

TWO
AMERICAN
CRUSADES

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Actors and Factors in the Cold War
and the Global War on Terrorism

Marian Leighton



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*Two American Crusades:
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*This book is dedicated with
much love to my amazing family*

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INTRODUCTION

When World War II ended in 1945, America and the Soviet Union were allies, and Soviet forces received the lion's share of the credit for defeating Nazi Germany. A few years later, the Cold War began when the USSR moved to cement its victory by seeking control over Eastern Europe.

The sudden and wholly unanticipated implosion of the Soviet Union in 1989 brought an abrupt end to the Cold War, but the United States failed to reap a peace dividend. After only a short reprieve during the 1990's, the country suffered on September 11, 2001 the most horrific attack on its soil since Pearl Harbor 60 years earlier. In response, President George W. Bush launched the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), a war that has lasted for two decades.

The United States regarded both conflicts as wars of necessity, not of choice. And it pursued both with a messianic zeal that reflected not only an urgency to keep the enemy at bay but also a conviction that fundamental American values and interests were at risk.

I have chosen to analyze America's conduct of these two monumental struggles because the Cold War, followed by the Global War on Terrorism, have spanned my lifetime and also because my career focused on analysis of the Soviet Union and later on terrorism. Born on the day of the decisive Allied victory at Midway, I grew up in the staid 1950's and then transitioned to the New York folk scene while my fellow students at Barnard College joined the fledgling civil rights movement and rallied against the Vietnam War (America's

most infamous lost crusade). In 1963, I visited the Soviet Union as part of a student group from the University of Michigan that spent the summer immersed in a Russian language program. The Cuban missile crisis had recently ended, and among the billboards in Moscow and Leningrad proclaiming the inevitable victory of Communism were posters of a smiling Kennedy and Khrushchev in tandem. The Russians lost no opportunity to convince us that the Soviet Union wanted peace with our country.

After graduation from Barnard, I obtained a Certificate from the Russian Institute (now called the Harriman Institute in honor of former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Averell Harriman). In 1979, armed with a newly minted PhD from Columbia University, I moved with my family to the Virginia suburbs and in 1980 I became a Soviet analyst at the CIA. Toward the end of 1984, I moved to the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) to join a newly created office on counterterrorism. The office was established in the aftermath of an outbreak of terrorism around the world, notably the 1983 terrorist attacks on the U.S. Embassy and the Marine barracks in Lebanon. During the 1990's, I also taught courses on terrorism and on Russia and the former Soviet Union as an Adjunct Professor at the National Defense Intelligence College. I continued to work on intelligence issues as a member of the CIA's Declassification Center and at a Department of Defense facility focused on combatting terrorism.

CHAPTER 1

NOT YOUR ANCESTORS' CRUSADES

The Crusade was a delayed response to the *jihad*, the holy war for Islam

Bernard Lewis

In 1095, Pope Urban II inspired the First Crusade by exhorting Christian soldiers to reclaim sacred sites in Jerusalem from the Fatimid Caliphate. By far the most significant site in the eyes of the faithful was the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where Jesus reputedly was buried and resurrected after the Crucifixion. In 1982, almost a millennium after Pope Urban's lifetime, President Ronald Reagan addressed the House of Commons to enlist Britain's partnership in "a crusade for freedom" against Communism. And in 2001, at the dawn of the 21st century, President George W. Bush declared that America was determined to pursue "this crusade, this war on terrorism," no matter how long it might take. Each of these campaigns stemmed from a unique mixture of motives and objectives but all had profound and, in some ways, unintended historical consequences.

The medieval Crusades were among the bloodiest chapters in the conflict between Christianity and Islam—a conflict that has re-emerged in the contemporary world. In the year 622 the Prophet Muhammad fled from his birthplace in Mecca to escape pagan hostility to the new religion of Islam. His journey, known as the *Hijra*, brought him to Medina, where he became the head of state and a military commander. Mecca and Medina remain the two holiest places in the Islamic world and are closed to non-Muslims.

At the time of the Prophet's death in 632, most of the Levant and North Africa had been Christian lands for hundreds of years. But Islam was the

prevalent religion in Arabia, from which Muslim armies were poised for unprovoked aggression against the Persian and Eastern Roman empires. Robert Spencer, a critic of Islam, declared that

... in the years immediately following Muhammad's death, the Muslims carried out a series of raids and invasions against their non-Muslim neighbors, and these had a new religious dimension that previous raids by Arabian tribes had never had. Jihad had begun, and the world would never be the same.¹

Philip K. Hitti, a distinguished expert on Arab history, wrote, however, that "the dream of heaven in the next life may have influenced some [of the Muslim soldiers], but desire for the comforts and luxuries of the civilized regions of the Fertile Crescent was just as strong in the case of many."² Similarly, the Crusaders aspired in part to such material rewards as territorial acquisitions and riches for the European nobles; expansion of trade between the Italian city-states and the East; colonial aggrandizement on the part of the Normans (directed as much against the Roman as against the Muslim world); and the lure of travel and adventure.

Hitti noted that

If someone in the first third of the seventh Christian century had had

the audacity to prophesy that within a decade or so some unheralded, unforeseen power from the hitherto barbarous and little-known land of the Arabians was to make its appearance, hurl itself against the only two world powers of the age, fall heir to the one [the Sassanid] and strip the other [the Eastern Roman or Byzantine] of its fairest provinces, he would ... have been declared a lunatic. Yet that was exactly what happened.³

Muslim armies conquered Damascus, the capital of present-day Syria, in 635, and parts of what is now Iraq in the following year. The Sassanid Empire of Persia was defeated by Islamic armies in 637. The Caliph Umar took Jerusalem in 638. Armenia succumbed in 643. The fall of Egypt occurred during the same period. Thus, Muslim forces rapidly overwhelmed the entire area of Mesopotamia.

Max Rodenbeck, the Middle East correspondent for *The Economist*, summed up the immense significance of these military successes:

Few events in history have had so swift, profound and far-reaching impact as the advent of Islam. Within a mere 15 years of the Prophet Muhammad's death in A.D. 632, his desert followers had conquered all the centers of ancient Near Eastern civilization. They had erased a great and enduring regional power, Persia; reduced its brilliant rival, Byzantium, to a rump state; and carved from their territories an empire as vast as that of Rome at its height. Within 100 years, Muslim armies were harrying the frontiers of the Tang dynasty ... in China ...

They also penetrated Southeast Asia, notably the vast archipelago of Indonesia, which today has the world's largest Muslim population.

Muslim armies also invaded the lands that now comprise India, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The results were horrific. As described by a Hindu historian,

Islamic imperialism ... required its warriors to fall upon the helpless civilian population ... [and] to sack and burn down villages and towns after the defenders had died fighting or had fled. The cows, the Brahmins, the *Bhikshus* [Hindu or Buddhist monks] ... and ... the temples and monasteries were their special targets in an orgy of pillage and arson. Those whom they did not kill, they captured and sold as slaves ...⁴

In the meantime, Muslim soldiers rampaged across southern Europe and North Africa. They defeated the Byzantines at Sufetula, in present-day Tunisia, converted the Berbers to Islam, and by 709 controlled the entire present-day Maghreb. Two years later, they crossed the Mediterranean and conquered the Iberian Peninsula, home of the unified nation of Spain and Portugal.⁵

The Muslim drive into France was repelled at the famous Battle of Tours (also called Poitiers) in 732, in which Charles Martel (the "Hammer") de facto ruler of the Frankish kingdoms, defeated Muslim invaders from Spain. Martel's victory is generally regarded as a decisive event in world history because it preserved Western Europe from Muslim conquest and Islamization.

The Islamic armies also captured Sicily in 827 and launched an abortive invasion of Rome in 846. Forced to withdraw from that city, they "sacked the cathedrals of St. Peter ... and ... St. Paul ... and desecrated the graves of the pontiffs."⁶

Retired Admiral James A. Lyons, a former commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, has observed that

These were ... Christian lands whose inhabitants experienced the horrors we see today in Syria, Iraq and now Libya amputations, beheadings ... and sex slavery. When we see horrific videos of ISIS beheadings and ... sex slaves, let's remember it's

a scene repeated thousands of times before: in Jerusalem in 637, Egypt in 639, Spain in 711, and Constantinople in 1453. The only difference is that today there are cameras and instant worldwide communications.⁷

Everywhere the conquerors offered their victims a choice between conversion to Islam, a status of *dhimmi*s (second-class citizens subject to a special tax called the *jizya*), or death.

Rodenbeck observed that

... the [Muslim] triumph was not just military. The explosive expansion of Islam severed at a stroke the 1,000-year-old links of commerce, culture, politics and religion that had bound the southern and northern shores of the Mediterranean. It created, for the first and only time, an empire based entirely upon a single faith ... It transformed Arabic from a desert dialect into a world language that for centuries supplanted Latin and Greek as the main repository of human knowledge.⁸

Despite the variety of motives on both sides, including desires for commercial access and dynastic advantage, the religious factor in the centuries-long struggle between Christianity and Islam was paramount. The Crusaders, like the medieval Muslim armies, regarded themselves above all as holy warriors. It is worth recalling, however, that Muhammad's role as a warrior prophet had no Christian counterpart in Jesus, who was a committed pacifist.

