the councils of Europe. Beneath the surface, exploiting especially links with the Soviet Union, it laid the basis for rearmament; but this development did not reach serious dimensions during the 1920's. The Soviet Union, after two postwar years of revolution, unsuccessful allied intervention, and bitter civil war, turned to a period primarily of domestic preoccupations: the building of a totalitarian bureaucracy, economic recovery, and the post-Lenin power struggle in which Stalin triumphed by 1928. It easily broke the cordon sanitaire envisaged at Versailles

and emerged, along with Germany, as an active but not dominant or even threatening European force in the period 1925-1929. In Asia, under Soviet tutelage, the Kuomintang found its feet and created a Nationalist China at least superficially unified under a central government; but in 1927 this unity gave way to a progressive internal struggle as Chiang Kai-shek eliminated the Communists from the Kuomintang but did not destroy their organization and they entered their long period of insurrection. The Japanese did not at this stage seek with force to stem the rising tide of nationalism in China, occupying themselves mainly on the stage of formal diplomacy as a new major power.

Exhausted, disillusioned, or both, in varying degrees, Britain, France, and the United States did not press forward their victory in war to achieve new power objectives or even to hold firmly the lines laid down in 1919. Japan was held loosely in check by the moderates who wielded power at home, by the Anglo-Japanese alliance, and by the various multilateral undertakings Japan accepted abroad. The emergence of the Soviet Union as a limited diplomatic force was tolerated, except by the United States, the least enthusiastic of the interventionist powers which sought to throttle Bolshevism in its cradle but the most persistent in maintaining nonrecognition. The German balance of power maneuvers between the Soviet Union and the West were accepted as inevitable and not imminently dangerous; and the multiple states of Eastern Europe created out of the postwar settlement pursued their uncertain ways with relatively little serious attention or concern from

Britain or the United States.

The world of 1925-1931 was in a kind of balance. The limited initiatives of the more ambitious states did not appear greatly to threaten the generally passive or preoccupied victors of the First World War; and the moderate politicians in these states presided over a situation of sufficient economic and diplomatic progress to justify to their peoples their commitment to the concepts and the institutions of the post-Versailles world. Technically, the Versailles and post-Versailles arrangements blocked Japan from hegemony on the Chinese mainland and separated Russia from Germany by a barrier of Eastern European states which, so long as they remained independent or linked to the Western allies, kept the European end of Eurasia also in balance.

The outlook of France was, to a degree, an exception to this generally quiescent mood among the allies. France remained acutely aware that it could no longer regard itself as a match for Germany; and it did not view the events of these years with the complacency of London and Washington. It actively sought a policy that would continue to contain Germany on the European continent. With the United States withdrawn as an effective military force in Europe, the French turned to the British to support them in a post-Versailles policy of actively holding the continental balance against German resurgence. Britain failed to make the restraint of Germany the central feature of its continental policy; and, in particular London did not support Paris in its occupation of the Ruhr in 1924. In fact, Britain turned away from the Continent and, to a degree, withdrew within itself, undergoing its own form of isolationism. The upshot was that in the 1920's the

British gave relatively little serious attention to the course of events on the Continent; and, perhaps more important, Britain became confused concerning the character of its interest there, developing relations of chronic irritation if not cross-purposes which inhibited the making of an effective Anglo-French policy in the 1930's, when matters turned more serious.

Over these years American diplomacy was active in four areas. The Nine Power Treaty of 1921, by defining and confirming the status quo, apparently clarified the relations of the major powers to each other and to China in the Far East, formally internationalizing the Open Door. The Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 (and the short-lived London Treaty of 1930) settled the terms on which the victorious Allied powers (Britain, France, Japan, and the U.S.)<sup>37</sup> would live together without a naval armaments race. The Dawes and Young Plans (1924 and 1929 respectively) kept the tangled flows of international capital, reparations, and war debts moving without complete breakdown. Kellogg, goaded on by Borah from the Senate and by Nicholas Murray Butler and James Shotwell from New York, initiated the Pact of Paris (1928) outlawing war as an instrument of national policy.

Formally, then, the United States operated as a major power on each of the principal overt issues of the period: the balance of power in northeast Asia, the level of armaments, the post-Versailles status of Germany, and the keeping of international peace. Down to 1929, at least, it appeared that the nation had emerged successfully

from the First World War and its aftermath. It had asserted its freedom of action, disavowed Wilson and the League of Nations, and made a separate peace; but it had, nevertheless, played a role of leadership and dignity on the world scene. As Stimson has said of the nation's position when he took office under Hoover:<sup>38</sup>

. . . The country had defied reality in 1920; nine years later there had come no punishment for this folly, and the people were thus more confirmed than ever in their determination to avoid foreign entanglements. Narrowly considered, American foreign relations between 1920 and 1929 had been highly successful.

It took the sequence of international crises from 1931 to 1939 to demonstrate that the mixture of isolationist concept and limited diplomatic intervention in Eurasia which characterized American policy in the decade after 1920 was an illusory solution to the nation's foreign policy problem.

#### The Process of Disintegration

The 1920's was a deceptively easy time for the United States to play the role of major power without strain or substantial cost. Germany was temporarily weakened; Russia temporarily weakened and withdrawn; Japan, without allies in the West, had no realistic alternative but to accept status as junior major power in the club of former allies whose membership could reflect reality for only a little while at best. But those results of the First World War could be only temporary. They constituted only a brief interruption in the evolutionary changes taking place in the structure of world power, the onward movement of which had been gathering momentum since the 1860's. As it happened, the Great Depression after 1921 put the post-Versailles

system to a cruel series of tests and smashed both it and the comfortable illusion of successful American participation in world affairs which it had fostered. But even if the Great Depression had not occurred, the locus of power in Eurasia would have shifted in the course of the 1930's as Germany found its feet and Russia regathered momentum after the post-revolutionary decade of slow recovery and institutional reorganization, and the United States would have had to face up to the fact that there would have to be an enlarged American military and foreign policy effort if peace and a stable balance of power in Eurasia were to become realities.

First, in Japan and then in Germany the world-wide depression broke the prestige and power of those moderates who had been prepared to press their national interests within the limits of the post-1919 settlement. Simultaneously, by creating grave internal problems within the United States, Britain, and France, the depression weakened the energy and cohesion with which, individually and together, they confronted the new challenges. For the extremists in Germany and Japan (and for Mussolini as well) the depression both cleared the path to more ambitious policies at home and weakened effective opposition abroad.

The breakdown of the national and international equilibria which had been achieved in the period 1925-1929 and the discrediting of the concepts and men who had created them proceeded in a progressive, interacting process. In Britain, France, and the United States the depression posed critical questions which absorbed political energies

and drained away attention from the international scene; and, in a quite technical sense, it broke up the curious system of international trade and capital movements which had come to hinge on the American economy in ways that even the wisest Americans did not then perceive.

The retraction of American capital in 1929 and the Smoot-Hawley tariff of 1930 were substantive as well as symbolic acts of consequence. In Japan, the economic crisis, focussed around problems of foreign trade, had a triple effect. It weakened the moderate men in power; it made increasingly attractive an economic solution based on the development of a unilateral Japanese position on the Chinese mainland; and it symbolized the increased weakness and vulnerability of the major powers standing in the way of the militarists who had been crystallizing their objectives and plans in the 1920's. In Germany a similar convergence occurred. There the moderate governments of 1929-1932, dominated by men whose economic thought had been rigidly fixed by the experience of postwar inflation, were peculiarly incapable of initiating policies to deal with depression. Extreme levels of unemployment, the complete breakdown of the international economy after 1931, and the evident domestic preoccupation, if not bankruptcy, of will among the victors of 1919 gave National Socialism its opportunity.

Economically, Britain began its revival in 1931, the United States in 1933. France wallowed along, less hard-hit than others by depression. The French were clearer than others about the growing menace to the European balance of power, but France was incapable of taking any effective action without British or American support--and



that was lacking. By the mid-1930's, when Britain and the United States began to awaken to the dangerous deterioration in the balance of power, the Japanese militarists and Hitler were firmly in the saddle. Pandora's Box had been opened in the period 1931-1933; and it could not be closed again without a major concerted initiative backed by British, French, and American force. One opportunity after another for such an initiative was lost until, at last, war released the Anglo-American energies required for the survival of the Western World.

#### American Reactions to Crisis

For the United States the first and decisive foreign policy test came in 1931-33. In September 1931 the Japanese army proceeded to occupy key areas in South Manchuria in flagrant violation of the Kellogg Pact, the Nine Power Treaty, and the older American commitment to the Open Door. The State Department under Stimson was fully alive to the implications of the Japanese action and notably to the fact that the stature and meaning of the postwar treaty and collective security arrangements as a whole were at stake. After several months in which the power of the Japanese moderates over policy was tested and found to be ineffective, the government confronted the question of what the United States should do in the face of this primitive act of defiance. President Hoover consistently took the view that the United States had no interests in Asia justifying the use of force or the risk that it might have to be used. He rejected any action, military or economic, that could conceivably embroil the United States in an Asian war.

Hoover's position set an exceedingly narrow range for American diplomatic action. Stimson's opportunities for effective diplomacy were further limited by the position taken in London in response to the Japanese movement into Manchuria in September 1931. Britain, preoccupied at home, and with a strategic view in Asia that was somewhat myopic north of Shanghai (or Hong Kong), dealt coolly with the State Department's exploratory moves looking toward some form of common response. The British regarded the Open Door and the Nine Power Treaty as unrealistic in conception, given the actual state of Chinese national administrative unity. They continued to think in terms of loose Chinese regions which were still fair game for foreign zones of influence or control. Thus in British eyes Manchuria was, more or less legitimately, an area for the Japanese exercise of authority -- or for Russo-Japanese rivalry; the South of China was still regarded, almost a century after the Opium War, as a British zone of influence.

When, in January 1932, the Japanese invasion of Shanghai appeared too close for comfort to British interests, the British were willing to put up a united front with the United States, a move which, combined with a remarkable show of Chinese national cohesion and military competence, finally led the Japanese to withdraw from the International Settlement in Shanghai and to concentrate for the time being on the consolidation of their Manchurian position. From this point, Britain and the United States moved together, more or less in step, in a diplomacy of moral condemnation of Japanese aggression climaxed by the publication of the Lytton report and the Japanese withdrawal from the

League of Nations in 1933.

The interplay between Hoover's firm refusal to contemplate the use of force and Stimson's awareness of what was at stake for the United States and the world in the Far East yielded a curious result. The powers of the Western world, in this matter clearly following the American lead, condemned and refused to recognize as legal an act proclaimed both as immoral and dangerous to a "system of orderly development by the law of nations";<sup>39</sup> but - also following the American lead - they refused to apply their military or even their economic strength to preserve that system at a vital point. The diplomacy of 1931-1933 -- the reiteration of high moral principles without the will to face risk or undertake sacrifice in their support -- invited aggression. It opened the gates to German (and Italian) aggression and set in motion the long slow process of defining the interests and principles around which the United States and the West later rallied for their desperate effort at self-preservation in the Second World War.

The gap between the American moral and legal commitment to an independent China and the American performance in Asia widened over the decade that followed the invasion of Manchuria in September 1931. The United States was, in a sense, even less purposeful in its response to the full-fledged invasion of China which began in 1937. Roosevelt evaded an application of the Neutrality Act, which would have worked against Nationalist interests, but as Chiang Kai-shek was driven back on to Chungking, the United States aided him even less positively than did the Soviet Union.

It is easy to condemn a policy consisting of statements of objectives as profoundly unrelated to action as were American policy statements in the sequence from the Open Door to Pearl Harbor. It is even possible to argue that American power interests might have been better served over this period by a systematic policy of alliance with Japan, if necessary at China's expense.<sup>40</sup> What is clear as a matter of fact, however, is that the diplomatic tradition inaugurated in 1899 with the Open Door notes, running through the Nine Power Pact and Stimson's policy of 1931-1933, had long run substance, despite the lack of effort and will to back it in the short run. The initiatives of Hay, Hughes, and Stimson left a deep imprint on the nation; and, at a later time of crisis, that imprint may have been more rather than less powerful because the nation's conscience was not clear toward China.

In October 1941 the United States faced its decisive diplomatic confrontation with Japan and was tempted by the possibility of an American-Japanese accord, to be negotiated in Alaska between Prince Konoye and President Roosevelt. Such an accord conceivably could have not only staved off a two-front war but also reversed the direction which Japanese foreign and domestic policy had taken over the previous decade. At the minimum the negotiation might have been so conducted as to clarify American interests in checking Japanese aggression and to widen a deep split in the Japanese government, a situation which Washington followed in extraordinary detail by means of intercepted wireless messages. The story of the failure to seize this possibility is extremely complex.<sup>41</sup> In the end Washington, against the advice

of the Embassy in Tokyo, refused to negotiate. The American government could not bring itself into a high level meeting without explicit assurances concerning China's integrity which the Japanese clearly could not and would not give before the event.

In his mannerly debate on whether a negotiation in the American interest was then possible Feis concludes: ". . .the records since come to hand do not support the belief that a real chance of maintaining the peace in the Pacific--on or close to the terms for which we had stood since 1931--was missed."<sup>42</sup> Grew has his final, respectful reservation on this verdict.<sup>43</sup> What is clear, however, is that despite all the nation's errors of commission and omission in the Far East, "the terms . . .of 1931" and the three decades that lay behind them ruled in the showdown. For good or ill or for both, the attachment of the nation to a general objective, linked to moral principles derived from its domestic life and tradition, had great long-run force and meaning despite the evident failure to match the national performance with these principles.

The challenge in China to the nation's interwar policy, the ineffectual American response, and the consequences of that response for the subsequent deterioration of the balance of power in Eastern Eurasia are all reasonably clear-cut. There was no such easily identifiable turning point in the deterioration of the balance of power in the West, and no single occasion when the challenge was so explicitly made to Washington and Washington examined and rejected it.

In part this asymmetry arose from the greater complexity of the

European power structure, which was eroded in a progressive sequence, not broken at a blow. Before he felt safe to move, Hitler had to make sure that he did not face a superior united coalition. Specifically, he would have been immobilized if the Anglo-French alliance had succeeded in uniting with the other two non-German elements in the European power balance, the Soviet Union and the Eastern European states which France had sought to build into an effective Little Entente. Aside from surviving without riposte the unilateral German denunciation of the Versailles Treaty--accomplished with the reoccupation of the Rhineland and open German rearmament-- Hitler's task was first to destroy the efficacy of the Little Entente and then to neutralize the Soviet Union. Aided by the uncertainty of Britain, the weakness of France, and Stalin's opportunism, all was prepared with the signing of the agreement at Munich in September 1938, the occupation of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, and the German-Soviet Pact of August; an isolated Poland and an inadequately prepared Western Europe could be dealt with in sequence.

In part the difference between the course of events in Asia and in Europe arose from the fact that the American commitment to China was explicit and formally confirmed in treaty. In Europe no equivalent basis existed for the American position after the debacle of 1919-20.