The Crusades were a series of battles undertaken between the 11th and 14th centuries by European Christendom to recover traditional Christian sites in the Holy Land conquered by Muslim armies. They were thus purely defensive. The First Crusade was partly a response to an appeal to the pope by Emperor Alexios I of the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire for help against the Islamic forces that were advancing through Asia Minor and

closing in on the Bosphorus. This Crusade gained its impetus from Pope Urban II's speech at the Council of Clermont in 1095, when he exhorted Christians to launch a war for the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The Crusades took their name from the crosses that were distributed at the time of the pontiff's speech. The Christian battle cry was *Deus hoc volt* (God wills it), an utterance eerily similar to the chant of Allahu Akbar (God is great!) proclaimed by today's jihadists. The Crusaders were called "armies of the Lord," and "knights of Christ." There were additional parallels between the Christian and Muslim holy wars. Professor Anthony Pagden has written that

never before had a pope made it clear that participation in a war would be looked upon as an act of merit ... a "right kind of sacrifice"—an act of devotion that would contribute toward the salvation of the participant's soul. ... Christendom had never before had holy warriors. It had had only martyrs—those who had died, unresisting ... to "bear witness" to the truth of their faith. Now the passive victim and the hero who died in battle had become one and, like their Muslim counterparts, would pass directly into Heaven [minus the 72 virgins allegedly awaiting the Islamic warriors] ...⁹

According to Pagden, "the Crusade was to be a war of terror, an act of revenge against the Muslims for the damage that, over the centuries, they had inflicted upon the Christian West." He added, however, that "the Crusade, it was hoped, would provide an outlet for the repressed energies and frustrated ambitions of scores of young men across Europe."¹⁰

The First Crusade ended on 15 July 1099 with the capture of Jerusalem (and the slaughter of its Muslim and Jewish inhabitants). The Crusaders' victory alleviated the military pressure on Byzantium, the center of Eastern Christianity. Pagden recounted that "on June 5, 1099, as the battered Crusader army approached Jerusalem, there was an

eclipse of the moon that was interpreted to foretell an end to the rule of the crescent, the symbol of Islam. The Crusader army, miraculously, prevailed against the much stronger Muslim forces.”¹¹

Subsequent Crusades were mainly undertaken to assist the forces already in the Holy Land. The Fifth Crusade, for example, tried and failed to conquer Egypt. Of a total of nine Crusades, however, all but the first failed to achieve its objective. In 1291, Acre, the Holy Land’s last Christian stronghold, fell to the Mamluks, the knightly military caste in Egypt. A significant factor in the Crusaders’ ultimate defeat was that the Islamic fighters had the home court advantage against the Christian invaders.

The rise of the Ottoman Empire dates from the 14th century, not long after the Crusades ended. The Ottoman warriors emerged from Anatolia, conquered most of Asia Minor (modern Turkey), and eventually destroyed the remainder of the Eastern Roman Empire. In 1356 they marched into Europe at Gallipoli and went on to subdue Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Albania and southern Romania in rapid succession. Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, fell to the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II on 24 May 1453 (after which the city was renamed Istanbul and the Hagia Sophia, the magnificent Greek Orthodox Church, was converted into a mosque). By the early 16th century, the Ottomans had conquered Syria and Egypt from the Mamelukes, who previously had battled the Mongols and destroyed the Crusader kingdoms.

The conquest of Iberia marked the pinnacle of success for the Islamic armies in Europe. The Moors (the Spanish term for Muslims) gave the Arabic name Al-Andalus to the areas under their control—lands that encompassed most of southern Spain. Their empire, ruled by successive dynasties, lasted from the 8th to the 15th centuries. It rivaled the Ottoman Empire in duration and probably surpassed it in the reverence it holds for Islam.

The Catholic leaders of Iberia vowed to expel the Muslim invaders and reclaim their lands for the Church. The recapture of Toledo in 1085 by Alfonso VI, the king of Leon and Castile, marked the beginning of the Spanish Reconquest.¹² Cordoba, the seat of Moorish civilization and of

the Umayyad Dynasty’s court, was defeated in 1236, followed by Valencia two years later and Seville in 1248. The center of the caliphate then shifted to Granada, famous for the red palace and fortress of Alhambra. Granada became the last bastion of Islam in the West.¹³

In 1483, Pope Sixtus IV issued a papal bull authorizing and sanctifying the Spanish Crusade to complete the reconquest of Spain’s Christian lands from the Muslims. The bull proclaimed the Crusade to be a religious duty and imposed a financial levy on the church hierarchy and the military to finance the war. Generous indulgences were promised to everyone who participated in the Crusade, either by engaging in combat or by fundraising.¹⁴

The battle between Spain’s Catholic monarchy and Granada’s Moorish caliphate was a religious war—a *jihad*—between Christianity and Islam that was fought with the same ferocity and passion as the original Crusades for the Holy Land. It culminated with the Catholics’ victory in 1492—a feat that, incidentally, released funds for Columbus’s voyage to the New World.¹⁵

The alleged relevance of the Crusades to contemporary Islamic militancy has been a favorite refrain for al Qaeda. Islamists have long memories and a strong sense of historical grievance. They have neither forgotten nor forgiven the loss of Al-Andalus. In the aftermath of 9/11, al Qaeda invoked the memory of the 11th- and 12th-century Crusades and added that “the Spanish Crusade against Muslims and the expulsions from Al-Andalus are not so long ago.”¹⁶ The Muslim terrorists who attacked four commuter trains in Madrid in 2004 sought to portray the mass murders as an act of revenge for the Christian war against the Moors in Al-Andalus. Osama bin Laden vowed to recover Andalusia (the Spanish name for Al-Andalus) for inclusion in the *ummah* (the global Muslim community). His goal reflected the Islamic ideological concept of *waqf*, which posits, *inter alia*, that once a Muslim entity controls, resides on, or governs a particular land, that land must forever be under Muslim rule and constitute part of the *dar al-Islam* (abode of Islam). The concept was comparable to the

defunct Soviet doctrine of the irreversibility of Communism, i.e., once a Communist state, always a Communist state.

Islamic incursions into Europe did not cease with the defeat at Granada. Having captured Constantinople, the Ottoman Turkish armies marched relentlessly through the Mediterranean region and Central Europe, seizing Bosnia, Croatia, Hungary, Poland and southern Austria. War also raged at sea. Of particular significance was the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, which took place in the waters off Greece as part of an Ottoman Turkish campaign to acquire the strategic island of Cyprus. The victory of combined Christian naval forces over the Turkish fleet marked a turning point in the balance of power between the Christian West and the Islamic East.

Under the reign of Sultan Murad III in the late 16th century, the Ottoman Empire stretched from North Africa through Eastern Europe to the Indian Ocean. Battling the forces of the Hapsburg Empire and other Christian kingdoms, the Islamic armies marched onward until September 11, 1683, when the Christian defenders of Vienna turned back the Ottoman tide at the gates of the city. King John III Sobieski of Poland, co-commander of a relief army sent to bolster the Viennese forces, celebrated the momentous occasion by proclaiming to Pope Innocent XI that “We came, we saw, and God conquered” (an echo of Julius Caesar’s famous phrase “I came, I saw, I conquered” upon his capture in 47 B.C. of Pontus in modern Turkey).¹⁷ Osama bin Laden may have chosen the date of September 11 to attack the United States as a token of revenge for the defeat of the Islamic forces at Vienna.

Author and literary critic Christopher Hitchens called the Muslim loss at Vienna “a hinge-event in human history.”¹⁸ It marked the end of armed incursions by Islamic forces into Europe and elsewhere that had lasted for a millennium. It also heralded the start of the Ottoman Empire’s long decline.

Although the Crusades in the Holy Land were largely unsuccessful, they finally achieved their objective after the collapse and dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, the last great Muslim empire, after World War I. Ottoman Sultan Mehmed V declared war on the Allies on 11 November 1914. Two days later he proclaimed a *jihad* and enjoined

all Muslims to fight against the non-Muslim powers, especially Britain, France and Russia.¹⁹

Entry into World War I was a fatal error for the crumbling Ottoman Empire and greatly hastened its demise. British intelligence agents persuaded Arab nationalist groups in the empire to break with their Muslim coreligionists and join the fight against the Ottomans in return for a vague promise to support postwar Arab independence. The secret Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 (named for British statesman Sir Mark Sykes and French diplomat Francois Georges-Picot) nullified the British promise, however, by carving out spheres of influence for Britain and France in what are now Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. These European protectorates eventually became independent but arbitrarily delineated nation-states.

General Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (“Father of the Turks”) headed a nationalist movement that resulted in the abolition of the Ottoman Sultanate in 1922. The following year he transformed Turkey into a secular republic. The sultan had a dual role as the sovereign ruler of the Ottoman Empire and the caliph of Islam. In 1924 the Turks abolished the caliphate, which by then was a purely ceremonial office. Renowned Middle Eastern historian Bernard Lewis wrote that

... during its nearly thirteen centuries, the caliphate had endured many vicissitudes, but it remained a potent symbol of Muslim unity, even identity. Its disappearance, under the double assault of foreign imperialists and domestic modernists, was felt throughout the Muslim world.²⁰

Ironically, modern-day Turkey has evolved from a pro-Western democratic society to one heavily influenced by Islamists who favor a stronger role for religion at home and a weakening of the country’s ties with the United States and NATO abroad.

Today the “C” word is back in vogue and provokes raw emotions on both sides of the religious divide. The term “Crusaders” has become an epithet hurled at the West by radical Islamists. Al Qaeda called itself the “World Islamic Front for Jihad

Against Jews and Crusaders.” The Islamic State (ISIS) has also appropriated the term in its rhetoric. Vowing to erase the artificial boundaries imposed by the former colonial powers in the Middle East, ISIS proclaimed a new caliphate on territory captured from Iraq and Syria in 2014. The short-lived entity came under attack by U.S.-backed forces within two years, but its message continues to resonate in the Muslim world and to inspire terrorist attacks far beyond the Middle East.

Allegations that radical Islamic terrorism derives from hatred inspired by the Crusades lack credibility. As the historical chronology attests, the Crusades date from the end of the 11th century, more than 400 years after Muslim armies launched their conquest of Christian lands in the Middle East and Europe. Nevertheless, today’s Islamists contend that the Crusades never really ended but rather led seamlessly to Western seizure of Ottoman territory during World War I, partition of the Arab world through the postwar creation of European colonial possessions in the Middle East, Western sponsorship for the creation of the “Crusader state” of Israel in 1948, support for the Shah’s regime in Iran, the outbreak of the U.S.-led Gulf War in 1990, and the American military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan after 9/11. Journalist and political correspondent Todd S. Purdum wrote:

When, on September 16, 2001, five days after the destruction of the World Trade Center, George W. Bush unadvisedly declared, “We understand ... this crusade, this war on terrorism, is going to take a while,” he did not intend any specific allusion to the historical Crusades. He meant simply that it was a good and noble cause. But for those in the Islamic world who heard him use that hated word, he seemed to be alluding to a perpetual war, one that had been in progress with only brief interruptions since the tenth century, a war not against anything as amorphous as “terrorism,” but a war against Islam.²¹

Robert Spencer observed that

Virtually all Westerners have learned to apologize for the Crusades. Less noted is the fact that these campaigns have an Islamic counterpart for which no one is apologizing and of which few are even aware.²²

President Bill Clinton’s use of the C-word is symptomatic of this mindset. He declared that

Indeed, in the first Crusade, when the Christian soldiers took Jerusalem, they first burned a synagogue with 300 Jews in it and proceeded to kill every woman and child who was Muslim on the Temple mound [sic] ... I can tell you that the story is still being told today in the Middle East and we are still paying for it.²³

Bernard Lewis observed, however, that

... the Crusades are often depicted as an early experiment in expansionist imperialism—a prefiguration of the modern European empires. To the people of the time, both Muslim and Christian, they were no such thing. When the Crusaders arrived in Jerusalem, barely four hundred years had passed since that city, along with the rest of the Levant and North Africa, had been wrested by the armies of Islam from their Christian rulers and their Christian populations forcibly incorporated in a new Muslim Empire. The Crusade was a delayed response to the *jihad*, the holy war for Islam, and its purpose was to recover by war what had been lost by war—to free the holy places of Christendom and open them once again ... to Christian pilgrimage.²⁴

The Crusades were a unique historical phenomenon rather than a template for recent U.S. policies. Nevertheless, as a U.S. national security analyst pointed out,

... The propensity to think of international conflict as a grand crusade of good against evil was embedded in the Western psyche as long ago as the Enlightenment, which taught that a democratic order is inherently good because it provides justice and that all other political forces are inherently wicked ...²⁵

America's crusades (with a small "c") against the Soviet Union during the Cold War and against Islamic terrorism after 9/11 were not primarily religious in nature, even though presidents Reagan and Bush both professed a strong Christian faith. Reagan specifically abjured the notion of a religious crusade, talk of the "Evil Empire" notwithstanding. He seemed instead to model his anti-Communist campaign on the Crusade for Freedom, an enterprise that employed the future president as a spokesman and that raised funds during the 1950s and 1960s for Radio Free Europe's peaceful penetration of the Iron Curtain. Reagan's policy toward the Soviet Union was also guided by his strong moral compass. Bush, for his part, insisted that the war on terrorism was not a war against Islam, which he described (not altogether persuasively) as "a religion of peace." But it had a deep moral streak, insofar as Bush's persona as a born-again Christian

infused him with a presumably religious-inspired view of good and evil in the world.

President Barack Obama put a peculiar new twist on the issue in remarks to the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington on 4 February 2015. The president linked contemporary militant Islam to the "terrible deeds" committed during the 11th-century Crusades and the 15-century Inquisition. He also lectured Christians about getting on their "high horse" about fanaticism because people acting "in the name of Christ" used religion to justify slavery and Jim Crow laws.²⁶ He essentially equated the burning alive of a captured Jordanian pilot by ISIS with the immolation of Joan of Arc at the stake.

Obama's nod to moral equivalence was a step too far, however. The great medieval Muslim historian Ibn Khaldun wrote that "the other religious groups [aside from Islam] did not have a universal mission ... But Islam is under an obligation to gain power over other nations."²⁷ Robert Spencer referred to Ibn Khaldun by noting that "despite their role as a whipping-boy in modern-day analyses, the Crusades for all [their] abuses ... were actually conceived of as defensive actions against the steadily advancing Muslims ..."²⁸

Journalist Oriana Fallaci placed this issue in a contemporary context with her admonition that "... a reverse Crusade is on [the] march ... A war they call Jihad ... that does not aim at the conquest of our territory maybe ... but certainly aims at the 'conquest of our souls and at the disappearance of our freedom.'²⁹

CHAPTER 2

AMERICA'S CRUSADING LEGACY

We have no interest in running the planet; we just want to shape it.³⁰

Newt Gingrich

Although U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War and the War on Terrorism has not been driven primarily by religious zeal, it retains much of the theological spirit of the nation's earliest settlers. At the conclusion of the long ocean voyage to the New World in 1630 aboard the ship *Arabella*, John Winthrop, who became the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, inspired his fellow Puritans with a phrase from the Sermon on the Mount in the Book of Matthew. "We ... shall be as a city upon a hill," he intoned, evoking Jerusalem. "The eyes of all people are upon us." This beneficent image has persisted through the centuries.

In his book *The American Miracle: Divine Providence in the Rise of the Republic*, Michael Medved credited Divine intervention for the way in which the *Mayflower* was "blown blessedly off course" and for the unusual weather patterns that helped the Revolutionary Army escape certain destruction in New York.³¹ Medved emphasized that only a miracle could explain the good fortune of George Washington's army as it began to retreat from the British onslaught in Long Island. British Gen. William Howe's forces could have overwhelmed George Washington's defenses but inexplicably hesitated long enough for the revolutionary army to break out of its defensive position and live on to achieve victory.

James P. Byrd, associate dean at Vanderbilt University and the author of *Sacred Scripture, Sacred War: The Bible and the American Revolution*, opined that the colonists who declared American independence

on 4 July 1776 viewed the impending struggle as akin to a holy war. He wrote: "Because they believed that their cause had divine support, many patriots' ardor was both political and religious ... Scripture [was] one of the major sources of American patriotism." Byrd quoted Connecticut minister Samuel Sherwood to the effect that "God Almighty, with all the powers of heaven, are [sic] on our side. Great numbers of angels, no doubt, are encamping round our coast, for our defense and protection."³² Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, the most influential patriotic pamphlet of the revolution, stated that "Scripture clearly revealed God's protest against monarchical government." And the Declaration of Independence lauds the "unalienable Rights" endowed by the "Creator."

As recently as 2010, a poll conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute and the Brookings Institution found that a majority of respondents believe that "God has granted America a special role in history."³³ Walter Russell Mead, senior counselor of the World Policy Institute at the New School, wrote in 2012 that "American society has as messianic and as transcendental a view of its role in the world as any country in history."³⁴ The United States was thus conceived as both a country and a cause—a national polity and the standard-bearer of a worldwide liberal and democratic revolution. (The Soviet Union, America's Cold War enemy, functioned similarly as both a political entity and the self-proclaimed vanguard of a universal Communist movement.)

The idea that America is an exceptional nation with unique virtues as well as responsibilities has thus been embedded in the nation's narrative since the time of the Founding Fathers.