Thus, in the dreadful sequence in the West of 1935-1938--Ethiopia, Spain, the Rhineland, Austria, and Czechoslovakia--at no one point did the nation's formal obligations force it to take a clean-cut position

as it did when the Japanese invaded Manchuria in September 1931. The Congress, in a sense, had purposefully guaranteed that this would be so in the Neutrality Acts of 1935-1937. There was not even an occasion for enunciating a moral position equivalent to Stimson's non-recognition to which the nation could later repair. The United States, having made a separate peace after the First World War, and having tied its hands in the Neutrality Acts, left the task of holding together the world created by Versailles up to Britain and France-- both split and weakened in the aftermath of the First World War, in part by the fact of American abstention. Moreover, in its deeper origins, the China commitment was a part of the nation's history which antedated the experience of the First World War and which struck responsive chords in many who after 1920 firmly turned their backs on the Old World and its recurrent tragedies. The invasion of Manchuria and the Japanese assault on Shanghai instinctively stirred many Americans as, say, the German reoccupation of the Rhineland in March 1936 did not.

The underlying fact, then, is that the United States behaved over these years as if its rejection of the Versailles Treaty and the League of Nations had ended the American national interest in the European balance of power. As the crisis in Europe deepened, the Congress progressively reaffirmed an isolationist neutrality. The climax came with the Declaration of Panama (October 3, 1939), which established in the Western Hemisphere a "safety belt" around the Americas south of Canada from approximately 300 to 1000 miles in width and warned the belligerents to refrain from naval action within that area. In November 1939, having failed four months earlier, a cash-and-

carry policy of arms exports was passed by the Congress, offering some concession to the Administration and the American sympathies and some modification of the previous neutrality legislation; but this was an Act designed consciously to avoid the Freedom of the Seas controversy which, it was then believed, had effected American entrance into the First World War. In this extremity, the United States abandoned a doctrine which it had irregularly maintained from the days of Napoleon, the Barbary pirates, and the War of 1812.

#### Some Reasons for Failure

There are conventional explanations for the nation's performance in the period 1935-1939--the coming to maturity of a new generation of Americans trained to believe that American participation in the First World War was a purposeless and costly error, the Nye Committee's false dramatization of the influence of munition makers and the arms trade on war, the concentration of the nation's energies on the problems of domestic recovery and reform after 1933.<sup>44</sup> But these are only a partial explanation. There was a general pattern in the nation's behavior during the late 1930's--the pattern of men caught up in an unrealistic vision of the world and their relation to it who preferred to risk major national interests rather than to acknowledge error, men who asserted and reasserted their false vision with increasing force as events rolled on to crisis.

The policy of the nation then consciously reflected the vision of a United States which had been led to participate in the First World War out of naivete and idealism but now, wiser, knew that it could



defend its interests and its virtue without the mobilization of force and its application beyond this hemisphere, a United States which could, in effect, afford to ignore the course of the balance of power and politics in Eurasia.

There was no sound basis in history for this view. There were only distorted memories of life before 1900 and a rejection of what had happened between 1898 and 1920. The nation's history from its beginnings had been intimately bound up with the Eurasian power balance. That relationship had changed its character, but it had never ceased to exist as a major factor in the American evolution. Moreover, almost every force at work in the twentieth century had increased the depth and importance of that relationship, notably by reducing the power of Britain and France relative to Germany, Japan, and Russia, by eliminating the Austro-Hungarian Empire as a force for stability in Eastern Europe. In denying all this the nation failed even to act in the only way that would have conformed to a rational isolationism -- namely, by a vigorous defensive rearmament.

The American performance from 1931 to 1940, and especially over the last five years of that period, bears a family relation to other neurotic fixations which led nations to cling to concepts divorced from reality until that reality enforced a disaster, a change in concept, or both; for example, the Tory policy toward the American colonies in the years before 1776, the policies of the French and Russian courts before 1789 and 1917, Hitler's vision of Germany's place in the world over the period 1933-1945, and French colonial

policy in Indo-China and North Africa after 1945.

The following appear to have been the major underlying ingredients in the peculiarly intractable American isolationism of the 1930's.

1. The discrediting of both the Large View and Wilson's policy in the period 1918-1920. Theodore Roosevelt's education of the American people in the period 1901-1908 had not prepared them fully for the sacrifices of full-scale involvement in Eurasia; Wilson's idealism had not prepared them for the harsh realities of international politics and power. In the face of the challenge of 1917 the nation had accepted the costs of war and had stretched to the limit of its aspiration in backing initially a Wilsonian settlement; but the tough bargaining and detailed issues of power and politics which arose at Versailles did not fit the nation's Wilsonian vision of what peace would be like and were distinctly a shock. Even the Large View, with its distorted naval ingredient, had not fully prepared the nation for the serious, sustained commitments to the European Continent demanded by the French and implied by membership in the League of Nations.

2. The sustained prosperity of the American economy in the 1920's combined with the nation's deceptive diplomatic successes confirmed the notion of an America capable of maintaining virtue and world authority without effort, sacrifice, or sustained involvement in the affairs of Eurasia. To Americans of the 1920's Theodore Roosevelt and Wilson seemed, in retrospect, archaic crusaders. The men who ran the nation came honestly to believe that, if the United States concentrated on business, the rest of its interests would take care of themselves with minimal applications of either force or idealism to the world scene.

3. The shock of depression weakened the faith of the men who had made national policy since 1920; and after the election of 1932 it threw them on the defensive. The New Deal challenged their stature in the community and the institutions and modes of life to which they were attached. They were forced into opposition under circumstances not conducive to a sense of national, let alone international, responsibility; and with them there temporarily disappeared from authority men of the stamp of Root, Hughes, and Stimson, who had tempered the isolationist winds of the 1920's.

4. Although headed by a man much of whose formative political experience down to 1920 had been in military and foreign affairs, the New Deal was a coalition primarily built around issues of domestic policy. Many of the younger men who worked within it had never known the world before 1914. Their minds were focussed on issues of domestic reform and recovery; and they believed the First World War a product of European power rivalries in which the United States had no legitimate interest and from participation in which it should have abstained. They were uninterested in issues of international power and military affairs, regarding them as somehow associated with the conservative mind. In many ways the young reformer of the 1930's was a more purposeful throw-back to the Wilsonian Democrats of 1912-1916. <sup>45</sup> More important, New Deal domestic support hinged on Congressmen and constituencies representing areas and minority groups that were distinctly isolationist. In short, the New Deal was an awkward set of personalities and a difficult political grouping from which to mount a sustained international-

ist effort in the 1930's.

Thus, just as the Republicans of the 1920's had moved away from the concepts and precepts of the Large View, the influence of Wilson on the Democrats had waned by the 1930's. Although their concept of the nation's life and institutions might differ from that of the isolationist Republicans of the 1920's, many New Dealers, their minds filled with large domestic hopes and plans and struggles, and observing the disorderly state of Eurasia in the late 1930's, would have been prepared to echo Herbert Hoover's retrospective statement that it "was not isolationism"; it was a belief that "somewhere, somehow, there must be an abiding place for law and a sanctuary for civilization."<sup>46</sup>

Here, then, was the old sense of moral superiority and world mission, never absent since the nation's founding, having failed in Wilson's great projection, having fallen back to empty moralizing (in, for example, for the Kellogg-Briand Pact), now turned in on itself defensively and in desperation as the Axis moved to dominate a Eurasia where the values of civilization appeared to be dead or dying. There is a sense in which the United States regarded itself as an innocent violated by the First World War and now belatedly protecting itself from its own ardors and a wicked world by a chastity belt of Neutrality Acts.

#### Franklin Roosevelt and the Road Back

In this setting, how did the nation's diplomacy move from 1933 to 1939 under a President and Secretary of State committed as individuals to internationalism?

From 1933 to 1939 Roosevelt sought time after time to free his hands in such a way as to be able to apply the weight of American economic power and military potential against those seeking to unset

the balance of power in Eurasia. He hoped to prevent war by re-creating the image of coalition that would again deter those seeking primacy in Eurasia from using force. He was systematically prevented by the Congress from moving effectively in this direction. His only recourse was to seek to move the Congress by appealing to the country over its head. Here he was cautious and probing, fearing to lose his power over policy--domestic as well as foreign--if he overplayed his hand.

The Administration never ceased to assert the nation's ultimate interest in the evolution of events in Eurasia, and it conducted a sporadic effort at education; but its domestic interests and constituency prevented it from attempting a full-scale test which, according to every index of public and Congressional opinion down to mid-1939, it would have lost. As Hull explained, his steady reiteration of the fundamental principles of collective security (usually accompanied by great caution in diplomatic and political practice) was purposeful.<sup>47</sup>

I had several purposes in mind in constantly reiterating these principles. One was to edge our own people gradually away from the slough of isolation into which so many had sunk. Another was to induce other nations to adopt them and make them the cornerstones of their foreign policies. Still another was to get peoples everywhere to believe in them so that, if aggressor governments sought war, their peoples might object or resist; and, if war did come, such peoples, having these principles at heart, would eventually swing back to the right international road.

The pattern of frustration was set in the spring of 1933 when Roosevelt sought to salvage the Geneva Disarmament Conference and take the nation back on the road to collective security. France demanded, as the price for disarmament, a pact which would guarantee American support in case of aggression.<sup>48</sup> Roosevelt proposed a consultative

pact which would require American decision in case of alleged aggression combined with a discriminatory arms embargo which would permit the nation to throw the weight of its resources against a designated aggressor. On May 27 the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations reported out a proposal which required an arms embargo against all parties to a dispute. Rather than tie his hands, Roosevelt dropped the initiative. Germany withdrew from the Geneva Conference, which flatly failed. At a decisive moment in Europe's history and at a moment of definition for the new Administration, the image of the United States created by the election of 1920 and its aftermath was confirmed - above all, in Hitler's mind.

In 1935, as the League of Nations became seized of Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia, Roosevelt struggled to use the nation's weight in a more specific demonstration of collective security. Fear of American involvement led to the passage of the first of the Neutrality Acts (August 1935) which made mandatory the imposition of an arms embargo in case of war. This act, designed to limit the President's enterprise, was a temporary measure, confined to six months. It was extended to May 1, 1937 after the Senate refused to act on amendments proposed by the Administration which would have given the President a degree of flexibility in embargoing raw materials important for war making.

The nonlegislative events of the latter months of 1935 had not encouraged the cause of collective security. In October the President applied the Neutrality legislation; and he warned that sale of materials other than arms could be undertaken only at seller's risk and

without normal diplomatic protection. As the League of Nations faced the question of an oil embargo on Italy, Hull, on November 15, included oil explicitly in the Administration's supplementary "moral embargo." The League failed to follow this lead on November 18; and in December the Hoare-Laval Pact was published. The American oil gesture was insufficient to move Britain and France into a stronger stand; and the cause of collective security was damaged on both sides of the ocean. In Europe, the lack of American presence in the League was a strongly felt weakness at a decisive moment of testing; in the United States, the Administration appeared to be left out on a limb, more activist against Italian aggression than even Britain and France.

The strict application of neutrality legislation in the Spanish Civil War further confirmed the image of American nonparticipation on both sides of the Atlantic. Here, the apparent Communist support for the Loyalists and the support of important elements in the Catholic Church for Franco compounded the more general difficulties in moving the nation from its isolationist posture. As Rauch points out, these factors almost certainly gained strength from the fact that the Spanish Civil War broke out in July 1936, the summer of an election year.

By the time Japan's full-scale attack on China was launched, the 1937 Neutrality Act had been passed, giving the President a slightly larger flexibility in throwing the nation's weight than the Acts of 1935 and 1936. It was now up to the President to decide when "a state of war" existed: he had the choice of declaring an arms embargo or an arms embargo plus an embargo on war materials. In any case, American

vessels could not engage in military traffic, and credits were ruled out to belligerents. The Congress was now thoroughly seized of the theory that trade in arms and war materials, credits to allies, and the participation in the carrying trade had caused American entry into the First World War. The maximum American assistance to Nationalist China permissible under these circumstances was achieved by the President's refusal to declare "a state of war" between Japan and China, a position made a shade less preposterous than it might have been by the lack of declarations of war between the belligerents.

The dead-end nature of the American policy with respect to Nationalist China was reinforced by the meeting in Brussels (October-November 1937) of the Nine Power signatories (excepting Japan, but including the Soviet Union) to define their position on the Japanese invasion of China. This meeting followed Roosevelt's famous "quarantine the aggressors" speech (October 5); and the American position at the Conference was weaker even than it might have been because the Administration judged that the public reaction to that speech had been generally negative. Given the feebleness of the American position and Britain's intent to minimize its burdens in Asia, the choice before the Conference narrowed to: an American proposal that the Conference bring Japan and China into a direct negotiation to end hostilities; or a British proposal that Britain and the United States serve jointly as intermediaries in an exploration of terms between the belligerents. Japan rejected the first proposal, the United States the second. The American refusal, echoing Stimson in 1931 and foreshadowing the refusal to



negotiate with Japan on China in 1941, arose from Hull's unwillingness to permit the United States to take explicit (as opposed to implicit) responsibility for a corruption of the Open Door concept and the Nine Power Treaty.

The cross-purposes of Britain and the United States at this stage reached a climax when, early in 1938, Welles sounded out the British (with Roosevelt's tentative support, against Hull's opposition) on the possibility of a Washington conference of the major powers designed to halt the trend to war. Formally, disarmament would be the central issue; but the conference would also consider the general issue of aggression and measures for "economic pacification through equality of treatment and opportunity." This was, at bottom, a psychological proposal to break through the Neutrality Acts, dramatize the weight of the United States in the power balance, and arouse the peoples everywhere, including the United States, to the need for common action to stop the drift to war. To thoughtful Britons it looked like a last chance to bring an effective Anglo-American coalition to life; and on these grounds the British Ambassador supported it and Eden resigned on Chamberlain's refusal to accept it. Hull believed Welles' proposal involved an American responsibility which could not be backed by American political forces then anywhere in sight; and he was sceptical of the psychological dynamics Welles and Roosevelt envisaged. As exchanges proceeded in January between Washington and London, the issue centered not on the large political forces which such a conference might conceivably set in motion but on the possi-

bility of achieving an agreement with Hitler and Mussolini. Chamberlain believed no fruitful negotiation could result unless Britain and the United States were prepared to make substantive political--that is, territorial--concessions to Mussolini in Abyssinia and, possibly, to Hitler in Austria and Czechoslovakia. These, in the end, the United States was not prepared to envisage. Thus the bold gamble was not attempted and Chamberlain plodded along the road to Munich.

Although the Administration may have slightly strengthened the British and French hand in the Munich negotiations by the Presidential message of September 26, 1938, essentially the die was cast. The effort to produce from the American political and diplomatic process an image of effective strength sufficient to alter British and French policy and to check Hitler had failed. Ironically, the shock of Munich began to release certain of the restraints on the Administration; for example, modest credits to Nationalist China were arranged at the close of 1938, and the first war-planning which included the possibility of American participation in a European war began. In his State of the Union Message in January 1939 Roosevelt made the danger of war his central theme and proposed measures designed to prevent war by increasing American military strength and permitting the United States to throw its weight against aggression by "methods short of war." But in the summer of 1931 the Senate refused to remove the mandatory arms embargo from the Neutrality Act of 1937. And this was the state of things as Molotov and Ribbentrop completed their negotiation in August and war broke out with the German attack on

Poland on September 1.

Only a United States evidently prepared to mobilize and actively to use its weight in Eurasia could have given the British and the French heart, convinced Stalin that a deal with Berlin was not his best move, and thus have deterred Hitler. The gestures and maneuvers of American diplomacy from 1935 to 1939 did not suffice, notably because they appeared to be precisely what they were: the moves of an Administration which had behind it a reluctant and unperceiving people and a Congress determined in its opposition to active American involvement in the process of preventing the deterioration of the power balance.<sup>49</sup> Britain and France alone did not present a front of sufficient strength and purposefulness to persuade Stalin or to dissuade Hitler in 1939.

Accepting the central fact of the nation's monumental failure, at a lower level of historical judgment all was not loss.

First, the Administration struck a posture which unlike that of its opponents, experience tended progressively to confirm as correct. As with Churchill in Britain, the coming of war and its evolution strengthened Roosevelt's hand. The isolationists--like Chamberlain--had clung desperately to the possibility that war would not come; and although isolationist rear-guard actions persisted down to Pearl Harbor, by and large the nation was able to unite around a leader whose perspective had been confirmed by unfolding events.

Second, the insistence on avoiding de jure compromises with Japan, Italy, and Germany--following Stimson's formula of 1931--in a sense preserved the nation's sense of conscience and, to a degree,

its ability to lead--although the problem of matching a virtuous objective with political reality and with American force was to recur in China and elsewhere even before the end of the Second World War.

Third, Roosevelt's long struggle with Congress, centered on the right of the United States to throw its support behind its allies in moves short of war, yielded naturally, once Congressional opposition weakened, a sequence permitting American weight to be brought to bear by progressive stages: from the cash-and-carry legislation of October 1931 down through Lend-Lease and a shoot-at-sight policy in the Atlantic in 1941. It is, indeed, arguable that the American interest in the Second World War would have been better served by a further and earlier commitment of the nation's military weight. But accepting this as beyond what Congress and the public would have accepted, the concept of a purposeful gearing of American supplies into a battle where American interests were engaged proved a useful device of compromise and transition, the foundations for which were laid in the Neutrality Act struggles of 1935-1939.

Finally, the very thoroughness of the isolationist victory of the 1930's--while it did not prevent post-1945 controversy on the question of whether Roosevelt consciously maneuvered the nation into an unnecessary war--persuaded a substantial majority of Americans that it had been an error to abandon collective security in 1920. Given the mutually destructive behavior of Wilson and Lodge, perhaps a period of isolationist ascendancy and clear-cut failure was the only way for the nation to find its way back to the road it had taken in the first two decades of the century.

Franklin Roosevelt and the American Tradition in Foreign Policy

Franklin Roosevelt inherited naturally and incorporated in his thought both the Large View and the Wilson traditions. He was not only a Roosevelt but also a former Assistant Secretary of the Navy who had known Mahan personally. He was among the small band of American civilians who had shared the pre-1920 experience of groping toward a new concept of the American power role on the world scene and of fighting a major coalition war. He was also, in part, a loyal Wilsonian who understood and came gradually to feel the political reality of international idealism as a working force in American behavior, and who believed with Wilson that some way must be found to order the interplay of national power in order to avoid war.

As a junior member of Wilson's administration Roosevelt had been ardently for early preparedness, vigorous in supporting the use of force against Mexico, and a bulwark of the Navy's capital ship program both before American entrance into the First World War and immediately thereafter. Caught up in the affairs of a military service, there was little Wilsonian idealism in his thought or action until the war was over.<sup>50</sup>

In the post-Armistice period he backed Wilson fully on the League of Nations issue and helped take the issue to the country as Democratic candidate for Vice President. But even in this period of identification with Wilson's policies, he "clung tenaciously to his fundamental trust in adequate armament, or, failing that, in any training the public would accept."<sup>51</sup> And he even pressed for the creation of a

joint planning body which would have brought the State, War, and Navy departments together.

Between the Democratic defeat in 1920 and the victory in 1932 Roosevelt took positions over a wide range in foreign and military policy. These positions reveal on the one hand an expedient recognition of the deterioration in public support for either national security or collective security measures and, on the other, a desire to find formulae to set the United States back on the road it had reached by 1920.

Under the converging force of cumulative isolationism and pre-occupation with major depression Roosevelt's initial policies as President were highly isolationist. But as the Axis threat unfolded he began to lead the nation back toward preparedness and collective security.

The rebuilding of the American Navy under Roosevelt began as early as 1933. And from the Chicago "quarantine" speech of 1937 forward Roosevelt undertook with great caution a re-education of the nation as the danger of war increased, a war which he never doubted would put in jeopardy fundamental American security interests. The extent to which the interwar generation had rejected both the Mahan and Wilson traditions steadily restricted his arena for action and initiative. Down to Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt conducted his policy with an acute awareness of the mood into which the country had fallen between wars, taking each step toward American defense and the protection of the national interest on a tentative practical basis in the

face of specific urgent situations. Only in January 1941 in his address to Congress defining the Four Freedoms and in the August 1941 meeting with Churchill which yielded the Atlantic Charter did he permit the Wilson tradition to emerge as the United States asserted itself and helped to begin to define Allied postwar aims. It was, however, not merely the presence of Churchill and the British which tempered the language of the Atlantic Charter and avoided specific commitments. Throughout his period as President, Roosevelt lived in the consciousness of Wilson's failure, and increasingly so as the end of the war could be envisaged. In a larger sense, however, in the image of himself and the nation he projected on the world scene Roosevelt recaptured much of the best in Wilson's performance. As the American role expanded in World War II, the old concept of the American mission regained vitality, that of a great power exerting its influence for good purposes because of an inner dedication to the values of its domestic society.

It was natural, against the background of American history since 1920, that Roosevelt should seek in 1940 as Secretaries of War and Navy men who had shared the Large View Republican traditions: Stimson and Knox. Such older men, matured in the pre-1914 world and having played substantial roles in the First World War, were more at home in the America of 1939-1941 than those whose mature experience was confined to the 1920's and 1930's, when the spiral of rejection of American internationalism, begun in 1920, worked its way out. Between Stimson and Franklin Roosevelt there were, for example, long memories shared and common points of reference rare among American leaders,

largely concealed from their colleagues, even those close to them like Hopkins, who took on the Second World War not as a variant on American experience since 1898 but as a great fresh adventure.<sup>52</sup>

As war came to Europe and the allied position deteriorated, the United States slowly returned from the costly isolationist deviation of the interwar decades. Step by step the nation found its way back to a position which embraced, in a fashion, the partial realities articulated at an earlier time by the holders of both the Large View and the Wilsonian doctrine. But those actions to protect the nation's security were taken in response to an urgent and flagrant threat to the nation--not in a mood of reflection on the abiding long-term interests of the nation. The late but successful American reaction to the threat presented by the Axis did not end the problem of finding a consensus on the national interest and translating it into an agreed and stable national military policy capable of guiding and controlling American behavior in peace as well as desperate war.



Diplomat and Soldier: Instruments of An Uncertain Nation

George Kennan has written:<sup>53</sup>

"Essentially what the diplomat does is only to maintain communication with other governments about the behavior of the respective countries in ways that have reciprocal impacts and are of interest to the governments. The diplomat writes notes and holds discussions, under the President's authority, with other governments, about America's behavior--he merely talks about it, defines it, explains it, listens to protests about it, and expresses whatever undertakings he is permitted to express about its future nature. He is only the clerk and the recorder-- a secretary, of sorts--not an independent agent. For every real promise or commitment he expresses to a foreign government regarding the behavior of the U. S. on the international scene, he must have the sanction of some domestic authority which has the corresponding real power and is prepared to back him up.

"When, therefore, the military used to say to us: this or that must be obtained by 'diplomatic means,' they were using an empty term. Strictly speaking, there are no diplomatic means divorced from the real elements of national power and influence, which are all--in the U.S.--remote from diplomatic control."

Despite the intimate and inescapable relationship between diplomacy and force, the American diplomat and the American soldier-- the principal executors of the ruling concept of the national interest-- evolved separately in their respective professions during the early decades of the twentieth century and maintained quite different relationships to the making of policy and to American society as a whole.

So far as the soldier was concerned, the pattern of experience of the nineteenth century persisted. When war came, the corps of military professionals, however ill-treated they may have been in peace, automatically assumed a high degree of responsibility. The

President did settle the issue as between major courses of military strategy. He generally chose his top commanders, and he sometimes (like Lincoln until he found Grant) exercised in some operational detail his prerogatives as Commander-in-Chief. The civilian Secretaries of War and Navy, depending on their qualities and their relations with the President, played a lesser or greater role in military operations and military affairs. Nevertheless, men who for years had been junior officers became general officers and admirals; they took command of large units, and they were placed in positions of grave national responsibility where the rewards and public prestige as well as the risks were theirs.

This was not true, under equivalent conditions, for the professional diplomat. On occasions when important national stakes hinged on the conduct of diplomacy it was the national habit for the President or the Secretary of State (or both) to assume direct operational responsibility and for them, in turn, to rely heavily for staff work and the execution of policy on those outside the ranks of professional diplomacy. It had been assumed from an early stage in the nation's history that men experienced in national politics should take major and direct responsibility for national diplomatic action. Thus the American diplomatic professional was generally an adviser to a politician or quasi-political figure rather than a major performer in his own right. When the professional made policy--and he often did--he made it in the guise of technical advice or through his special function of defining the situation confronted.

Congress, of course, intervened often in military matters. Its control of appropriations set the chronically straitened operating framework for the military. Congressmen steadily sought to ensure expenditure of military appropriations in their districts. Congress wrote the Militia Act of 1792, determining the character of the reserve army for a century. And, from the Continental Congress forward, legislators influenced military operations and military strategy in more direct ways from time to time. But there also<sup>was</sup> a consistent tendency for Congress to regard military affairs as an unfamiliar area of expert specialized knowledge and therefore to leave the professional soldier considerable latitude within which to go about his business, making his own decisions over a considerable range--at least until the situation in the field went badly.

There was no such modesty on the part of Congress in regard to its knowledge of foreign affairs, which it generally viewed as a less professional and more familiar terrain than military operations. The markedly greater involvement of Congress with diplomatic than with military affairs accentuated the relative limitation of the role of the professional diplomat. There are several familiar reasons for this, quite aside from the Senate's constitutional relation to the making of treaties. In the nineteenth century regional interests of direct concern to the voter were often involved in foreign policy; and in the latter decades of the period, as the flow in immigration increased, voting groups emerged with strongly held attitudes toward particular foreign nations. From the Committee of Secret Correspond-

ence created in 1775 forward, the detailed conduct of foreign affairs had a Congressional dimension which tended systematically to limit the range of authority of the professional diplomat.

Diplomacy was not only a less clearly definable professional field than military operations (and one where the professional could less persuasively justify a claim to be left on his own); in its traditional context it was also a less operational field. A diplomat reported the situations he saw about him in foreign areas and the conversations he had. He negotiated on the basis of instructions cabled or otherwise dispatched to him from Washington. When assigned in Washington he considered what position the nation ought to take in the light of its interests, the exact current situation in particular foreign areas, and the current context of American politics. This was a bookish sort of job: a job of reading, writing, thinking, and talking to others like himself. A diplomat did not command large masses of men nor did he manipulate complicated machines. He represented a kind of activity which, in the spectrum of American values (at least since the 1830's) had never been accorded the prestige of jobs where things were produced or physically manipulated, or where executive responsibility was assumed over the performance of large numbers of men. The soldier in the field, on the other hand, although he may have done specific things that seemed strange, was exercising operating skills which were understandable and respectable. The soldier was generally viewed by the public and the Congress as, somehow, meeting a payroll. He was regarded as a man of action; the

diplomat was not.

The somewhat remote and professional character of a diplomat's business was given a further, equivocal turn by its central purpose. By definition, the diplomat worked with foreign countries under conditions where the foreigner had some bargaining power short of unconditional surrender. He was forced, therefore, to take sympathetically into account perspectives which were unfamiliar, even contrary to the American interest; and, in the end, he had to advocate positions in which a unilaterally defined American position was compromised. A soldier on the other hand, was (or appeared to be) associated with the direct enforcement of the national interest. He represented the nation in action in its simplest and purest form. A diplomat, representing a less resolute defense of the national interest, was, therefore, regarded instinctively with annoyance, if not suspicion or worse.

Further, the social life of the professional diplomat was different from that of the average American in peculiar ways. He lived a considerable proportion of his mature life abroad, consorting with foreigners. He learned to conduct himself in circumstances where the ruling etiquette, derived directly from an era of aristocratic hegemony, ran counter to the manner of normal intercourse among Americans. When in the United States the diplomat was liable to be bound closely to Washington and cut off in his movements and activities from what appeared to be the major normal streams of American life and activity. The military man, too, led a life different from that of the average American; but that life was historically based mainly on American soil. Even the most familiar form of entrance into the

professional services--via Congressional recommendation and appointment to the military and naval academies--underlined the connection between the military professional and the central patterns of the nation's life; whereas the background and motives which led men into the life of professional diplomacy were, for most Americans, remote, more remote even than those which induced a reasonable number of Americans to spend their lives overseas as missionaries.

Thus the professional diplomat was never accorded by the nation the status or the degree of responsibility to which a high-ranking soldier might aspire; and, moreover, the diplomat had to deal with both a chronic suspicion and with a willingness of the nonprofessional to intervene from which the professional military was to an important degree spared.

As the nation, responding at the turn of the century to forces it did not fully understand and which it could not fully control, moved out and, more or less, stayed on the world scene, the American diplomat and military men were faced with problems new in character and in scale. Each was forced to act his role as the instrument of a nation unclear and vacillating about basic interests and purposes beyond its shores. Each reflected (in different composition and balance) weaknesses and strengths of the society of which he was a part. Each faced the challenge of trying to free himself from habits and memories of the nineteenth century at a pace which might match the sudden uprush of the nation's relative influence on the world scene.

At a few points the professionals in diplomacy and war met, or

at least, their activities overlapped: in their joint connection with Root and Stimson, for example, who fostered the beginnings of a connection between them; in the abortive Navy initiatives of the First World War and immediate postwar years to establish a Council of National Defense, embracing civilians and soldiers or, at least, to establish systematic liaison; to a degree, at Versailles; at the Washington Conference of 1921-1922, in its way a high point in American diplomacy of this era; in the person of Franklin Roosevelt and his interweaving of naval experience and diplomatic knowledgeability.

In general, however, the two sets of professionals continued to go their separate ways, each maturing after his fashion over the first four decades of the century but emerging essentially unprepared for a Second World War and a postwar era in which problems of force and diplomacy would be inextricably intermingled.

The Evolution of Professional Diplomacy: 1900-1941The New Foreign Service

Elihu Root is the father of the modern Department of State as well as of the modern American Army. His reforms in 1905-1906 usefully mark the moment when the American professional diplomatic tradition began to move off its insular base toward maturity. That trend development lagged behind the rise in de facto American power on the world scene; and it was not accompanied by the development of professional doctrines of the American interest. Until George Kennan's post-1945 analysis of the nation's problem in dealing with the Soviet Union, the Foreign Service produced no Captain Mahan (or, even, General Mitchell),<sup>54</sup> that is, no figure capable of articulating a national strategy based on a clear concept of the national interest. Nevertheless, the Department of State and its Foreign Service was a quite different institution on the eve of Pearl Harbor from what it was when Grew's youthful tiger-shooting caught Theodore Roosevelt's imagination.

By executive orders of November 10, 1905 and June 27, 1906 Elihu Root put diplomatic and consular positions on a civil service basis, excepting Ambassadors and Ministers, who remained political appointees. Examinations were required for entrance into the Foreign Service, promotions in the Foreign Service were placed on a merit basis, and the civil service merit system was extended to the whole consular service.