Thomas Jefferson wrote that Americans are

... trusted with the destinies of this solitary republic of the world, the only monument of human rights, and the sole depository of the sacred fire of freedom and self-government, from hence it is to be lighted up in other regions of the earth [that] shall ever become susceptible of its benign influence.³⁵

In the Appendix to *Common Sense*, Thomas Paine exulted that “we have it within our power to begin the world over again. A situation similar to the present has not happened since the days of Noah ...” This sentiment underlies the impulse throughout U.S. history to improve and repair the world by spreading the democratic creed as widely as possible.

In 1835, Alexis de Tocqueville's classic, *Democracy in America* alluded to the country's exceptionalism, although the term “exceptional nation” did not gain traction until more recent times. The concept of geography as destiny also fueled American exceptionalism. The republic's early isolationist impulses stemmed from a kind of geographical exceptionalism. German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck exemplified this situation in his remark that “the Americans are truly a lucky people. They're bordered on the north and south by weak neighbors and to the east and west by fish.”³⁶

During his Farewell Address, George Washington prefigured American isolationism by warning his countrymen to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world. He stated that commercial relations with foreign nations should entail “as little political connection as possible” because “Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote, relation ...”³⁷ Thomas Jefferson famously declared in his first inaugural address in 1801 that America should pursue “peace, commerce,

and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none.”³⁸

President John Quincy Adams famously declared on 4 July 1821 that America “goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own ...” This axiom has been honored mainly in the breach, as illustrated by the country's innumerable foreign adventures (or, in many cases, misadventures). Adams thus cautioned against the type of ideological crusade that his country later embraced. James Madison's admonition that “no nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare” was no more heeded than were Adams's pearls of wisdom.

Abraham Lincoln called America “an almost chosen nation” and “the last best hope of mankind.” When President Franklin Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill met on the heavy cruiser *Augusta* off Newfoundland on 9 August 1941 to proclaim a common defense against Nazi Germany, they sang three songs with the assembled sailors: “O God, Our Help in Ages Past,” “Eternal Father, Strong to Save,” and “Onward, Christian Soldiers.”

A contemporary version of this philosophy was voiced by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright: “The United States has an inescapable responsibility to build a peaceful world and terminate the abominable injustices and conditions that still plague civilization.”³⁹

The United States is still the most religious of all industrialized Christian countries, even though the separation of church and state is one of its bedrock principles. Prominent examples of America's faith-based culture include the words “In God We Trust” on U.S. coins and dollar bills, the phrase “one nation under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance, the offering of a prayer by official chaplains at every opening session of the House and Senate (a tradition dating from 1789), and the hosting by the president and members of Congress of an annual National Prayer Breakfast.⁴⁰ Newly elected President Dwight Eisenhower (who was named after the renowned Gilded Age evangelist Dwight Moody) told a New York gathering in 1952 that

“our form of government has no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith, and I don't care what [that faith] is.”⁴¹

Upon accepting the nomination for president at the Republican National Convention in Detroit in 1980, Ronald Reagan said

Can we doubt that only a divine providence placed this land, this island of freedom, here as a refuge for all those people in the world who yearn to breathe freely: Jews and Christians enduring persecution behind the Iron Curtain, the boat people of Southeast Asia, of Cuba and Haiti, the victims of drought and famine in Africa, the freedom fighters of Afghanistan and our own countrymen held in savage captivity [a reference to the hostages held at the U.S. embassy in Iran].

Reagan declared in 1984 that “if we ever forget that we're one nation under God, then we'll be a nation gone under.”⁴² In his farewell address to the nation on 11 January 1989, the president intoned:

And how stands the city on this winter night? She's still a beacon, still a magnet for all who must have freedom, for all the pilgrims from all the lost places who are hurtling through the darkness, toward home.⁴³

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher once observed that “Americans and Europeans alike sometimes forget how unique is the United States of America. No other nation has been built upon an idea—the idea of liberty.”⁴⁴ Commentator Daniel Krauthammer wrote that Thatcher's words “perfectly reflect the essence of American exceptionalism: that uniquely among the countries of the world, the United States was founded not on bonds of blood or race or religion or tribe, but on the ideals of freedom, equality, and self-government.”⁴⁵

Historian Richard Hofstadter observed in 1955 that “it has been our fate as a nation not to have ideologies but to be one.”⁴⁶ This ideology has

been the expression of a morality play in which the good Americans battle bad people and institutions around the globe. Ronald Reagan's concept of the Soviet Union as an “Evil Empire” is consonant with this tradition, as was George W. Bush's characterization of Saddam Hussein as evil incarnate on a par with Hitler. Most recently, Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster, President Donald Trump's former national security adviser, castigated the leaders of the Islamic State as “some of the worst human beings on the face of the earth.”⁴⁷

President Barack Obama stated during a speech in Trinidad and Tobago in 2009 that America would reach out to other countries as “an equal partner” rather than as the “exceptional” nation that many leaders before him had embraced.⁴⁸ At a meeting with the Group of 20 economic leaders, the president went further by opining that he believed in American exceptionalism, but “just as I suspect that the Brits believe in British exceptionalism and the Greeks believe in Greek exceptionalism.”⁴⁹ And in Cairo a short time later, Obama claimed that “any world order that elevates one nation or group of people over another will inevitably fail . . .”⁵⁰ In a commencement speech at the U.S. Air Force Academy in 2012, however, Obama conceded that “the United States has been, and will always be, the one indispensable nation in world affairs.” His Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, opined that “Americans have always risen to the challenges we have faced. It is in our DNA. We do believe there are no limits on what is possible or what can be achieved.”⁵¹ During a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations on 15 July 2009, she quoted Thomas Paine to the effect that “we have it within our power to begin the world over again.”

During the past decade and especially since Donald Trump's election in 2016, there has been a noticeable shift in U.S. attitudes toward both religion and patriotism. Although the country remains more religious than other wealthy and democratic nations, the gap is closing. The 2010's witnessed a significant rise of “nones,” i.e., Americans who do not identify with any religious faith. In addition, a 2019 Gallup poll revealed that American patriotism is at a record low—a fact undermining the notion of exceptionalism that has prevailed throughout

the nation's history. Moreover, Abe Greenwald, the senior editor of *Commentary*, remarked that Hofstadter's notion of America as an ideology is outmoded:

Our politicized nation is now convulsed with ideologies. Public opinion continues to fracture into capitalism, socialism, religion, atheism, and so on. American exceptionalism seems barely discernable in the mix.⁵²

The young American republic's first military foray overseas was purely defensive. Beginning at the turn of the 19th century, the United States fought an undeclared war against the Barbary pirates of North Africa, who conducted raids on behalf of the Berber Muslim entities known collectively as the Barbary States. The pirates demanded tribute for the safe passage of U.S. merchant ships through their waters.⁵³ When Jefferson balked, the pirates seized the ships and held their crews hostage in order to extort hefty ransoms.

Although Congress did not issue a formal declaration of war against the Barbary States, it authorized U.S. forces for the first time to fight a land and naval battle on foreign shores.⁵⁴ A turning point in the Barbary Wars came in 1805 when a detachment of U.S. Marines and mercenaries captured the Tripolitan city of Derna and for the first time in history raised the U.S. flag on foreign soil. The victory is memorialized in the phrase of the Marines' Hymn "to the shores of Tripoli."

The Barbary Wars were America's first brush with terrorism, and they have a contemporary sequel. The struggle among Islamic extremist forces for control of the Libyan coast could presage a new danger for U.S. naval forces in the area. Piracy in waters off the Horn of Africa, as epitomized in the 2013 film "Captain Phillips," also illustrates the ongoing threat. Phillips was taken hostage by Somali pirates who hijacked his ship in 2009.

During the first half of the 19th century, the United States abstained from overseas activities and focused on the consummation of Manifest Destiny. Historian Steven Hahn wrote:

Whether clearing Native Americans from their land, obtaining close to 800,000 square miles from France in the Louisiana Purchase, or defeating Mexico in a one-sided fight that added Texas, California and much of the Southwest to the American map, the pursuit of empire—or Manifest Destiny—became a unifying force, supported by merchants looking for new markets, slaveholders dreaming of new possibilities in places like the Caribbean, and small farmers seeking no more than a plot of land to till.⁵⁵

In 1803, while America was still subduing the Barbary pirates, Jefferson negotiated the Louisiana Purchase from France. It was the biggest land sale in history, consisting of 827,000 square miles. This vast expanse of territory, extending from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains, more than doubled the size of the United States. The purchase price of \$15 million amounted to four cents per acre. This acquisition marked the onset of U.S. expansion across the continent. Author Derek Leebaert observed that "to Washington, Jefferson, and [founding father and statesman John] Jay, empire meant sovereignty over the great empty lands of North America," not worldwide imperialism.⁵⁶ Before leaving office, however, Jefferson counseled incoming president James Madison that his so-called "Empire for Liberty" should encompass the Floridas, Texas, Canada, and even Cuba.⁵⁷

Congress declared war against Britain in 1812 to avenge the habitual seizure of merchant ships and impressment of American sailors on the high seas. Britain's burning of the White House during the conflict was the last foreign attack on the U.S. homeland until the terrorist strike of 9/11 (Hawaii was a U.S. territory rather than a state at the time of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor). The most famous engagement of the War of 1812 was General Andrew Jackson's defeat of British forces in the Battle of New Orleans, immortalized in the song of the same name.⁵⁸

In 1819 the United States and Spain signed the Transcontinental Treaty (also called the

Adams-Onís Treaty for Secretary of State John Quincy Adams and his Spanish counterpart, Luis de Onís). It was a key document in settling the two countries' boundary disputes in North America. Under the treaty, the United States acquired Florida and a southern strip of what are now Alabama and Mississippi. More broadly, the U.S. boundaries defined by the accord extended from the western Louisiana/eastern Texas border northward and westward to present-day Wyoming and then west along the 42nd parallel of latitude to the Pacific Ocean. Spain renounced the Oregon Country in exchange for U.S. recognition of Spanish sovereignty over Texas. Historian Samuel Flagg Bemis wrote that "even without Texas, the Transcontinental Treaty ... was the greatest diplomatic victory won by any single individual in the history of the United States."⁵⁹

In 1916, a group of white men established the American Colonization Society with the goal of reducing the number of freed black people in the United States by resettling them in Africa. In 1922 they founded Liberia, which became the world's second black country (after Haiti). It was an American colony and later a protectorate of the Firestone Rubber Company.

The year 1823 witnessed the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine, an early example of American unilateralism and hubris. It stated bluntly that "the American Continents ... are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European power." And it warned Europeans that the United States would "consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety." The U.S. government viewed the doctrine as a defensive measure aimed at deterring European efforts to recolonize or otherwise meddle in the Western Hemisphere and at distancing the United States from the conflicts of the Old World, as well as preventing ideological contamination of weak hemispheric neighbors by foreign political entities. As one writer noted, however, "what gave the Monroe Doctrine its teeth was not official warnings from Washington, but rather British sea power deterring the Continental nations from re-establishing their colonies."⁶⁰

A border dispute between the United States and Britain continued to fester in the Oregon Country after Spain renounced its claims there. An Anglo-American Convention in 1818 had stipulated that the two parties would have "joint occupation" of the area. But possession of Oregon became a hot-button issue in the 1844 election, by which time large numbers of Americans had settled there. Dark horse James K. Polk adopted an extremist position in his presidential campaign by demanding demarcation of the border at 54 degrees 40 minutes north latitude (which would have included the western provinces of Canada). Advocates of expansion chanted the famous slogan "Fifty-Four Forty or Fight!" After winning the presidency, however, Polk agreed to the Oregon Treaty, signed in 1846, which established the U.S.-Canadian boundary at the 49th parallel. The United States thereby acquired present-day Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and parts of Montana and Wyoming.

The year 1846 also witnessed the outbreak of war with Mexico after prolonged and fruitless negotiations to delineate America's southwestern frontier and counter cross-border incursions by Mexican forces. President Polk responded to reports of an ambush against a U.S. military patrol near the Rio Grande by asking Congress to declare war on Mexico. His objectives were to acquire California and New Mexico, to extend slavery westward, and to use California as a gateway to commercial opportunities in the Pacific region.

Having resolved the territorial dispute with the British, Polk turned his full attention to Mexico. The origins of the Mexican-American War dated from 1836, when the self-proclaimed Republic of Texas declared its independence from Mexico. Although the Mexican government never acknowledged the declaration, Congress voted in 1845 to annex Texas to the United States. Polk staged a series of provocations to intimidate Mexico and coerce it to recognize the annexation of Texas and to cede its northern provinces to the United States. When some Mexican forces crossed the Rio Grande and attacked a U.S. military patrol, Polk used the occasion to ask Congress for a declaration of war. U.S. soldiers entering Mexico City were confronted by civilians shouting "Death to the Yankees!" Gen.

Zachary Taylor's success in the war paved the way to his successful run for the presidency in 1848.

Gen. Ulysses S. Grant stated in 1879 that "I do not think there was ever a more wicked war than that waged by the United States on Mexico." Six years later, on his deathbed, Grant called the war "one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation."⁶¹ He ascribed the conflict to the Polk administration's campaign to curry political favor with Southern slave-holding politicians.

Reflecting on the war, historian Michael Beschloss wrote:

Just a half century into the life of the American Republic, Polk had crushed the Founders' hope that their fresh new country would not indulge in the Old World monarchs' habit of manufacturing false pretexts for wars that they sought for other, more secret reasons [notably the president's commitment to Western expansion and the consolidation of "Manifest Destiny"].⁶²

The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, signed in 1848, formally ended the war. It finally acknowledged the U.S. annexation of Texas and obligated Mexico to cede a huge chunk of its northern territory. This area was subsequently carved into the states of California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, as well as portions of Colorado, Oklahoma and Wyoming. Thus the United States increased its territory by nearly one quarter and reduced that of Mexico by nearly half. The newly acquired lands were sparsely populated—a situation regarded favorably by influential Americans such as South Carolina Sen. John C. Calhoun, who declared that "we have never dreamt of incorporating into our Union any but the Caucasian race."⁶³

Although the settlement of the war averted a long-term occupation or annexation of all of Mexico, it left behind a bitter relationship between the two nations that still endures.

In the aftermath of the Mexican-American War, only the disposition of a small slice of territory in the southwest was needed to round out the boundaries of the continental United States.

The Gadsden Purchase, which was finalized in 1854, stipulated that the U.S. government would pay Mexico \$10 for the land, which became part of Arizona and New Mexico.

The steady U.S. acquisition of power and territory during the first half of the 19th century instilled a sensation of self-confidence bordering on arrogance. As Richard Hofstadter wrote:

Our main aspirations were continental; and within our chosen, limited continental theater of action we were ... irresistible. Our foes were Indian tribes, the corrupt state of Mexico, the decaying Spanish Empire ...⁶⁴

Having fulfilled its Manifest Destiny by extending its writ "from sea to shining sea" and creating a transcontinental empire, the United States embarked on an expansion of its presence and influence worldwide. America's professed opposition to Western colonialism was largely self-serving; the nation's primary objective was to ensure commercial entrée to Asia, Africa and the Middle East. This commercial imperative was best epitomized a century later by President Calvin Coolidge, who famously declared that "the business of America is business."

In 1844 the United States piggybacked on Great Britain to obtain unfettered access to the markets and products of China. Chinese efforts to suppress the opium trade led the British to launch the First Opium War (1839–42), which ended with a treaty granting commercial privileges to Britain. The United States, demanding equal access, signed its first formal treaty with China at Wangxia (a city in Portuguese Macao). Its main provision was to open five treaty ports for Sino-American trade.

The new U.S. imperial presence in East Asia also involved the acquisition of dozens of uninhabited "guano islands" in the Pacific for the express purpose of harvesting the abundant bird droppings to produce fertilizers.

In 1853, Commodore Matthew Perry opened Japan at gunpoint to secure ports for U.S. whalers. Then, in 1857, Great Britain attacked ports and other sites in China to punish the Chinese for alleged failure to adhere to the terms of the com-

mercial treaty. The Second Opium War (in which France joined Great Britain) ended in 1858. Under the Treaty of Tianjin, China agreed to grant most-favored-nation treatment to all foreign commercial powers, including the United States. The above accords became known collectively as “unequal treaties” because they bestowed trading privileges onto foreigners and extracted concessions under duress from China. Like the treaty ending the Mexican-American War, the advantages conferred by the Sino-American pacts should be weighed against the seething resentment that poisoned bilateral relations for more than a century. American denigration of China knew no bounds. In 1940, for example, Sen. Kenneth Wherry (R-NE) declared that America would “lift Shanghai up, ever up, until it is just like Kansas City.”⁶⁵

Some historians argue that the United States, in “a fit of absent-mindedness,” created a global empire. If so, it was above all an economic and commercial empire that sought influence and access to resources rather than the outright acquisition of territory and domination of foreign populations. Heeding the precept that trade follows the flag, America not only promoted its commercial interests overseas but also, willy-nilly, intruded in the domestic affairs of foreign nations.

In addition to material goods, America sent abroad a large number of Bible-toting Christian missionaries, whose activities ranged from the denunciation of foot-binding in China to the establishment of schools for women and girls in the Middle East. The concept of the “white man’s burden” or what the French called a *mission civilisatrice* also fueled American economic and cultural imperialism.

The Civil War temporarily curtailed U.S. foreign policy initiatives, but activism abroad resumed immediately after the war’s end. In 1867, for example, Secretary of State William Henry Seward purchased Alaska from Russia for the bargain-basement price of \$7.2 million (roughly two cents per acre). Congressional and media critics of the transaction (dubbed Seward’s Folly) failed to foresee the strategic significance of Alaska’s acquisition.