These reforms reflected two contemporary trends in the political life of the nation: the civil service movement and the spreading



notion that the nation was developing major and expanding interests on the world scene which justified a more professional approach to foreign affairs. Despite the fact that he failed to get the increase in salary and allowances he sought from the Congress, Root laid the basis for a less political and more competent and professional diplomatic service. It was partially under the direct influence of these developments, as well as in common response to the deeper currents which produced them, that George Washington University and Princeton turned their attention to the problem of training men for the new diplomatic examinations.<sup>55</sup>

#### The Diplomacy of War and Peace-Making

As war broke out in Europe and the United States assumed the technically complex and demanding role of neutral, the slowly developing American diplomatic service was confronted with issues of a new seriousness and delicacy. The well-ordered amiable pre-war routine gave way to the problem of getting Americans out of the war zones, of minimizing friction with the British arising from neutrality status, of pressing the Germans on the question of Belgian refugees. In terms of policy-making President Wilson took matters thoroughly into his own hands. Neither Bryan nor Lansing had an important voice in the Administration's major decisions, although Lansing exhibited first-class technical skill in the day-to-day execution of policy.

On the whole, the tangled issues arising from American neutrality in a major war were well handled, the Department of State being the President's effective diplomatic instrument for these narrow

purposes. When, however, the United States became a belligerent and then assumed major responsibility for the making of peace, the President looked elsewhere for staff work and assistance. A special group under Colonel House was created in 1917 to prepare for the peace conference. Lansing acquiesced fully in this arrangement, which virtually divorced the Department of State from the peace-making process.<sup>56</sup> Wilson consistently relied on his own judgment, using selectively Colonel House and a few others outside the professional diplomatic service as advisors and agents in major matters. But the separation stemmed also from the fact that the American professional was ill-prepared to deal with the issues on which the nation had to take positions in the aftermath of the war.<sup>57</sup> The drawing of national boundaries, the balancing of deeply held British and French interests and perspectives towards the Continent, and the creation of a League of Nations raised issues for which the essentially consular American professional experience had not prepared the Foreign Service.

In effect, then, the First World War and its immediate aftermath did not significantly develop the Department of State as an instrument of staff work or planning in foreign policy. It did however expand the cumulative professional experience of the Department in the technical business of modern diplomacy ; and the nation's withdrawal after 1920 brought the level of the nation's problems and responsibilities in foreign affairs back to the low but rising level of State Department competence.

Perhaps the most important positive effect of the First World War and its aftermath on the development of American diplomacy was

to draw into the Department of State a new generation of able men whose imagination was caught by the new service and who concluded from the events of 1914-1920 that the American role in foreign affairs would eventually expand.<sup>58</sup>

### Inter-War Developments

The first major diplomatic occasion in which the Secretary of State was the central figure and the Department of State supplied the essential staff work was the Washington Disarmament Conference of 1921-1922. Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes dominated the affair, and the career men, the technicians, and regional experts of the Department were effectively used. Hughes devoted much attention to building the professional service, his contribution being climaxed by the passage of the Rogers Act of 1924, which he guided through the Congress. This act united the consular and diplomatic corps in a unified Foreign Service, providing also for rotation between field posts and desks in Washington. Under Kellogg and Stimson the slow growth in the quality, prestige, and maturity of the Foreign Service proceeded. Despite the nation's isolationism, able men, later to assume major responsibility, entered the Department of State, among them George Kennan (1926) and Charles Bohlen (1929).

The turbulent agenda of the 1930's raised new problems. Economic affairs increased in importance, requiring something more than the conventional, essentially commercial reporting from the field and the filing of dispatches at home. Herbert Feis was brought into the De-

partment as Economic Advisor in 1932 and remained for many years a center for sophisticated and sensitive analysis of the international economy. From 1925 the Department undertook a part of the responsibility for the negotiation of the many reciprocal trade treaties which Hull sponsored with such ardor. Divisions for cultural affairs and international communications were set up to meet newly felt needs. In addition, the Department participated in preparing the briefs for the series of unsuccessful struggles with the Congress over neutrality legislation and assumed responsibility from 1936 for licensing American traffic in arms. Undersecretary Welles and Assistant Secretary Berle, both close to the President, participated in efforts to use American diplomatic influence to prevent war in 1938; and after war had begun Welles made his famous tour to Rome, Berlin, Paris and London in 1940 to explore the possibilities of an early peace.

Harding and Coolidge had given Hughes a free rein in the Department of State, and, although Coolidge was more active in foreign affairs with Kellogg in office, still the Department of State was the central instrument of foreign policy. Similarly, although Hoover made the central foreign policy decisions of his administration, Stimson was uniquely his agent. It is fair to say that from 1920 to 1933, within the narrow limits of American foreign policy, the professional service developed steadily in stature.

#### The Revolution in Diplomacy under Franklin Roosevelt

With the Roosevelt administration there began to operate forces which were radically to alter the role of the Department of State and

the American diplomatic tradition.

Unlike his three immediate predecessors, Roosevelt was actively interested in the details of diplomacy as well as broad foreign policy positions. He was unwilling to delegate day-to-day operations to the same degree as Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover; and like Wilson he was not prepared even to regard the Secretary of State as his sole agent in foreign affairs. Moley was his effective representative at the London Conference of 1933. He maintained communications with certain of his ambassadors (notably Bullitt) outside Departmental channels; he maintained a relationship of confidence for some years with Welles, the Under-Secretary, from which the Secretary of State was sometimes excluded. An increased proportion of the ambassadorships were given over to patronage, diluting the authority and prestige of the Foreign Service; and, as the war crisis developed, special presidential envoys were used to conduct major business.

There is no doubt that Franklin Roosevelt, quite aside from the vigor with which he assumed his constitutional prerogatives in foreign affairs, regarded Hull as responsible advisor over only a limited area of foreign policy and the Foreign Service as an instrument of limited usefulness to him. It was Hull's position in relation to the Senate that mainly commended him to the President. This was an important link and increasingly important as the diplomacy of the Second World War came to its climax, but the truly revolutionary factor which progressively affected the role of the Department of State was that the United States began to throw into the world power balance

its military, economic, political, and psychological weight. In early 1941 the United States began military and economic negotiations with the British. By the time of Pearl Harbor or shortly thereafter, the Department of State was surrounded by a Treasury pressing hard distinctive lines of foreign policy, the Lend-Lease Administration, the Board of Economic Warfare, and a White House group headed by Harry Hopkins. In addition, those charged with war production and shipping responsibilities had their hands on important levers of foreign policy which they often used with vigor on their own initiative. Moreover, within the Department of State the Foreign Service (of some 800 men) was all but engulfed by men on temporary appointments who were doing special jobs arising from the war effort.

The co-ordination of this sprawling new foreign affairs empire lay uniquely in the President's hands. Although the Department of State itself expanded greatly in the course of war years, and its personnel shared many of the adventures and enterprises of the time, its monopoly position under the President was broken, never to be regained in the post-war decade.

The diplomatic professional was not trained as an operator; and the United States had begun to operate throughout the world. The function of American representatives was not merely, as in the past, to gather information about the world environment, to deal with it as a given, or to negotiate with it, but also, as had never been attempted before, to change it in ways favorable to the national interest. On the eve of the Second World War the Foreign Service officer was at

his best a man skilled in reporting and in negotiation with other government officials. He was knowledgeable in the customs and history of the nations of the modern world, and he was sensitive to specific American interests and, occasionally, to the processes of American government and politics; but he was generally ignorant of military affairs, unskilled in detecting the political implications of military operations, and diffident in asserting his professional interests and responsibilities in the face of the military. Similarly, he was not skilled in economics and the operating problems of war production and supply. The new fields of propaganda and covert operations were, for the most part, alien to the gentlemanly American diplomatic tradition; and, outside a limited range of subject matter and technique, the diplomatic professional was an awkward amateur in the field of intelligence collection and analysis. It was inevitable, therefore, that when, in the days of the Second World War, he confronted not only a formidable array of operators in these unfamiliar areas but also the ablest men the country could throw up, working ardently at the peak of their energy and competence, the Foreign Service officer instinctively sought to protect his most cherished preserves rather than to take the offensive and ride herd on the sprawling new agencies.

Looking back from the early days of the Second World War, the American diplomatic tradition can be seen to have developed in three phases. The first embraced the first century or so of the nation's life. Then the nation's foreign policy business was handled person-

ally by the Secretary of State with the President in a series of well-spaced treaty negotiations or pronouncements while the day-to-day business of American diplomacy remained almost wholly consular. In the second phase, down to the Second World War, the scale of American involvement in the diplomacy of Euresia expanded, and an American diplomatic corps emerged after 1905. Except during the First World War and its aftermath, however, this corps represented a nation which refused to admit that it had persistent major interests beyond the Western Hemisphere; and, in consequence, the American diplomatic style between the wars was more nearly that of an observant wary minor power, with no bargaining instruments to bring to bear, than that of a major power. With the Fall of France in 1940 and the British demonstration of military viability in the autumn, the United States turned to the task of bringing its assets to bear in relation to its interests on a world-wide basis; and thus was launched the third and truly revolutionary phase of the American diplomatic tradition.



The Evolution of the American Military: 1900-1941Higher Staffs and Their Limits

Between 1898 and 1917 an effort was made to apply to the two military services administrative concepts more appropriate to a mature industrial society than the loose patterns of the nineteenth century. The divergent results left marks which are clearly recognizable down to the present day.

In achieving passage of the General Staff Act of 1903 Root won at least limited victory in a battle to centralize policy command of the ground forces in the hands of the Secretary of War, to whom the Army Chief of Staff would serve as a personal administrative aid over the whole area of army command. The technical bureaus of the army were thus, in principle, effectively subordinated to a common policy, and the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of War were brought into an administrative relationship likely to maximize their common interests and personal harmony. Root's victory in 1903 was by no means total; and it took a major showdown in 1912 with a powerful bureau chief, General Ainsworth, to make clear that the Secretary of War (then Henry Stimson) and his Chief of Staff (then Leonard Wood) were in fact jointly in command of the Army.

The Navy, after long controversy, adopted in 1915 a different plan which was more nearly in harmony with the nineteenth century tradition. The operating military functions of the Chief of Naval

Operations and the supply and training functions of the Bureaus remained essentially separate, with the Secretary of the Navy (in reasonably clear command of the bureau chiefs, but in a dilute and ambiguous relation to the CNO) an uneasy arbiter. This looser competitive equilibrium system was the ideological basis at least for the Unification Act of 1947; and it continues to have its supporters. It should be noted, however, that from Sims forward the Navy has had distinguished advocates of the Root system although it has not been generally prudent for them to express that advocacy openly when on active duty.

The concept of the Army General Staff met great resistance, and the powers of the General Staff were sharply circumscribed. In the first place, the technical and operating bureaus of the Army and Navy resisted the creation of a strong unit above them which might determine their policies and control their day-to-day business. Secondly, elements in the Congress not only feared instinctively the concentration of military men and thought which higher staffs represent in the military establishment but also cherished the particular connections with the services (and elements in the services) which committees could build up. Such ties gave members of Congress both power over elements in the military and increasing bargaining power in patronage issues involving the military.

The forces of bureaucratic and political interest converged with general scepticism about the importance of military planning divorced from day-to-day operations to keep the higher staffs, such as they were, relatively weak down to 1939.<sup>59</sup> In turn, the lack of strong Army and

and Navy general staffs inhibited sustained constructive thought and planning concerning the nature of the American security interest in the world. Reflecting this situation, the Army and Navy War Colleges were more concerned with military technique than national military strategy; and when high officers viewed the nation's security problem, they did so mainly to deplore what they regarded as the nation's obtuse and almost total disregard for its military security.<sup>60</sup>

With the notable exception of Captain Mahan--and, in a sense, of General Mitchell--the American military did not generate much serious formal thought concerning the nature of the national military interests in the world. The best the Army could produce was Leonard Wood, who, like Upton before him, advocated in the pre-1917 period a preparedness rooted merely in a generalized feeling that the nation's size and economic status made it appropriate for it to be prepared in a world of competitive nation states. Wood advanced no persuasive conception of the national interest from which could be derived any foreseeable danger requiring large ground forces. Captain Mahan--accepted by the Navy as a sport--transgressed the normal bounds of a professional military man in his analysis and prescriptions for the national interest. General Mitchell, although ostensibly court-martialed not for his views but for his manner of advocacy, was doomed to be a maverick not merely because he was struggling against powerful bureaucratic vested interests but also because the nature of force and its relation to the American interest were not popular themes--notably when the conclusion emerged that American invulnerability to direct attack was rapidly ending.

When war came to Europe in 1939, there was no consensus in the military concerning the character of the American interest in the Second World War. Eisenhower notes in his Crusade for Europe: 61

In early 1940, however, the United States Army mirrored attitudes of the American people, as is the case today and as it was a century ago. The mass of officers and men lacked any sense of urgency. Athletics, recreation, and entertainment took precedence in most units over serious training. Some of the officers, in the long years of peace, had worn for themselves deep ruts of professional routine within which they were sheltered from vexing new ideas and troublesome problems. Others, bogged down in one grade for many years because seniority was the only basis for promotion, had abandoned all hope of progress. Possibly many of them and many of the troops too, felt that the infantryman's day had passed. . . .

The greatest obstacle was psychological--complacency still persisted. Even the fall of France in May 1940 failed to awaken us--and by 'us', I mean many professional soldiers as well as others--to a full realization of danger. The commanding general of one United States division, an officer of long service and high standing, offered to bet, on the day of the French armistice, that England would not last six weeks longer--and he proposed the matter much as he would have bet on rain or shine for the morrow. It did not occur to him to think of Britain as the sole remaining belligerent standing between us and starkest danger. His attitude was typical of the great proportion of soldiers and civilians alike. Happily there were numerous exceptions whose devoted efforts accomplished more than seemed possible.

The professional military, sharing the presupposition of the society of which they were a part, and reflecting its strengths and weaknesses, were incapable of anticipating the problems the nation would face and the response the nation would make when those problems became real. As a result, higher planning in the American services developed for the most part out of a confrontation with specific situations and dangers rather than from firm and widely understood doctrines of the national military interest.

### World War I and the Inter-War Cutback

The First World War and its aftermath appeared to do little to alter that situation. The United States played at the margin a decisive role in the Allied offensive in 1918; but at the time of the Armistice the American forces had not been brought to full planned strength and their military experience was still limited. It would have been in the offensives of 1919 that the American Army would have operated in distinctive army groups; a serious allied strategic air offensive, possibly commanded by an American, would have been mounted; and fully trained and American-equipped forces would have been at their effective peak. The Armistice came, in short, at an intermediate stage of the American build-up.

The First World War did, indeed, give the United States and its professional military an extensive experience of the problems of large-scale coalition warfare far from American bases. It trained the American Navy in the problems of convoy in the face of submarines. It gave the ground forces an extensive experience of modern logistics and staff work; and it introduced the American military to two innovations--the tank and the military aircraft--as well as developing distinctive American methods and doctrines of artillery employment. But the formal return to isolationism after 1920 appeared to deny the continued relevance of the First World War experience in coalition continental warfare.