Seward was a leading advocate of overseas expansion. Addressing the Senate in 1850, he advocated the creation of a U.S. maritime empire across

the Pacific, declaring that the United States “must continue to move on westward until the tides of the renewed and the decaying civilizations of the world meet on the shores of the Pacific Ocean.”⁶⁶ Seward aspired to secure stepping stones across the Pacific (prefiguring America’s island-hopping strategy toward Japan in World War II). Seward’s imperial vision was relatively benign, however. He was primarily concerned with commerce (which he regarded as inevitably bringing democratic values in its wake) and wanted to minimize the use of military force or American control over nonwhite peoples.⁶⁷

Senator Lodge, who lauded the superiority of Anglo-Saxon culture, was a more forceful proponent of American imperialism. Historian Richard Immerman portrayed Lodge as “an avid nationalist who interpreted America’s survival of the bloody Civil War as proof of its exceptionalism and global mission to promote liberty and civilization. Lodge epitomized the earliest iteration of America’s ‘Best and the Brightest.’”⁶⁸ The senator proclaimed that

the great nations are rapidly absorbing for their future expansion and their present defense all the waste places of the earth. It is a movement which makes for civilization and the advancement of the race. As one of the great nations of the world, the United States must not fall out of the line of march.⁶⁹

One commentator described the spirit of the times as “an alchemy of Christian moralism and American can-do-ism.”⁷⁰

By the 1890’s the closing of the frontier and the onset of a severe economic crisis spurred a U.S. search for greener pastures abroad, both to secure new markets and to spread the gospel of freedom and democracy. U.S. imperialism reached its zenith under President William McKinley’s administration at the time of the Spanish-American War: “Intoxicated by the new spirit of Manifest Destiny ... we launched a crusade to expel the Spaniards from Cuba and Puerto Rico.”⁷¹ The Caribbean subsequently became an American lake and the gateway to the Pacific for the U.S. Navy.

The proximate *casus belli* was a mysterious explosion on 15 February 1898 (probably caused

by a faulty boiler or by coal stored dangerously close to munitions) that sank the USS *Maine* in Havana Harbor, with the loss of 266 sailors and two high-ranking naval officers. The ship was on standby to be available in the event of an evacuation of American citizens from Cuba, which was in the throes of a rebellion against Spain. A Navy board of inquiry alleged that a Spanish mine had sunk the vessel; but no incontrovertible evidence ever emerged, and the explosion most likely was an accident.

President McKinley, who had fought in the Battle of Antietam during the Civil War, did not relish a new conflict. He remarked that “I have been through one war. I have seen the dead piled up, and I do not want to see another.” But Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt, mocking the “unintelligent, cowardly chatter for ‘peace at any price,’” declared that ... “a rich nation which is slothful, timid or unwieldy is an easy prey for any people which still retains ... the soldierly virtues.” Ridiculing McKinley’s aversion to military action, he sneered that the president had “no more backbone than a chocolate éclair.”⁷² and concluded that “this country needs a war.” Spurred on by militant opponents of Spanish colonialism, by the jingoist purveyors of “yellow journalism,” and by his own humanitarian impulses, the president opted in April for war.

Senator Lodge epitomized the *zeitgeist* when he stated that we represent the spirit

We represent the spirit of liberty ... and Spain is medieval, cruel, dying ... [The United States is] capable of greater things than allowing Cuban suffering to continue ... The responsibility is ours; we cannot escape it.⁷³

Similarly, Senator Albert J. Beveridge declared:

... The trade of the world must and shall be ours ... And American Law, American Order, American Civilization, and the American Flag will plant themselves on shores hitherto bloody and benighted but by those agencies of God henceforth to be made beautiful and bright.⁷⁴

U.S. forces, including Roosevelt’s cavalry regiment known as the “Rough Riders,” expelled Spanish forces from Cuba and Puerto Rico. The United States also expanded the theater of war from the Caribbean to the Pacific. On 1 May, Commodore George Dewey sailed his squadron into Manila Bay and decimated the Spanish fleet. Spain surrendered on 7 July. The Treaty of Paris, signed on 10 December, formally ended the war and ceded Cuba, Puerto, Guam and the Philippines to the United States.⁷⁵ Secretary of State John Hay famously called the Spanish-American conflict “a *splendid* little war.”

America’s growing naval presence in the Pacific drew attention to Hawaii, where U.S. missionaries and sugar barons already were conspiring against the monarchy. A treaty signed in 1887 enabled the United States to maintain a naval base at Pearl Harbor. In 1893, Washington dispatched Marines to the islands and abetted a coup that forced Queen Liliuokalani to abdicate. This episode marked the first instance of U.S.-sponsored regime change in a foreign land. The United States annexed Hawaii in 1898.

In 1901 the United States forced Cuba to incorporate the Platt Amendment into its constitution. The document accorded Washington the right to intervene in Cuba’s domestic affairs to protect U.S. commercial and business interests. A more significant clause of the Platt Amendment granted the United States a lease in perpetuity on a naval coal-ling station at Guantanamo Bay. The site eventually became a military base and a detention facility for many of the perpetrators of 9/11.

Meanwhile, the United States faced a crisis in the newly acquired Philippines. President McKinley, a devout Methodist, viewed the Spanish-American War through the prism of America’s evangelical tradition. Apparently discarding his previous opposition to the war, he declared that “territory sometimes comes to us when we go to war in a holy cause, and whenever it does the banner of liberty will ... bring, I trust ... blessings and benefits ...”⁷⁶ The president vowed to “civilize and Christianize” the people of the Philippines. Senator Lodge denigrated the Filipinos as “a semi-civilized people ... with the Asiatic indifference to life, with the Asiatic treachery

and the Asiatic cruelty, all tintured and increased by three hundred years of subjugation to Spain."⁷⁷

Senator Beveridge declared that

... We will not repudiate our duty in the [Philippines] ... We will not abandon our opportunity in the Orient God has been preparing the English-speaking peoples ... to administer government among savage and senile peoples. Were it not for such a force as this, the world would relapse into barbarism He has marked the American people as His chosen nation to finally lead in the regeneration of the world ...⁷⁸

One historian noted that

we didn't want the Philippines; indeed, few Americans even knew where they were. Yet the islands were unfit for independence and we were unwilling to turn them over to the European colonial powers No sooner did we move into the Philippines than a guerilla insurrection (a war of "national liberation," so to speak) broke out that required 70,000 American troops to quell ... It was our baptism by fire as an Asian power.⁷⁹

The Filipinos at first viewed the Americans as liberators from their Spanish rulers. After the United States seized control of the islands, however, Filipino rebels under the leadership of Emilio Aguinaldo declared the country's independence and launched an insurgency that became one of the bloodiest conflicts in U.S. history. According to one account, "In the Philippines, civilians and prisoners were routinely mistreated, and what is now known as 'waterboarding' was employed as the 'water cure.'"⁸⁰ American troops employed many of the same brutal tactics that the Spanish forces had used in Cuba.

The conflict ended in 1901 with the capture of Aguinaldo, who took an oath of allegiance to the

U.S. government, received a pension, and retired to private life. As in the case of the Barbary Pirates, however, history has repeated itself. The Moros, a Muslim minority in the overwhelmingly Catholic Philippines, have waged a protracted campaign demanding autonomy or independence for their homeland in the southern portion of the Philippine archipelago. The United States supports Filipino counterinsurgency forces against the co-called Muslim terrorists.⁸¹

The era of the Spanish-American War also witnessed a more aggressive U.S. approach toward China. In 1899 Secretary Hay announced the "Open Door" policy, with the goal of maintaining the same trade and commercial privileges in China that European nations and Japan enjoyed, as well as ensuring the preservation of Chinese administrative and territorial integrity in the face of Japanese, Russian and European efforts to dismember the country. Even though China had little direct relevance to American security at the time, U.S. involvement in Asia led eventually to a collision course with Japan. This trajectory culminated with American opposition to Japanese expansion in Southeast Asia, which sparked Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor.

The so-called American Century (a term popularized by publishing magnate Henry Luce) dawned with a bang. The Spanish-American War symbolized America's coming of age. As the war illustrated, the United States participated eagerly in the imperialistic rivalry among the world's major powers to acquire territory and influence on a global scale.

In 1900, Theodore Roosevelt, fresh from his adventures as a "Rough Rider," declared that "of course, our whole national history has been one of expansion."⁸² On 4 May 1902, President Roosevelt delivered a Memorial Day speech to the newly opened Arlington National Cemetery in which he declared that the U.S. military success in the Philippines represented a "triumph of civilization over forces which stand for the black chaos of savagery and barbarism." He defended the U.S. Army against charges of cruelty in counterinsurgency operations in the Philippines, stating that for every "American atrocity" the Filipinos committed 100.

The president also showcased American imperialism by dispatching the "Great White Fleet"

(the U.S. Navy) around the world and subsequently engineered the secession of Panama from Colombia in order to acquire land for construction of the Panama Canal.⁸³ The United States assumed permanent sovereignty over the Canal Zone adjacent to the waterway. The canal, which created a shortcut to the Pacific, enabled the United States to link and dominate the commerce of the Atlantic and Pacific regions.