At a deeper level, the First World War left its permanent marks on a few key professional soldiers. Thus, when the problem of world war recurred, a high degree of continuity with the earlier experience

was built into American military leaders and, through them, into American military institutions. There was a greater linkage between the two world wars than the interwar hiatus would suggest.

Looked at in terms of military strength and technical development, however, the hiatus was real enough. The National Defense Act was passed June 4, 1920; the total regular army was set at a figure not to exceed 280,000 officers and men; and Wilson recommended to Congress that the long-term program of capital ship production launched in 1916 be resumed to give the United States for the long pull what was believed to be the essential requirement for a navy equal or superior to the British fleet. As Ganoe says:<sup>62</sup>

It looked as though the United States at last had learned its lesson—that we were going to quit ourselves like men and be strong. The army took on new hope of sufficiency and progress. It also took on the labor and responsibility of modernization.

New Services, such as air, chemical warfare, and tank, had to be placed on a firm basis. Other arms had to be revolutionized. New weapons had to be more thoroughly understood and properly assigned. The new army had to be welded into large tactical and administrative units which would not only take care of the United States proper and our island possessions but be a source of inspiration and knowledge in the home country.

But by 1923, as the weight of isolationism grew in the administration, the Congress, and the country, the armed forces were cut back by about 100,000 men and army appropriations were drastically reduced.<sup>63</sup> These reductions violated the plans which had gone into the National Defense Act of 1920 and left the services without adequate resources for experiment, innovation, and maneuver. A similar cutback occurred in naval strength and appropriations following the Washington Naval Conference of 1921-1922 .

### The Sluggish Pace of Innovation

In general, then, the American military establishments between the wars felt themselves constrained by inadequate funds and their energies were, in good part, devoted year after year to making a losing case for their enlargement. Within this difficult and discouraging framework they did what can only be judged a mediocre job with their major task: the building into the permanent military establishment of the lessons of the First World War and of keeping up with a military technology still in the process of evolution.

As Bush has said: <sup>64</sup>

When the First World War ended there were thus in existence nearly all the elements for scientific warfare. The principal devices had been tried out in practice. There were automatic guns, self-propelled vehicles, tanks, aircraft, submarines, radio communication, poison gases. More important, mass production had appeared; complex devices had been made reliable; the petroleum, automobile, chemical, and communication industries had approached maturity; thousands of men had become skilled in techniques. The long process of applying scientific results, all the way from the original academic theory or experiment to the finished device, had become ordered. The world was fully launched on mechanized warfare. For all the technical devices that were later to be used in the second war, except only atomic energy, practically every basic technique had appeared, waiting only for construction and development. And this was in 1918. . . .

What did the world do about it? It went to sleep on the subject. In this country, a decisive factor was the general atmosphere of isolation; here and elsewhere in the world there was a feeling--closer to hope than to conviction, but still a powerful feeling--that great wars were over. Fundamentally, lethargy gripped the techniques of warfare between the First and Second World Wars. These

who were familiar with modern scientific trends did not think of war, while those who were thinking of war did not understand the trends.

Some work did, indeed, go forward within the services on the key problems of innovation. An Army Industrial College was set up to work on problems and plans for industrial mobilization, reflecting the possibility of a second total national military effort. The ground forces moved on to a supply system based on motor transport; and, after some vacillation, the tank was finally woven into a sound conceptual structure of armored divisions. Important experimental work went forward on chemical warfare and in anti-aircraft; and the American artilleryman maintained the foundations for his primacy at rapid movement and concentrated fire. But this work was conducted with inadequate resources and against much bureaucratic resistance--often by a few men dedicated to their private insight at apparent cost to their professional careers.

In the Navy there were three major directions for innovation each of which was to have major significance in the Second World War: <sup>65</sup> naval aviation, the technique of amphibious landings, and the development of supply techniques for the Pacific Fleet which permitted sustained operations at vast distances from major bases. In the Navy as well as the Army, however, policy was dominated not by the requirements for innovation but by the conservative static establishment--in this period one built on the capital ship, to which most naval minds turned with comfort after what was hoped to be a transient concentration on convoy and anti-submarine problems in the First World War.



The First World War was regarded as a transient experience because the Navy, like the nation, did not accept the concept of a permanent American interest in the balance of power on the Eurasian land mass. If that lesson had been drawn from Mahan and the First World War--as well it might--the permanence and priority of the problems of convoying amphibious landings and anti-submarine warfare would have logically followed. But the Navy returned to a purer concept of sea power and focussed its attention on the balance between Japanese and American capital ships.

The cut in funds and in the scale of the armed services in 1922-1923 had, then a general weakening effect on all forms of research and development; and it served in a particularly acute way to exacerbate the problem of organizing an American air force. Cut to the bone, the instinct of the Army and Navy as institutions was to preserve what it had, to keep a minimum nucleus in reasonable trim and order.

It is possible, of course, that in peacetime, with the challenge and urgency of conflict removed, the services would in any case have lapsed into a rather conservative mood and policy. Innovation in a peacetime military establishment which is not planning to initiate war is notoriously difficult. And, as the story of the British tanks in the First World War indicates, innovation is difficult enough even in war, when the pressure of urgent need supports the innovator's case against inevitable human and institutional inertia and vested interest. Innovation was, therefore,

peculiarly difficult in a peacetime military establishment cut 30 or 40 per cent below its planned level, lacking either the intent to undertake the military initiative or any prevailing concept of the nature of future operations beyond the defense of the Western Hemisphere and possibly, in the case of the Navy, a capital ship engagement in the Pacific against Japan.

Only the stubborn sense of mission of a relatively few men provided the American Army and Navy with the innovational fundamentals which permitted the two services to move forward technologically as rapidly as they did in the Second World War. Although Admiral Sims cannot be regarded as typical, the military establishments contained and tolerated a sprinkling of men who lived and worked in the spirit of his injunction:<sup>66</sup>

It is not only the privilege but the duty of army and navy officers to direct letters of constructive criticism to their superior officers, and the officer who chooses to accept personal comfort in place of responsibility for such criticism is not only not worth his pay, but he is not worth the powder to blow himself to hell.

#### The Problem of Air Power

The one inescapable problem of innovation during the interwar years was air power, where a degree of momentum was maintained.<sup>67</sup> Here issues of military organization, prestige, and power interwove with questions of technical capability and with conflict over tactical and strategic doctrine to make air power, and its future organization and use in the military services, a chronic national issue.

The rise of aviation during the First World War as a serious military arm ancillary to naval and ground force operations, was a palpable fact; and strategic bombardment was sufficiently real to have justified careful plans for the 1919 offensive. More than that, within the Army a group of dedicated men emerged from the First World War with an intense vision of their service's future to which they were powerfully and personally committed. And in William Mitchell they had a bold, even reckless leader.

There were several quite specific separable issues which had to be settled.

1. In tactical support of troops should aviation be used simply to counter the enemy's air forces and for purposes of observation and close support, or were there distinctively tactical missions some distance behind the lines on which tactical air should concentrate? On this judgment hinged the question of whether, as a tactical instrument, fighters and light bombers should be attached to division, corps, army, or general army headquarters.

2. What was the military capability of heavy bombardment of the enemy's industrial plant and its consequences for his will to wage war: was air bombardment foreseeably an independent, decisive instrument of war?

3. What was the capability of heavy bombardment of the enemy's urban population centers and its consequences for morale and for his will to wage war: was air bombardment foreseeably an

independent, decisive instrument of politics?

4. What were the implications for the Navy of bombing aircraft aside from the airplane's role in reconnaissance, spotting, torpedo-carrying, anti-submarine patrol, and escort duty?

5. In the light of the emerging capabilities of aviation how should the services be organized: should there be an independent air force; should there be naval aviation distinct from an independent air force; if the air force was not to be independent, what importance, stature, and resource allocation should be made to aviation within the army and navy establishments?

This proved a formidable can of worms.

Between 1919 and 1934 there were fifteen public investigations concerning the appropriate role of air power in the American armed services. The cases for and against the role of air power as a military instrument were argued with a peculiar vehemence. Most of these who advocated increased allocations and stature for aviation were airmen who felt that they alone knew the meaning of air power and its future; and this private insight converged with a real sense of underdog persecution both for their service and in many cases for themselves personally within the military hierarchy. Those who argued against a substantial modification in military thought, practice, and organization in the light of air power had on their side the limited supplementary role of air power in the First World War. Moreover, they were protecting institutions and ideas to which their whole mature lives had been devoted.

In the course of twenty years of running battle---foreshadowing many of the air power issues of the Second World War and its aftermath---the following answers were evolved to the key questions. Tactically it was envisaged that some units would work intimately and directly with ground commands at the corps level or lower, but that self-contained general headquarters air force units might aid the ground battle by indirect support some distance from the battle-field, operating within an over-all ground support plan. With respect to strategic bombing, the Air Corps was permitted to develop a long-range bomber and bombardment doctrine---a task to which in the 1930's the air force devoted in many respects its best men and talents, straining Army directives to the limit; but at higher levels the issue of the future of strategic bombing was left unsettled, and air force activities in this direction were partly rationalized as an effort to defend the United States against

naval attack. The issue of precision attack on industrial installations versus area attack on morale was tipped towards the former by a technical rather than a doctrinal decision; that is, through the Air Corps' adoption of the Norden bomb sight and its concentration on a daylight heavy bomber. The Navy kept to itself a wide range of air functions; and within the Navy a more muted battle, parallel to that proceeding on the national scene, went forward between the advocates of carriers and those of capital ships. Spurred by the danger of air force competition, by the dramatic test sinkings of naval vessels from the air in 1921-1923, and by

their own aviation enthusiasts,<sup>68</sup> the Navy despite its devotion to the doctrine that the capital ship would remain the center of effective naval power, nevertheless laid the foundations for carrier warfare and produced a fighting carrier force capable of stemming the Japanese in the Coral Seas and before Midway in 1942.

In terms of organization the whole spectrum of possibilities was canvassed: an independent air force modeled upon the RAF and the British Air Ministry; a new cabinet agency on par with the Army and War Departments; a single department of defense with coordinate subdepartments for Army, Navy, and Air; the establishment of autonomy within the War Department for the Air Force equivalent to that enjoyed by the Marine Corps within the Navy; and the creation of an air force assigned to army general headquarters. The latter solution--minimal from the point of view of the Army airmen--was adopted in March 1935, after about a decade's experience under the transitional Air Corps Act of 1926. This solution had the advantage, for airmen, of permitting a concentration of command over a substantial proportion of the air force; but it had the disadvantages of dual control. Some tactical units remained under command at Army corps level, and at the top of the air force, control over training and indoctrination as well as procurement and development were in the hands of the office of the Chief of the Air Corps while the operational command of air force units in being lay with the commanding general of the General Headquarters air force. This clumsy dual arrangement was ended in March 1939, as American rearmament was at last seriously considered.

The tactical and operational doctrine developed by the Air Corps between the wars bore a close relation to basic and accepted military principle. Tactically, air force operations were based on concepts of attack, surprise, and concentration of massive air strength against decisive tactical and strategic objectives. In all this there was continuity with accepted American ground force and naval doctrine. The revolutionary content of air force thought lay in strategic bombardment; that is in the notion that air power could by-pass forces in the field and at sea and strike directly and decisively at the enemy's vital centers and his will to wage war:<sup>69</sup>

But the advent of air power which can go straight to the vital centers and entirely neutralize or destroy them has put a completely new complexion on the old system of war. It is now realized that the hostile main army in the field is a false objective and the real objectives are the vital centers. The old theory that victory meant the destruction of the hostile main army, is untenable. Armies themselves can be disregarded by air power if a rapid strike is made against the opposing centers, because a greatly superior army numerically is at the mercy of an air force inferior in number.

Here was the persistent vision of decisive independent air power enunciated before the First World War by Douhet, developed by Trenchard within the RAF and by Mitchell in the United States.

Both in their doctrines and in the building and planning of their operations air power advocates drifted towards the concept of precision bombing of militarily relevant industrial and transport installations, although certain pronouncements reflected a continued reliance on the consequences of bombing for morale and the national will to wage war. The Air Corps never settled the

question of whether it would seek in strategic bombing a military or a political decision.

### War Planning

The whole controversy over air power between the wars was colored and distorted by the ruling concepts of the national interest and the nation's military problem. Formally, the United States had returned to the Monroe Doctrine and to a policy limited to defense of the American continents. In such circumstances the protection of the ocean approaches was the only clear, persistent military requirement and the threat of the Japanese Navy the only barely realistic military problem on the horizon. And, in fact, the most professional and protracted military planning and war-gaming that proceeded between the wars centered on a possible naval engagement with the Japanese fleet.

A realistic conception of the role of the Army within these limits was virtually impossible beyond the difficult problem of defending the Philippines, which again attracted considerable realistic thought.

Air force advocates could and did argue that the foreseeable development of air power meant that the United States would become vulnerable in time to direct strategic attack; but between the wars the range and capabilities of bombing aircraft fell far short of constituting imminent threat. Practical men, faced with the problem of allocating scarce resources in annual budgets, were not



prepared to back fully the Air Corps vision. So far as the isolated continent of the United States was concerned, the case for United States strategic bombardment as a counterforce to an enemy air command was, over a reasonable planning horizon, weak. Nevertheless, the case for long-range bombers as a counternaval force, their possible long-term potentiality for intercontinental warfare, a degree of willingness to contemplate the possibility of war outside the terms of the Monroe Doctrine, and a degree of concession to ardent Air Corps sentiment permitted the development of the B-17 and the Norden bombsight and the tactical and strategic doctrines associated with precision bombing.

In a sense the big bomber advocates of the inter-war years faced the same problem as the advocates of capital ships in the Navy a half-century earlier: they could advance no truly rational argument for their new weapon to a nation whose image of its military problem was the defense of its coast lines. But, as with the earlier revolution in the Navy formal isolationist doctrine was softened to give the innovators some scope.

Despite some innovation at the level of military technology, the nation's ambiguity about the character of its interests inhibited realistic forward planning. In this setting, down to 1938, the war planners of the Army and Navy concentrated mainly on the question of Japan. The only coalition strategy envisaged until the late 1930's arose from informal discussions between officers of the British and American navies begun in 1934, in which the

possibility of a primary role for the United States was envisaged should war break out simultaneously in Europe and Asia.<sup>70</sup>

In war-planning the Japanese problem, a degree of controversy arose on whether the United States should attempt to hold a position in the Western Pacific or simply defend the line Alaska-Panama-Hawaii. After the passage of the Philippine Independence Act of 1934 the War Department generally took the defensive view; the Navy, which looked to the possible necessity of defeating the Japanese Navy decisively, was unprepared to envisage confining its operations East of Midway. In the years 1935-1938, during which Congress refused to permit the fortification of Guam and Japan opened its major campaigns in China, the Army-Navy controversy was compromised without being resolved: the agreed planning directive eliminated both references to the Navy's offensive mission and to the Navy's limitation of movement east of Midway. After 1938, as war in Europe became more likely, the planners began to consider action in relation to the European as well as the Pacific theater. In November 1938, after Munich, the Joint Army and Navy Board sent the Joint Planning Committee the following problem for study, the terms of which represented a military definition of the nation's commitments under the fundamentally isolationist assumptions of the time.<sup>71</sup>

. . .the various practicable courses of action open to the military and naval forces of the United States in the event of (a) violation of the Monroe Doctrine by one or more of the Fascist powers, and (b) a simultaneous attempt to expand Japanese influence in the Philippines. . . .

After 1938 the link between American interests and the fate of Britain and France began to be acknowledged; but, faithful to

the ruling mood and politics of the country, war planning at no stage reflected the possibility that American interests might best be protected by strong forehanded action designed to forestall the disintegration of the Eurasian power balance.

Like the nation, the military were dragged slowly from isolationism by the march of events in the face of a succession of palpable crises, for each of which the degree of prior preparation proved grossly inadequate. This lack of preparation extended from the ruling concepts of the national interest, through war-planning, the state of military technology, to a grossly inadequate order of battle.

Fortunately, the American professional tradition as of 1939 was adequate for the war the United States was about to fight. Its leadership was guided by certain relevant lessons from the experience of coalition in 1917-18; it recruited a reasonable sample of able men from the society; it indoctrinated them in the values of the society as well as in the disciplined requirements of their profession; it managed to select from them those most capable of command in war; it incorporated strategic concepts of operations and a tactical style well suited to the national temper; it developed a respect for logistics and a skill in supply which merged with the capabilities of the society, the tasks of bringing American power to bear, and the needs of celerity in combat. Down through the Second World War persistent weaknesses in intelligence, research and development, and in higher military thought and planning could

be borne without disaster, given the stage of history and of war-making in which the United States was caught up; for in the first half of the twentieth century the United States was, in fact, the strategic reserve of the West, and its allies twice provided sufficient time for the nation not only to mobilize its skills and resources but also to divest itself of the wishful illusion that its interests did not extend to the balance of power on the Eurasian mainland.

#### IV. A Conclusion

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#### The United States on the Eve of the Second World War

What, then, was the state of the nation at the outbreak of the Second World War?

In domestic affairs, national policy over the first four decades of the twentieth century, guided by the powerful, erratic, but not insensitive force of the democratic political process, had adjusted itself with reasonable success to the environment of a mature industrial society and to the potentialities of expanded consumption.

The depression had not been fully conquered; but the nation had absorbed, in continuity with its old political traditions and methods, a massive dose of institutional reforms. Not only had those reforms satisfied the dangerous frustrations and pressures which developed in the early 1930's, but they had come also to be widely accepted as a fact of life. Between, say, 1936 and 1940, as the momentum of the New Deal waned and more liberal Republicans moved towards leadership in their party, the domestic policies of the two major parties--if not their conventional rhetoric--moved closer together. As a national community the United States had weathered the 1930's without unbearable schism.

In military and foreign affairs the nation stood, moreover, in a position where, once its will and energy were released and its resources and talents put to work, a reasonably meaningful

victory in the Second World War was still possible; but the groping efforts to protect the national interest over the same period can be regarded as successful only in the sense that the nation still survived in 1940.

Indeed, there was something distinctly pathological about the United States in the late 1930's. It was, after all, almost a half century since the nation had slipped out from the restraining limits of the Monroe Doctrine and asserted status as a major power on the world scene; but until the German victories in the West of the spring of 1940 the United States stood frozen and inactive, clinging to distorted memories of a safe isolation long since rendered beyond the reach of attainable policy. The best that can be said is that, despite the national isolationist neurosis, much had happened since the turn of the century that had prepared the nation, almost despite itself, to face the Second World War and to shape a tolerable response to it.

Geographically, the old primacy of concern with the Western Hemisphere had persisted but changed its meaning. In the nineteenth century, in the framework of the Anglo-American mixture of stalemate and accord, the Western Hemisphere had been the sole major active theater for American diplomacy except for occasional forays in the Far East. The reasonably tough imperialist mood of Roosevelt and Taft in Latin America had proved a transient phase, giving way to more or less awkward, more or less successful efforts at creating a hemispheric atmosphere of good neighborhood. But in the

1930's, as the threat of war in Europe became increasingly real, and Roosevelt sought to assume the position of strategic reserve for beleaguered Euresian allies, the Western Hemisphere took on a new derivative role in American diplomacy--the role of a rear base the security of which is a minimum essential not merely for a successful defense of the United States but also for effective forward operations in Eurasia. It was a foreshadowing of this conception rather than simply the continued pursuit of hemispheric harmony which determined Roosevelt's tightening of his ties with Canada in the Kingston speech of August 18, 1938 and Hull's successful struggle to extract from the Lima Conference of December 1938 a declaration requiring mutual aid in case of indirect as well as direct aggression from outside the Hemisphere. By 1940 the Western Hemisphere had ceased to be a separate theater of more or less benevolent American hegemony and had to become part of the general American security problem of how to protect American interests in relation to a Eurasia the latent threat of which to the United States could not be contained by Britain and France alone.

In Asia, the Open Door and the Nine Power Treaty lay in the dust as Chiang Kai-shek retreated inland to Chungking, the Communists gathered strength in the countryside of the North, and the Japanese dominated the cities and rail lines of the Chinese mainland. But the nation had proved unwilling to translate its bankruptcy of purpose and policy in Asia over the period 1931-1939 into a formal recognition of Japanese legal rights in China. On the

books of the Department of State and somewhere in the nation's concept of its interest and destiny the Open Door was still alive.

In Europe there was no territorial concept equivalent to the notion of an independent China, the Maintenance of whose territorial integrity would hold stable the European structure of power. As parent at Versailles of the multiple national states of Eastern Europe, the United States might well have adopted some such Western Open Door concept; and, in fact, there was a better foundation in domestic politics for a persistent American concern with Eastern Europe than with China. But that had not happened. Wilson's advocacy of the national principle had never seriously penetrated even professional American diplomacy. It seemed as though Washington's vision of Europe stopped at Berlin, Moscow being something quite separate. American diplomacy in Europe centered in the 1930's on the effort to use American diplomatic and potential military weight to maintain a peace reasonably favorable to what gradually came to be acknowledged as the essential buffer area of Western Europe, led by Britain and France.

The road from benevolent posturing at Algeciras to decisive American responsibility at Versailles had been travelled too fast or, at least, under leadership and circumstances the nation did not sustain. As the crisis mounted in the 1930's, Roosevelt struggled to establish a position somewhere between that of his kinsman at Algeciras and Wilson's at Versailles -- that is, a position where the American weight in the European scales would be real and substantial, but one short of overt detailed American responsibility



and leadership. The effort was an anachronism. At Versailles a limited firm American commitment to support steadily a European settlement might well have sufficed, just as a limited American military effort in 1917-1918 sufficed to tip the scales in war; but during the 1930's the world arena of power had so changed its shape and balance that only an effort far beyond any attempted by Roosevelt would have broken the hopes and momentum of the Axis and persuaded Stalin that loyalty to collective security was the most attractive realistic alternative open to him. The rise of Japan, Italy, and the Soviet Union coupled with the decline of spirit, confidence, and unity of purpose in Britain and France between the wars drastically altered the terms on which the American interest in Eurasia could be protected. In concept, however, there was continuity in the American approach--to buttress the British and French against the Germans; and this negative approach to the problem of a stable European structure--implicitly leaving central responsibility with the British and French--was to persist, in a sense, down to 1947.

Roosevelt sought to define an American approach to Eurasia which embraced both Large View and Wilsonian concepts, concepts of power and persistent American ideals. He was, if anything, closer to the Large View than to Wilson, building his primary case on American self-interest in a world where aggression in Eurasia could not but damage the nation's physical security. Given a people and Congress disabused with crusades, this was the part of good

politics; but it conformed also to Roosevelt's early training, experience, and temperament in international affairs. His clarity and explicitness about the hard core of direct national interest was, however, linked to grand Wilsonian themes. Typical of this synthesis is the following passage from a speech of October 26, 1938, which foreshadowed Roosevelt's later Wilsonian evocation in the Four Freedoms:<sup>72</sup>

It is becoming increasingly clear that peace by fear has no higher or more enduring quality than peace by the sword.

There can be no peace if the reign of law is to be replaced by a recurrent sanctification of sheer force.

There can be no peace if national policy adopts as a deliberate instrument the dispersion all over the world of millions of helpless and persecuted wanderers with no place to lay their heads.

There can be no peace if humble men and women are not free to think their own thoughts, to express their own feelings, to worship God.

And there is no doubt that, in the end, popular support for American aid to the allied cause proceeded not simply from a heightened awareness of national security interests but also from a sense of national interest and responsibility to defeat Hitlerism as a way of life.

By the time the bombs fell on Pearl Harbor the rude foundations for an American consensus in foreign policy had been laid and confirmed: by the Lend-Lease debate, the acceptance of the risks of a shoot-at-sight policy in the Atlantic, and the American role at the Atlantic Conference in August 1941. An overwhelming majority of the nation accepted now the existence of a national interest--worth the expenditure of treasure and if necessary blood--

in a system of collective security; and it accepted the commitment to a measure of sustained responsibility for the shape of the postwar world. Moreover, all this was rooted in concepts which acknowledged the legitimacy of the national experience from 1898 to 1920--and which acknowledged error in the interwar years.

Backed by the weight of the nation's resources, managed by military professionals whose essential skills had somehow survived the desultory inter-war generation, the United States commanded the essentials for the role of strategic reserve to allies bearing the brunt of fighting in a great Eurasian war. And the concept of the national interest associated with the role of strategic reserve proved a reasonably adequate basis for the guidance of American policy so long as the Angle-Soviet-American alliance was sustained. But it was an inadequate basis on which to confront a world arena from which the power of Germany and Japan had been removed, where Britain and France were too weak to lead, and where, from the center of Eurasia, the tightly mobilized force of Russia was being thrust outward. The nation, having barely recaptured the will to face the tasks of strategic reserve, was promptly forced to assume responsibility--directly, in detail--from one end of Eurasia to the other. Neither Mahan nor Wilson nor those who followed their leads had prepared the United States for this role; and thus, as the gap between inter-war isolationism and the threat represented by the Axis was closed, a new gap opened promptly in its wake.

### Footnotes to Section I

<sup>1</sup>See especially, G. Stourzh, Benjamin Franklin and American Foreign Policy, Chicago: 1954, Chapters II-IV.

<sup>2</sup>For the structure of thought and evidence which lies behind this section, see the author's Process of Economic Growth, New York and Oxford, 1952; and, especially, "The Take-Off into Self-Sustained Growth," Economic Journal, March 1956.

<sup>3</sup>The Argentine certainly belongs in this group technically; but, like a number of the Latin American states, it has had to overcome a powerfully inhibiting set of values and social organization derived from Mediterranean Europe before its economic potential could be effectively explained. French Canada is a similar case, on a regional basis.

<sup>4</sup>On the other hand, just as Napoleon's defeat opened up the way to an unobstructed British exploitation of its international trading advantages so Northern victory was a necessary condition for the thrust to the Pacific and the guarantee of a unified national market within which the forces of industrialization could work their way out. Both wars also produced a group of men skilled in floating government bonds whose postwar enterprise enlarged the scope of the long-term capital market.

### Footnotes to Section II

<sup>5</sup>S. F. Bemis, A Diplomatic History of the United States, New York: 1954, pp. 38-39.

<sup>6</sup>See, especially, S. F. Bemis, John Quincy Adams, New York: 1949, Chaps. XVIII and XIX.

<sup>7</sup>G. H. Stuart, The Department of State, New York: 1949, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup>Henry P. Johnston, The Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay, Vol. I, pp. 440-41.

<sup>10</sup>Adee, for example, in the best American tradition of nineteenth century diplomacy, deplored Theodore Roosevelt's course in Panama. In a letter to Hay of August 18, 1903, on the possibility of the United States annexing Panama in case of a revolution of secession from Columbia he said: "Such a scheme could of course have no countenance from us--our policy before the world should stand like Mrs. Caesar, without suspicion.

Neither could we undertake to recognize and protect Panama as an independent state like a second Texas." (Stuart, op. cit., p. 199.)

<sup>11</sup>Joseph C. Grew, Turbulent Era, Boston: 1952, Vol. 1, pp. 12-13.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 20-21.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 24-25.

<sup>15</sup>Quoted, S. F. Bemis, op. cit., p. 364.

<sup>16</sup>P. Bradley (ed.), Democracy in America, New York: 1954, (Vintage edition), Vol. II, pp. 292-293. See also the angry reflections of E. Upton in 1880 on the costly, mercurial pattern of military performance over the first century of national experience, The Military Policy of the United States, Senate Document No. 494, 62nd Cong., 2nd Sess., U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. (third impression, 1912), pp. VII-XV.

<sup>17</sup>From "Report on the Art of War in Europe in 1854, 1855, and 1856," quoted R. E. and T. N. Dupuy, Military Heritage of America, New York: 1956, pp. 208-209.

<sup>18</sup>"Sentiments on a Peace Establishment," quoted by J. M. Palmer, America in Arms, New Haven: 1941, pp. 10-11.

<sup>19</sup>S. Huntington, The Soldier and the State, Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1957, p. 224.

<sup>20</sup>For a precise image of the interlacing of professional military and family life see, for example, Nancy Shea, The Army Wife, New York: 1941.

<sup>21</sup>Tocqueville, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 282.

<sup>22</sup>See, notably, S. Huntington, op. cit., pp. 257-69.

<sup>23</sup>E. Upton, Military Policy of the United States, Washington: 1912, (reprinted), Government Printing Office, pp. ix-x.

<sup>24</sup>Quoted, U. S. Military Academy, West Point, Official Register of Officers and Cadets, June 30, 1954, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup>See, for example, F. G. Hill, "Government Engineering Aid to Railroads Before the Civil War," The Journal of Economic History, Vol. XI, No. 3, summer 1951, and Hill's unpublished dissertation, "The Role of the Army Engineers in the Planning and Encouragement of Internal Improvements," Columbia University, 1950.

<sup>26</sup>E. E. Morison, Admiral Sims and the Modern American Navy, Boston, 1942, pp. 66-67.

<sup>27</sup>Morris Janovitz, The Professional Soldier and Political Power: A Theoretical Orientation and Selected Hypothesis (Working Paper), Bureau of Government Institute of Public Administration, University of Michigan, July 1953, p. 76.

<sup>28</sup>R. Ernest Dupuy (Col.), "Pass in Review," The Army Combat Forces Journal, October 1954, extracts drawn from pp. 24-34.

<sup>29</sup>Dennis Hart Mahan's dictum was: "There probably has existed no great engineer who, when called upon, has not shown himself a superior general; nor a great general who did not fully acknowledge and appreciate the art of fortification...", Quoted, R. Dupuy and T. Dupuy, op. cit., p. 285.

<sup>30</sup>See, for example, R. R. Glass and P. B. Davidson, Intelligence is for Commanders, Harrisburg, Pa. 1948, p. viii.

<sup>31</sup>See, for example, R. and T. Dupuy, op. cit., Chap. 10, "The American Civil War," especially pp. 212, 241, 248, 252, 264, 270, 273, 285-287, 291-292.

<sup>32</sup>E. E. Morison, op. cit., p. 289.

<sup>33</sup>A. Gleaves, Life and Letters of Stephen B. Luce, New York and London, p. 173.

<sup>34</sup>R. Niebuhr, The Irony of American History, New York, 1954: pp. 23-24.

<sup>35</sup>S. E. Morison, By Land and by Sea, New York: 1953, Chap. X.

<sup>36</sup>D. H. Lawrence, Studies in Classic American Literature, New York: 1955 (Anchor edition), p. 18.

<sup>37</sup>A. de Tocqueville, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 21.