During his annual message to Congress on 6 December 1904, TR promulgated the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. He explained that “chronic wrong-doing may in [Latin] America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized power, and in the western hemisphere ... the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States ... in flagrant cases of such wrong-doing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power.” This proclamation represented a radical transformation in both the scope and the rationale of the Monroe Doctrine, which was originally predicated on an avowed U.S. intention to protect the hemisphere from European meddling.

A century after America’s encounters with the Barbary Pirates, the man who famously quipped that we must “speak softly and carry a big stick” brandished his stick on behalf of American businessman Ion Perdicaris, who was kidnapped and held for ransom on 18 May 1904 in Tangier by a brigand named Ahmed ibn-Mohammed Raisuli. Roosevelt dispatched a naval squadron to the Moroccan coast as a show of force against the sultan. On 22 June, Secretary of State Hay issued his famous ultimatum: “Perdicaris alive or Raisuli dead!” Two days later the sultan yielded to Washington’s demands and released Perdicaris.⁸⁴

Although the United States would have been unable to resist a European challenge to the Monroe Doctrine, it readily proved capable of enforcing the Roosevelt Corollary. Its first opportunity came as early as 1905, when the Dominican Republic faced possible European military intervention for debt collection. The United States preemptively invaded the country, seized its customs houses to pay off foreign creditors, and established a protectorate

that lasted until the financial situation stabilized. The Dominican action was one of many uses of U.S. gunboat diplomacy.

President Woodrow Wilson, who was elected in 1912, pursued a foreign policy infused with a heavy dose of crusading moralism, along with plenty of arrogance and self-righteousness. The son and grandson of Presbyterian ministers, Wilson told a reporter that he believed God had chosen the United States “to show the ... nations of the world how they shall walk in the paths of liberty.”⁸⁵ His avowed goal was not only “the destruction of every arbitrary power anywhere” but also “to redeem the world by giving it liberty and justice.”⁸⁶ The president “became convinced that the American nation and he personally were bearers of a divine commission to reform civilization by abolishing war and extending to the globe the benevolent principles of American democracy and religion.”⁸⁷

Wilson aspired to graft American values onto what we now call the international community, declaring that “every nation of the world needs to be drawn into the tutelage of America.”⁸⁸ But his intervention in Mexico resulted in a humiliating defeat:

Wilson boasted that he could teach the South American republics to elect good men. After Mexican Gen. Victoriano Huerta arranged the assassination of the democratically elected President Francisco Madero and seized power in February 1913, Wilson promised to unseat the ... dictator, using a flimsy pretext to dispatch troops across the border. But instead of being greeted as liberators, the U.S. forces encountered stiff resistance and inspired riots and demonstrations Schoolchildren chanted “Death to the Gringos!” U.S.-owned stores and businesses in Mexico had to close. The Mexico City newspaper *El Imparcial* declared that “the soil of the patria is defiled by foreign invasion! We may die, but let us kill!”⁸⁹

During the first three decades of the 20th century, U.S. military forces deployed repeatedly to Caribbean and Central American countries in the region; they were intended to reinforce U.S. hegemony by deterring European economic or military competition and protecting American interests during periods of financial or political instability or revolutionary upheavals. Critics of U.S. policy referred to many of the interventions as “Banana Wars”—a reference to the alleged need to sustain the preeminence of the United Fruit Company, a longstanding symbolic target of “Yankee imperialism.”

President Wilson's slogan for his 1916 reelection campaign was “He kept us out of war” (despite the sinking of the British ocean liner *Lusitania* in 1915 with the loss of 123 American lives). Germany's unrestricted submarine warfare against American ships on the high seas was such a blatant violation of U.S. neutrality, however, that Wilson joined the fray and announced his intention to “make the world safe for democracy.”⁹⁰ As one scholar remarked,

For a glittering constellation of American intellectuals [World War I] was the crusade of a lifetime, a high-water mark of American optimism ... shot through with hubris ... that America could make politics between nations resemble politics between Americans ...⁹¹

One historian opined that “no longer was the war a mistake, or even a grim necessity; it was a crusade.”⁹² Wilson's aspirations were embodied in the form of the Fourteen Points, which he unveiled on 8 January 1918 before a joint session of Congress. They included a commitment to disarmament, free trade, freedom of the seas, rights for colonial peoples, an end to secret treaties, and a League of Nations to Enforce Peace.

In presenting the Versailles peace treaty to the Senate on 10 July 1919, the president said that this was the war “that would end war” and lead to permanent peace and that America's role in this process came “... by the hand of God who led us ...”

The Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 (named for U.S. Secretary of State Frank Kellogg and French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand) garnered the signatures of 64 nations, all of which pledged to abjure war forever. The Senate passed the treaty by a vote of 85 to 1, and Kellogg won the Nobel Peace Prize. The rise of fascist and totalitarian regimes arose in Europe and Japan quashed the hopes for peace, however. The stillbirth of the League of Nations and other dashed hopes fueled American isolationism and pacifism during the 1920's and 1930's.

The outbreak of World War II sparked contradictory impulses in the United States, which sought to maintain its traditional aloofness from European conflicts but also feared the impact on U.S. security of German victory in Europe as well as Japanese ascendancy in the Pacific, where America's commercial interests were substantial. The “America First” movement, which advocated a continuation of isolationism, included such notables as Charles Lindbergh, Walt Disney, Frank Lloyd Wright and Sinclair Lewis. John F. Kennedy, son of the U.S. ambassador to Great Britain, sent a \$100 check to the movement as a token of his support for a “Fortress America” policy.⁹³

Germany's rapid victory over France in 1940 raised concerns in Europe about the ability of the anti-German coalition to prevail without U.S. support. Congressional passage of the Lend-Lease Act in March 1941 enabled FDR to provide “an arsenal of democracy” to embattled Britain. Lend-Lease (which was also extended to the Soviet Union after the Nazi invasion of June 1941) was the most significant contribution to the Allied cause prior to America's own entry into the war after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.⁹⁴

The U.S.-Soviet wartime alliance was based simply on the *mandala* principle, i.e., the enemy of my enemy is my friend.⁹⁵ Soviet forces bore the brunt of the war in Europe, however, and Stalin's resentment over the Western Allies' delay in opening a second front until 1944 (a delay caused by military rather than political exigencies) sowed the seeds of distrust that sprouted in the postwar period. The Soviet leader also resented General Eisenhower's

decision to prevent the Red Army from advancing further west beyond Berlin. Stalin reportedly complained that “Czar Alexander reached Paris.”⁹⁶

The postwar era witnessed a remarkable reversal of alliances. The United States began to transform Germany and Japan into democracies while

the Soviet Union evolved from a wartime ally against Nazi Germany into the arch-foe of the Cold War. America’s determination to contain the perceived Soviet threat triggered a global crusade against Communism that lasted for more than 40 years.

CHAPTER 3

FROM WORLD WAR TO COLD WAR

Although the shooting war is over, we are in the midst of a cold war which is getting warmer.

Bernard Baruch

At the end of World War II, the most successful war in U.S. history, America was virtually unscathed. The country suffered about 420,000 casualties, compared with almost 9 million for Germany and at least 25 million for the Soviet Union.⁹⁷ America's infrastructure remained intact, its economy produced almost half of the world's industrial output, and it held a monopoly (briefly) on nuclear weapons.⁹⁸ The United States was the preeminent global power and the leader of the "Free World." Henry Kissinger stated that World War II (widely regarded as the "Good War") resulted in such a preponderance of U.S. power that it "convinced us that we could shape the globe according to American design."⁹⁹ This overwhelming U.S. power fed the narrative of American exceptionalism, albeit in a more secular guise than the earlier Providential one. But the Soviet Union emerged from the war as a superpower that was determined to retain and strengthen its place in the sun at the expense of the United States.

Ronald Steel, a former Foreign Service officer, wrote that in World War II the United States conducted "twin crusades, one in Europe, one in Asia; one to restore freedom to the West, one to bring it to the East."¹⁰⁰

The war destroyed the illusion that "Fortress America" could isolate herself from an immoral and corrupt world. It also led to the dramatic growth of American military power that undergirded

the policy of global interventionism while also generating a moral crusade to purify and transform the international landscape in America's image.

Washington's abrupt shift from aversion to foreign entanglements (an aversion dating from the earliest period of the republic) to a policy of global engagement and from unilateralism to multilateralism was epitomized in its approach to the League of Nations and the United Nations, respectively:

In 1919 and 1920, the Senate rejected U.S. participation in the League of Nations three times; in 1945, it ratified the UN Charter by a vote of 89 to 2. And [the country] continued to pursue its messianic mission, but through more intrusive means, from the successful occupation and transformation of Germany after World War II to the ongoing and less successful forays into Afghanistan and Iraq."¹⁰¹

The most imminent postwar concern was the growing hostility between the United States and the Soviet Union.