<sup>38</sup>G. Myrdal, An American Dilemma, New York: 1944, Vol. 1, p. 21.

<sup>39</sup>Jean-Paul Sartre, "Americans and Their Myths," The Nation, Vol. 165 (October 18, 1947), pp. 402, quoted, K. Davis, H. Bredemeir, M. Levy, Modern American Society, New York: 1949, p. 48.

<sup>40</sup>Tocqueville, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 15-18.

<sup>41</sup>Morton White, Social Thought in America, Boston: 1957, pp. 12-13.

<sup>42</sup>For the setting and influences which lay behind Turner's paper, see Lee Benson, "Schelle Lorias' Influence on American Economic Thought" and "The Historical Background of Turner's Frontier Essay," Agricultural History, October 1950 and April 1951.

<sup>43</sup>One can, in fact, make quite a good case for dating the close of the nineteenth century with the crisis of 1873. See, for example, author's British Economy of the Nineteenth Century, Oxford, 1948, especially Chaps. III and VIII.

<sup>44</sup>F. J. Turner, The Frontier in American History, New York: 1920, p. 11.

<sup>45</sup>This sequence is taken, quite arbitrarily, from the headings under which this period is examined by S. Morison and H. Commager, in The Growth of the American Republic, Vol. II, New York: 1954.

<sup>46</sup>This section is heavily indebted to the work on the history of American administrative methods by Professor Alfred Chandler of M. I. T.

<sup>47</sup>For a more extended analysis of this period and of the underlying phenomena which falling agricultural prices reflected, see the author's British Economy of the Nineteenth Century, Chaps. III, IV, and IX, and The Process of Economic Growth, Chaps. 6 and 9.

<sup>48</sup>The role of non-agricultural interests in bringing about government regulation of business in this period is developed by Lee Benson, Merchants, Farmers, Railroads; Railroad Regulation and New York Politics, 1850-1887, Cambridge, Harvard, University Press, 1955.

<sup>49</sup>B. Thomas, Migration and Economic Growth, Cambridge, England, 1954, p. 112.

<sup>50</sup>McKinley's famous statement to his Methodist brethren indicates even more clearly how decisive to the resolution of the American moral dilemma was the likelihood of some other power moving into the imperial vacuum:

The truth is I didn't want the Philippines and when they came to us as a gift from the gods, I did not know what to do about them...I sought counsel from all sides--Democrats as well as Republicans--but got little help. I thought first we would take only Manila; then Luzon; then other islands, perhaps, also. I walked the floor of the White House night after night until midnight; and I am not ashamed to tell you, gentlemen, that I went down on my knees and prayed Almighty God for light and guidance more than one night.

And one night late it came to me this way--I don't know how it was, but it came: (1) that we could not give them back to Spain--that would be cowardly and dishonorable; (2) that we

could not turn them over to France or Germany--our commercial rivals in the Orient--that would be bad business and discreditable; (3) that we could not leave them to themselves--they were unfit for self-government--and they would soon have anarchy and misrule over there worse than Spain's was; and (4) that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellow-men for whom Christ also died. And then I went to bed, and went to sleep and slept soundly..." Quoted, Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People, New York, 1950, p. 520.

<sup>51</sup>Walter Millis, Arms and Men: A Study in American Military G. P. Putnam, New York, 1956, p. 139.

<sup>52</sup>A. Gleaves, Life and Letters of Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce, New York, 1925. See, especially, Luce-Thompson letter of August 8, 1877, pp. 168-170.

<sup>53</sup>Strictly speaking, the American Navy did have the opportunity to "cross the T" during the battle of the Philippines; but the battleship engagement was not the central or climactic occasion envisaged in the classic naval doctrine.

<sup>54</sup>Tocqueville, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 169-171.



Footnotes to Book Two

1. L. B. Namier, Avenues of History, Macmillan, New York, 1952, p. 5.
2. For an excellent review of the classical literature in these terms see L. Robbins, The Theory of Economic Policy in English Classical Political Economy, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1952; also the analysis by G. Myrdal, The Political Element in the Development of Economic Theory, (tr. by Paul Streeten), Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1953.
3. See, notably, R. H. Gabriel, The Course of American Democratic Thought, The Ronald Press, New York, 1940.
4. See, for example, M. Meyers, The Jacksonian Persuasion, Stanford (Calif.), 1957.
5. A trend period refers to an interval longer than a decade (before 1914, 20-30 years) during which there is a persistent set of tendencies in general prices, relative prices, agricultural income, interest rates, and real wages. The author has identified these as follows: 1793-1815; 1815-1848; 1848-1896; 1896-1920. Certain trend period characteristics are associated also with the intervals 1920-1935; 1935-1956. The author holds that trend periods have resulted, essentially, from distortions in agricultural capacity caused, in turn, by wars and by acreage overexpansion in the course of the opening up of new agricultural territories. For further discussion, see the author's British Economy, Chap. 1 and Process of Economic Growth, Chap. 6. Also, for an alternative interpretation of the trend period phenomenon, J. Schumpeter, Business Cycles, McGraw Hill Book Co., New York, 1939.
6. Historical Statistics of the United States, 1769-1945, G. P. O., Washington, D. C., 1949, p. 65, adapted from tables D62-76 and D77-89.
7. The connection between expanded welfare and the increase in professional and white-collar classes is familiar enough. The extent to which the semi-skilled worker becomes a central figure in a modern economy is less often noted. As machines become more refined they require lesser degrees of skill; and the flexibility of the unskilled worker--familiar (say) with machine operations in general but not committed to a highly specialized technique of production--is, under certain circumstances, a positive advantage. In terms of supply, the semi-skilled worker may have fared disproportionately well--in comparison with the white collar worker--because the non-economic attractions of white collar work may have yielded a relatively large supply for this category.
8. L. Corey, "Problems of the Peace: IV. The Middle Class," Antioch Review, V (Spring 1945), pp. 68-87. Corey's categories are made up as follows: farmers, owners and tenants; working class, manufactures, mining, transportation, and construction, farm laborers, other workers; old middle class, business, professional; new middle class, technical-managerial, professional, clerical, salespeople, public service. Corey

sums up as follows: (pp. 71-72)

While the working class multiplied six times from 1870 to 1940, the middle class as a whole multiplied eight times and the new middle class sixteen times. The absolute numbers of the industrial proletariat has remained virtually stationary since 1920 while the new middle class scored an increase of 50 per cent. From an almost negligible proportion in 1870 the new middle class moved up to become 25 per cent of all gainfully occupied persons. Technical-managerial and professional employees alone have multiplied thirteen times since 1870, from 330,000 to 4,772,000.

9. S. Fabricant, The Output of Manufacturing Industries, 1899-1937, The National Bureau of Economic Research, New York, 1940, p. 89.

10. The aircraft industry, always closely linked to military requirements, was the first to develop close ties to government research yielding, between the wars, the laminar flow wing and an efficient streamlined cowling for aircooled engines--both products of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics.

11. As will appear, the dating of the first period is somewhat ambiguous. On strictly economic grounds there is a good case for making the break in 1920, when agricultural prices fell radically, relative to industrial prices, setting the framework for the postwar decade. On political and social grounds, however, the Progressive Era ends with American entrance into the First World War.

12. P. Douglas, Real Wages in the United States, 1890-1926, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1930. See, especially, summary pp. 581-590.

13. As R. Hofstadter has pointed out, however, this shift was accompanied by the passage of an impressive series of agricultural measures during the Progressive period ranging from the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906 to the Federal Farm Loan Act and the Warehouse Act of 1916. See The Age of Reform, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1955, Chap. iii, especially pp. 117-118.

14. From its peak in 1919 the purchasing power of farm prices fell to a trough in 1921. There was mild recovery to the mid-1920's; but farm prices slumped and surpluses built up before the crash of 1929, when relative farm prices were lower than they had been a decade earlier. The subsequent fall to the trough in February 1933 was some 43 per cent.

15. A. H. Hawley, The Changing Shape of Metropolitan America, The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1956.

16. By historical standards the length of the post-1929 slump (about three years) is not abnormal, notably after so prolonged an upswing.

17. The most substantial American effort to analyze the factors determining the great depression is that of the Brookings Institution, including particularly the following volumes: E. G. Nourse and his associates, America's Capacity To Produce, The Brookings Institution, Washington, 1934; The Recovery Problem in the United States, The Brookings Institution, Washington, 1936; and S. Bell, Productivity, Wages, and National Income, The Brookings Institution, Washington, 1940. The three works devoted most directly to the American boom, slump, and limited recovery are written by non-American economists: Volume II of Joseph Schumpeter's Business Cycles is mainly devoted to the great depression; and Lionel Robbins' essay on the subject, The Great Depression, Macmillan & Co., London, 1934. The best single analysis is that of T. Wilson, Fluctuations in Income and Employment, Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., London, 1942 (first edition) which examines critically and tests empirically alternative hypotheses in answer to the two questions. Interesting observations on causation are made, in the context of J. K. Galbraith's narrower focus in The Great Crash, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1955, pp. 173-193; and in the broader focus of A. M. Schlesinger, Jr.'s The Crisis of the Old Order, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1957, especially pp. 159-160.

18. These judgments stem from the author's conception of the relation between growth, trend periods, and cycles presented in The Process of Economic Growth, especially Chaps. 4-6. The reader may wish to compare this view with Wilson's, op. cit., especially pp. 170-172.

19. For more extensive discussion of leading sectors, see the author's "Trends in the Allocation of Resources in Secular Growth" in Economic Progress, Leon H. Dupriez (ed.), Louvain, 1955, (off-prints available from Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.)

20. The maximum possible unemployment in a modern industrial society still operating short of chaos (unlike, say, Russia in 1917 or Germany in 1945) is not, of course, a purely technical limit: the proportion of income spent varies even in the short period over a considerable range; and "minimum" capital requirements for a given output is a reasonably elastic concept.

21. Wilson's answer, for example, is as follows (op. cit., p. 186):

We have now discovered six important explanations of the prosperity of the New Era on the one hand, and the comparative stagnation of the 'thirties on the other. First, there was the huge increase in the stock of capital in the years before the slump in 1929--in this case, the surplus stock of buildings is the most striking example; second, there was a much less marked divergence between the fortunes of different industries, which suggests that innovations in technique, changes in taste, and the invention of new commodities were less important during the later period; third, the rate of growth of productivity had declined;

fourth, there was a decline in the foreign balance; fifth, the political atmosphere was unfavorable; and sixth, the high wage policy of the New Deal was a dangerous method of attempting to achieve what was undoubtedly the supremely important need of the country--a redistribution of income in favour of the working and spending class in order to offset the partial exhaustion of investment opportunities. Unfortunately, we can do no more than guess at the relative importance of these factors, unless some more refined method of inquiry is employed, but we may conclude that taken together they are sufficient to account for the main differences between the two postwar decades in the United States.

22. In economists' language a distinction is being drawn here between booms whose leading sectors are based on a radical reduction in costs or on the expansion of capacity in consumption items of low income elasticity of demand and booms whose leading sectors are based on expansion of consumption in items of high income elasticity of demand. Or, put another way, the accelerator becomes important relative to exogenous investment as average income and consumption levels rise to the point where growth is dominated by expanded consumption of durable consumer goods and services.

23. The business cycle in the United States, at the close of the eighteenth and in the early nineteenth centuries, was tied, in the first instance, to the relatively short rhythm of inventory fluctuations in foreign trade, in turn related to the luck of the harvests. From the 1830's at least, however, with its great boom in cotton land and Western improvements in canals and early railroads, accompanied by large imports of British capital, the element of long-term investment was powerful; and with it came a century of (about) nine-year cycles.

24. For a review of the various strands of thought which were ultimately brought to bear in New Deal policy see A. Schlesinger, Jr., The Crisis of the Old Order, Chap. 23.

25. See H. Hoover, The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover, The Great Depression, 1929-1941, Macmillan, New York, 1952, especially Chap. 4.

26. There is a sense in which Hoover has a real complaint to make against history or the luck of the draw. Roosevelt came to power immediately after or at the time of the cyclical low point. There is little reason to believe that the depression would have deepened further in the course of 1933, irrespective of which candidate was elected. Hoover, in seeking to stem a powerful depression, was thus faced with a more difficult job than Roosevelt, in encouraging forces in any case ready for a revival of some kind. Moreover, it is at least arguable that Hoover's concepts and degree of initiative would have yielded over the next six years at least as much recovery as that achieved under the New Deal. A New Deal reply might be that Roosevelt, if in power from 1929, would not have been as inhibited as Hoover is using the powers of

the state to stem the depression; and that Hoover, if in power from 1933, would not have carried out the basic reform in social security, farm policy, banking, and securities control which, in the longer run, constitute major bulwarks against a recurrence of major depression.

27. For interesting observations on differences between the operational--and somewhat opportunist--mood of the New Deal as opposed to the moralistic stance of the Progressives, see R. Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, Chap. VII. James MacGregor Burns (in Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox, Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York, 1956, p. 174) writes that F. D. R.'s Executive Council and National Emergency Council, although "too big to act effectively, did fulfill a function in the first headlong, exuberant, haphazard months of the New Deal...they exposed the heads of thirty or forty agencies firsthand to Roosevelt's contagious drive and enthusiasm. Sitting confidently in the midst of his admiring lieutenants, telling stories, making jokes, knocking heads together, urging action, demanding quick reports and recommendations, Roosevelt almost singlehanded gave pace and direction to the New Deal battalions.

'After spending an hour with the President, an ordinarily rather sober agency chief exclaimed to a friend, 'I could eat nails for lunch!'

28. E. C. Brown, ("Fiscal Policy in the 'Thirties: A Reappraisal," American Economic Review, XLVI, December, 1956, pp. 857-879), on the basis of new careful estimates of the net effect of governmental outlays (federal, state, and local) on employment concludes: "Fiscal policy...seems to have been an unsuccessful recovery device in the 'thirties--not because it did not work, but because it was not tried." So far as the Federal Government is concerned the net effect of fiscal policy was somewhat more expansionary in 1934-1936 than in 1931-1932, but only mildly so. In 1929 and 1937 federal fiscal policy was quite strongly deflationary.

29. For an analysis of the 1937-1938 recession see especially K. D. Roose, The Economics of Recession and Revival, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1954.

30. The dilemma of a conservative, in the cool tradition of Quincy Adams, on the eve of the Spanish-American War, is well illustrated by Elihu Root's statement:

...Fruitless attempts to hold back or retard the enormous momentum of the people bent upon war would result in the destruction of the President's power and influence, in depriving the country of its natural leader, in the destruction of the President's party...I deplore war. I have earnestly hoped it might not come. I deny the obligation of the American people to make the tremendous sacrifices which it must entail, not only of the treasure but of life, for the purpose of aiding the Cubans or any other people. I agree with the President that it is not his duty to sacrifice his own people for the benefit of others, but I cannot doubt that if the American people wish to make war upon Spain because of her acts in Cuba, if they are

willing to make the sacrifices required, they have a moral right to do so. The Cuban cause is just. The Cubans are exercising their inalienable rights in their rebellion.... When we take up their just quarrel we are doing no wrong to Spain and violating no law divine or international. I prefer that we should not do it; I don't think we are bound to do it; I would prevent it if I could; I think the President has been right in trying to prevent it; but if it is to be done, then every American ought to be for the war heart and soul, and first and foremost and without the slightest question should be the President of the United States. (P. Jessup, Elihu Root, Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1938, Vol. I, p. 197.)

31. William E. Livezey, Mahan on Sea Power, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Okla., 1947, pp. 260-261.

32. See, especially, P. Jessup, op. cit. On his own testimony the pattern of Root's actions was strongly influenced by Upton's Military Policy of the United States and Spenser Wilkinson's account of the German General Staff, The Brain of an Army.

33. J. McCloy, The Challenge to American Foreign Policy, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.), 1953, especially pp. 33-46.

34. R. E. Osgood, Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1953, p. 77.

35. Wilson, quoted in A. S. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910-1917, Harper, New York, 1954, p. 119.

36. Walter Lippmann, U. S. War Aims, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1944, pp. 108-109.

37. G. F. Kennan, American Diplomacy 1900-1950, Mentor Book, New York, 1954, pp. 38-39.

38. There was, of course, an alternative to the American linking of Chinese independence with the maintenance of the balance of power in Eastern Eurasia. China could, in effect, be so parcelled up among the major powers that no single power dominated the area. This, in effect, was for long the British objective. As Chinese nationalism developed momentum after 1900, this view became progressively less realistic as a long-run basis for a China policy. Its last appearance, in a sense, was in the postwar advice of General Wedemeyer and others to Chiang Kai-shek that he leave North China, for the time being, in Communist hands and consolidate effectively his position in the South, and in Wedemeyer's last-ditch proposal to establish a temporary major power consortium in Manchuria.

39. Italy joined the London negotiations of 1930 as, nominally, a major naval power.

40. H. L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War, Harper, New York, 1948, p. 159.

41. A phrase from Stimson's famous letter to Senator Borah of February 23, 1932, outlining the American position of Japanese aggression in China.

42. See, for example, G. Kennan, op. cit., pp. 49-52. If, as appears to be the case, the United States as a society requires a convergence of ideological and power interests to sustain a foreign policy when under pressure, it may be doubted that the United States could realistically have pursued with success a policy of systematic support for Japan on the Asian mainland over the period 1900-1941, at the expense of Chinese unity and national integrity.

43. See, especially, J. C. Grew, Turbulent Era, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1952, Vol. II, especially pp. 1291-1375, and H. Feis, The Road to Pearl Harbor, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1950, especially pp. 271-281.

44. H. Feis, op. cit., p. 275.

45. J. C. Grew, op. cit., pp. 1373-1375.

46. For an able summary of American policy and mood in this period, see F. R. Dulles, America's Rise to World Power, 1898-1954, Harper, New York, 1954, Chap. 9.

47. See, for example, the discussion of this mood in E. F. Goldman (rev. ed.), Rendezvous with Destiny, Alfred A. Knopf (Vintage Books), New York, 1956, Chap. XVI. Goldman concludes (pp. 290-291):

As Administration foreign policy emerged in the late Thirties, liberal opinion split into three groups quite similar to those of pre-1917 days--the collective--security faction, the die-hard isolationists, and the middle group, isolationist in its yearnings but ready to be persuaded that collective security, perhaps even war, was the wise course. But there was an important difference between the liberal situation of 1914-17 and that of the late Thirties. As American entrance into World War I came on, both the reform President and most of the reform movement were middle-of-the-roads in foreign policy. In the late Thirties the reform President was leading the collective-security faction while most of the liberals were convinced anti-interventionists, tending toward a genuine isolationism.

48. The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: The Cabinet and the Presidency, Macmillan, New York, 1952, pp. 377-378, quoted Dulles, op. cit., p. 168. See also Harry Hopkins' 1939 speech at Grinnell College quoted in R. E. Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins, Harper, New York, 1948, pp. 19-21, notably the following passage, p. 21:

With the world situation the way it is today, almost a mad house, with hate and fear sweeping the world; with this nation almost the last stronghold of Democracy; with the American people determined to maintain that Democracy, the kind of government that we have is extremely important, and it is the one thing in America that is important.

49. C. Hull, Memoirs of Cordell Hull, Macmillan, New York, 1949, Vol. I, p. 536.

50. For an account of Roosevelt and Hull's operations on short Congressional tether, 1933-1939, see, especially, B. Rauch, Roosevelt from Munich to Pearl Harbor, a Study in the Creation of a Foreign Policy, Creative Age Press, New York, 1950, Chaps. 2-6. For the latter stage of the Administration's struggle to free the nation's hands, see notably W. L. Langer and F. E. Gleason, The Challenge to Isolation, 1937-1940, Harper, New York, 1952.

51. From this perspective it is instructive to examine Ciano's Diary, 1939-1943, for the period down to the outbreak of the European War (ed. by M. Muggeridge, W. Heineman, Ltd., London, 1947, pp. 1-146). The stream of consciousness of European and Axis thought flows through these pages. In the present context the lack of reference to the United States--the assumption that it was irrelevant to the issues coming to climax--is the most striking characteristic of Ciano's thought and of those he reports. Europe too, had developed between the wars of its own parochialism, as widely out of touch with the shape of the world arena of power as that which had developed in the United States. In some hundred and fifty pages the following are the only four references to America and its role in the period January-August 1939:

...The Duce is more and more favourable to a bilateral alliance with Berlin, leaving out Tokyo. As our ally, Japan will definitely push the United States into the arms of the Western democracies. (March 3, p. 38.)

...Roosevelt has sent a message proposing a ten years' truce. At first the Duce refused to read it, then he defined it: "A result of infantile paralysis." (April 15, p. 70.)

...The American ambassador is very anxious to explain to me a conversation which the Duce had with him some days ago at the Quirinal. He is particularly resentful because Mussolini said that America is in the hands of the Jews. He wanted to deny this, but used very weak arguments. He stressed one point, namely that the American people who originated in Europe, have all made up their minds to concern themselves in European affairs, and it would be foolish to think that they would remain aloof in the event of a conflict. I reported this to the Duce, who did not seem to be very much alarmed.



During the afternoon I received Allesandri, ex-President of Chile and a good friend of Italy. He has been defeated by a popular-front coalition, but he considers the Red regime to be ill-suited to his country, and foresees, he says with horror, that he will be recalled to power. Like all Americans he is anxious about the international situation, and imagines there may be a formula that will have the magic power to stifle all controversies. (May 17, pp. 88-89.)

Philips, in the evening, brings me a long message from Roosevelt for the King. It doesn't seem to me to make much sense. (August 23, p. 133.)

52. F. Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1952, Vol. I, The Apprenticeship, p. 300.

53. Ibid., Vol. II, The Ordeal, 1954, p. 19.

54. The somewhat divergent strands in the Large View tradition represented by the two men is well illustrated by Roosevelt's affectionate identification with the Navy, Stimson's profound regret that "the Navy Department had never had an Elihu Root. 'The Admirals' had never been given their comeuppance." (Stimson and Bundy, op. cit., p. 506.) See also Stimson's differences with Roosevelt on the role of the Army in military government, based on Stimson's loyalty to the lessons of the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico as read in the War Department (pp. 555-556).

55. From a letter to the author.

56. Despite the incomplete and polemical character of Mitchell's writings they constitute, in their originality and substance, an appropriate parallel to Mahan's more erudite, less flamboyant, but no less scattered and polemical special pleading for new concepts. H. H. Ransom, for example, (The Air Corps Act of 1926, doctoral thesis, Princeton University, August 1953, pp. 169-170) has summarized Mitchell's view in the following assertions.

Although by 1926 many of Mitchell's concepts of air power were still hazy, they included the following general propositions:

1. The development of military aircraft called for a complete and radical change in United States defense organization and doctrine of war, with "air power" assuming the predominant role in all phases of future military operations.

2. Airplanes were constantly improving, they were the "great developing power;" ground armies were in a static stage; surface navies were obsolete or rapidly obsolescing.

3. Control of the air, by destruction of the enemy's air forces, is the primary mission of aircraft; no military or naval operations could be successfully carried out without supremacy of the air.

4. The combat functions of surface navies should rapidly be assumed by aircraft and submarines; the basic function of an Army in the United States, with a proper air force, would be to serve as a domestic constabulary.

5. Wars could be quickly fought and won in the air; with control of the air an enemy could be defeated quickly by strategic bombing, by the destruction of a nation's power to make war.

6. Official naval doctrine was fallacious, particularly its emphasis upon the role of surface craft, and its designation of the battleship as the capital ship.

7. Aircraft could certainly sink by bombing any surface vessel in the Navy.

8. Older services, conservative by nature, were clinging selfishly to outmoded doctrines and organizations; and from them Congress and the public were receiving false information.

9. Because of the potentialities of strategic bombing, including gas warfare, air power could serve as a deterrent to future wars. Populations threatened by total war from terrifying new aerial weapons would become more reluctant to sacrifice themselves to almost certain death.

10. Airmen belonged to a special fraternity of military fighters, which made it difficult for the other services to understand them.

11. These facts called for the immediate establishment of a Department of Aeronautics, on a co-equal basis with the Army and Navy, with personnel apart from the Army and Navy, all under a Department of National Defense.

12. Finally, the "former isolation of the United States" was a "thing of the past."\* America was no longer relatively invulnerable to effective and sudden enemy attacks.

\* Mitchell, Winged Defense, the Development and Possibility of Modern Airpower - Economic and Military, G. P. Putnam & Sons, New York, 3rd printing, 1926, p. xi.

57. See, for example, Jessup, Root, Vol. 2, p. 108.

58. Secretary Lansing himself was formally second in command on Wilson's five man peace commission in 1919, but played no significant role at Versailles, his occasional initiatives being coldly received by Wilson. Grew had an active but purely administrative function as Secretary General of the American delegation. In addition the Department of State assigned seven officers to the secretariat.

59. A member of Colonel House's staff (Walter Lippmann) described to the author the following incident: In preparation for the Balkan issues which might arise at the Versailles Conference, he called on the Secretary of State. He found some difficulty in making clear the issues involved in the Balkans and asked permission to use the Secretary's map. He drew down the map and found that the Secretary of State's map of Europe had not been revised since the First Balkan War, and still showed the area as part of the Turkish empire.

60. Others who entered diplomacy in these years and later achieved distinction were: Norman Armour (1915), Sumner Welles (1915), Stanley Hornbeck (1918), William Castle (1919), James Dunn (1920), John Hickerson (1920), Herschel Johnson (1920), and Robert Murphy (1920).

61. The major initiative toward a linking of military and diplomatic policy undertaken by the Navy at the end of the First World War to insure clear and firm guidance for military planning, was discouraged by Secretary of the Navy Daniels, as well as by Wilson in 1919; and in 1921, Secretary of State Hughes declined an invitation from the Secretaries of Navy and War that a civilian official sit with the Joint Army-Navy Board "when matters affecting national policy" were under consideration. W. R. Schilling, "Civil-Naval Politics in World War I," World Politics, VII (July, 1955), pp. 572-591, esp. p. 575.

62. See, for example, Admiral Fiske in 1914, B. A. Fiske, From Midshipman to Rear Admiral, The Century Co., New York, 1919, p. 550; Admiral King in 1932, E. J. King and W. M. Whitehill, Fleet Admiral King, Norton, New York, 1952, pp. 236-237; General MacArthur in 1935, quoted by R. E. Dupuy, Men of West Point, Sloane, New York, 1951, p. 156.

63. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe, Doubleday & Co., Garden City (N. Y.), 1948, pp. 7-8.

64. W. A. Gance, The History of the United States Army, D. Appleton-Century Co., New York; London, 1942, p. 482.

65. Ibid., p. 488.

66. Vannevar Bush, Modern Arms and Free Men; A Discussion of the Role of Science in Preserving Democracy, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1949, pp. 7-8.

67. D. W. Knox, "The United States Navy Between World Wars," in S. E. Morison, History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, Vol. I, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1947, especially pp. xlvii-lviii.

68. E. E. Morison, Admiral Sims, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1942, p. 433.

69. For the evolution of air power during and after the First World War, see, notably, H. H. Ransom, op. cit.

70. As Ransom points out (op. cit., p. 183) the mood of (say) Mitscher in the Navy did not differ in essentials from that of Mitchell in the Army in the early 1920's.

71. W. Mitchell, Skyways, Philadelphia, 1930, p. 255; quoted in W. F. Craven and J. L. Cate (editors), The Army Forces in World War II, University of Chicago Press, 1948, Vol. I (Plans and Early Operations), p. 42.

72. For the best short account of interwar planning see M. Matloff, and F. M. Snell, The United States Army in World War II, Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942, Office of the Chief of Military History, Washington, D. C., 1953, Chap. 1, pp. 1-10.

73. Matloff and Snell, op. cit., pp. 5-8. In an effort to clarify the military planning problem five terms of reference were set up and given priority covering alternative definitions of the military meaning of the American interest in a forthcoming war. The terms of reference of these so-called Rainbow Plans, are arrayed here in ascending degree of commitment assumed in the external world by the United States. Their numbers indicate the order of priority and urgency set for the planners by the Joint Board on June 30, 1939:

a. Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan  
Rainbow No. 1

Prevent the violation of the letter or spirit of the Monroe Doctrine by protecting that territory of the Western Hemisphere from which the vital interest of the United States can be threatened, while protecting the United States, its possessions and its sea-borne trade. This territory is assumed to be any part of the Western Hemisphere north of the approximate latitude ten degrees south.

This plan will not provide for projecting U. S. Army Forces farther south than the approximate latitude ten degrees south or outside of the Western Hemisphere.

d. Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan  
Rainbow No. 4

(1) Prevent the violation of the letter or spirit of the Monroe Doctrine by protecting all the territory and Governments of the Western Hemisphere against external aggression while protecting the United States, its possessions, and its sea-borne trade. This Plan will provide for projecting such U. S. Army Forces as necessary to the southern part of the South American continent or to the Eastern Atlantic.

c. Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan  
Rainbow No. 3

(1) Carry out the missions of the Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan--Rainbow No. 1.

(2) Protect United States' vital interests in the Western Pacific by securing control in the Western Pacific, as rapidly as possible consistent with carrying out the missions in a.

b. Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan

Rainbow No. 2

(1) Provide for the missions in a.

(2) Under the assumption that the United States, Great Britain, and France are acting in concert, on terms wherein the United States does not provide maximum participation in continental Europe, but undertakes, as its major share in the concerted effort, to sustain the interests of Democratic Powers in the Pacific, to provide for the tasks essential to sustain these interests, and to defeat enemy forces in the Pacific.

e. Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan

Rainbow No. 5

(1) Provide for the missions in a.

(2) Project the armed forces of the United States to the Eastern Atlantic and to either or both of the African or European Continents, as rapidly as possible consistent with carrying out the missions in a above, in order to effect the decisive defeat of Germany or Italy, or both. This Plan will assume concerted action between the United States, Great Britain, and France.

The one logical case not examined was, of course, that which the United States ultimately confronted; namely, a combination of the maximum missions defined in Rainbow 2 for the Pacific and Rainbow 5 for the European theaters, brought about by a declaration of war against the United States by the Axis powers.

The priority in which these plans were considered was determined, of course, not merely by the character of underlying American isolationism, but also by the likely position of the United States under differing assumptions about the enemy's first moves and their relative success. American military thought and planning in 1939 and, indeed, down to Pearl Harbor and beyond reflected a profound sense of the underlying weakness of the American military position, and a desire to limit to the minimum external commitments until American strength was rebuilt.

74. Quoted, Rauch, op. cit., pp. 86-87.