A voluminous literature exists on the origins of the Cold War, a subject that has generated one of the most heated debates of modern history. It is indisputable, however, that the seeds of the conflict were planted during World War II and sprouted

immediately afterward because of growing mutual suspicions between Washington and Moscow about their goals and intentions in shaping the postwar world.

Townsend Hoopes, an historian and Pentagon official, has written one of the most trenchant analyses of Stalinist attitudes and objectives, which were impossible to reconcile with those of the United States:

The cold war was a ... bitter struggle touched off by Stalin's ... efforts to subvert and capture Western Europe, to penetrate the Mediterranean basin, and to acquire political influence in ... Japan. No doubt, U.S. insistence on free elections in Eastern Europe confirmed the worst suspicions of Soviet leaders that a universalist American capitalism intended to deny Russian paramountcy in the belt of states through which Hitler's ... invading force had marched, a buffer zone regarded by Stalin as the minimal requirement of Russian security. But it was not merely the case of a Kremlin leadership understandably paranoid in the aftermath of unprecedented human loss and physical devastation inside its homeland; it was also the case of a leadership impelled by the iron logic of a messianic ideology, a fact that made the Soviet Union compulsively expansionist and thus something quite different from the classic nation-state.¹⁰²

Similarly, Arthur Schlesinger wrote that

Stalin and his associates ... were bound to regard the United States as the enemy ... because of the primordial fact that America was the leading capitalist power and thus, by Leninist syllogism, unappeasably hostile, driven by the logic of its system to oppose, encircle, and destroy Soviet Russia.

Nothing the United States could have done in 1944–45 would have abolished this mistrust, required and sanctified as it was by Marxist gospel—nothing short of the conversion of the United States into a Stalinist despotism ... accompanied by total subservience to Moscow.¹⁰³

As early as 1941, President Roosevelt confided to Ambassador Joseph Davies that “I can’t take Communism, nor can you. But to cross this bridge [i.e., defeat Nazi Germany], I would hold hands with the devil.”¹⁰⁴ In a letter to Churchill on 18 March 1942 the president stated that

I know you will not mind my being brutally frank ... when I tell you that I think I can personally handle Stalin better than either your Foreign Office or my State Department. Stalin hates the guts of all your top people. He thinks he likes me better and I hope he will continue to do so ...¹⁰⁵

The following year, FDR wrote to William Bullitt, who had served as the first U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, that “I think if I give [Stalin] everything I possibly can, and ask nothing from him in return noblesse oblige, he won’t try to annex anything and will work with me for a world of democracy and peace.”¹⁰⁶

Deputy commissar for foreign affairs Maxim Litvinov confided to a U.S. correspondent, however, that if the West granted all of Moscow’s demands, “it would lead to the West being faced, after a ... short time, with the next series of demands.”¹⁰⁷

During the Yalta conference in February 1945 with Stalin and Churchill, President Roosevelt began to refer to the Soviet dictator as “Uncle Joe.” Stalin, whose negotiations with Churchill had already won him a Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe,¹⁰⁸ now received from Roosevelt a promise of the southern half of Sakhalin and the southern Kurile Islands (Etorofu and Kunashiri), as well as internationalization of the ice-free port of Dairen, restoration of the Russian naval base

at Port Arthur, and joint Sino-Soviet operation of the Chinese Eastern and the South Manchurian railways.¹⁰⁹ In exchange for these concessions, Stalin pledged to enter the war in the Pacific within three months after Germany's capitulation and to support the creation of the United Nations, one of FDR's pet projects.¹¹⁰ The USSR declared war on Japan on 8 August, two days after the United States dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and was poised to incinerate Nagasaki. Japan therefore was just days away from surrender.¹¹¹

Stalin's demand for a Soviet role in the occupation of Japan was rebuffed by the Western powers; but Soviet forces occupied not only the southern Kurile Islands in accordance with the Yalta accords, but also Habomai and Shikotan in the northern Kuriles, which were part of the home territory of Hokkaido. The dispute over the "northern territories" persisted throughout the Cold War and prevented the signing of a Soviet-Japanese peace treaty. With regard to the United Nations, Stalin cajoled the Western allies into giving the USSR three votes in the General Assembly.

When Harry Truman became president upon FDR's death in April 1945, he had virtually no experience or knowledge of international relations, but he harbored

... a foreign policy mindset ... which had its roots in World War II. For virtually everyone in the Truman administration, Munich had been a totemic trauma, a searing, life-altering event. And to most policymakers its lessons were clear: The world contained evil people and evil regimes, which were impervious to reason. If their aggression was not met, early on, by force, the result might be death, destruction, and dishonor on an epic scale.¹¹²

Despite this mindset, Truman reportedly anticipated the transformation of the Soviet-American wartime alliance into a cordial peacetime relationship. He therefore slashed the number of U.S. military forces from 12 million to less than 2 million by 1946 and also abolished the draft. Moreover, he

offered to relinquish America's nuclear monopoly by placing all atomic weapons under international control (a plan that the Kremlin, already in possession of stolen U.S. nuclear secrets, rejected).

Truman's disenchantment toward the USSR arose most pointedly with Stalin's determination to create a bloc of Soviet client states in Eastern Europe in violation of the Declaration on Liberated Europe signed at Yalta by the United States, the USSR and Britain. This document endorsed "the right of all peoples to choose [their] form of government ... [through] democratic means [and] free elections. The fate of Poland was particularly critical. As early as April 1945, two months after the Yalta conference, Truman warned Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov that failure to permit free elections in Poland would "seriously shake [U.S.] confidence" in the Soviet-American relationship. According to Truman, Molotov claimed that "I have never been talked to like that in my life." Truman retorted: "Carry out your agreements and you won't get talked to like that."¹¹³ In the end, however, Soviet boots on the ground trumped solemn declarations. Ambassador Averell Harriman remarked that Poland "was the traditional invasion route for both Napoleon and Hitler. [Stalin] was determined to keep control of it."¹¹⁴

The division of Europe was undoubtedly the major factor in the Cold War. Stalin regarded Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe as the most significant of his rightful spoils of war. His demands included control not only of the East European nations that became part of the Soviet bloc but also of the three Baltic republics, Finland's Karelian isthmus, and the Rumanian province of Bessarabia, as well as Bukovina. The last two areas had never been part of Russia, even during the farthest extent of tsarist expansion. Stalin also lobbied unsuccessfully for control of Norway's Svalbard (Spitsbergen) archipelago and for the establishment of bases on Denmark's Bornholm Island, which commanded access to the Baltic Sea.

On 5 March 1946, Sir Winston Churchill delivered his famous speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri: "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an Iron Curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line

lie all the capitals of the ancient states of central and eastern Europe: Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest, and Sofia.” (The term “Iron Curtain” recalled a fireproof curtain used in English and French theaters beginning in the 18th century.) Churchill’s speech reflected the darkening political climate and heralded the onset of the Cold War.¹¹⁵

Resorting to a combination of military pressure (facilitated by the presence of the Red Army), secret police intimidation, and political subversion, the Kremlin installed Communist regimes in Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Rumania, and East Germany and instigated a Communist coup in Czechoslovakia. Communists took power in Yugoslavia and Albania without Soviet assistance.) A Communist regime was also established in North Korea, where Soviet forces had been deployed during the war in the Pacific.

Elsewhere, heavy Western pressure was required to dislodge Soviet troops from parts of northern Iran and Turkey and to counter Soviet demands for base and transit rights through the Turkish Straits leading from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. In neighboring Greece, a civil war raged between Communist rebels and the Greek government.

America became the chief supporter of Greece’s anti-Communist forces when Britain could no longer shoulder the burden. This situation led to the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine, enunciated in the president’s address to a joint session of Congress on 12 March 1947. Truman declared that “it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.” At the president’s request, Congress appropriated \$400 million in military and economic aid for Greece and Turkey, along with the dispatch of U.S. military and civilian personnel and equipment to help deter Soviet aggression.

Reflecting bipartisan support for Truman’s foreign policy initiatives, Congress also passed the 1947 National Security Act, establishing the Department of Defense (previously called the Department of War) and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, providing for an air force independent of the army,

and creating the Central Intelligence Agency. By 1947 the Truman administration had restored the draft and started to rebuild the American armed forces—a buildup that was augmented rapidly after the outbreak of the Korean War.

Although Greece and Turkey were the immediate beneficiaries of the Truman Doctrine, a *Washington Post* article stated that “this doctrine carried us all the way into Vietnam, and the term ‘free’ came to mean any nation, whatever its governance, that was not Communist.”¹¹⁶ Thus, the Truman Doctrine “marked the onset of an anti-Communist crusade inside the United States” and “a staunch and undifferentiated anti-Communism [that] became the required posture of all aspiring politicians, whether Republican or Democrat.”¹¹⁷ Anti-Communism became enshrined as America’s postwar ideology, and any regime that professed to be anti-communist was deemed worthy of U.S. support.

On 17 March 1947, in a St. Patrick’s Day speech in New York, Truman castigated Communism as “tyranny” because it “denies . . . man’s right to govern himself. Even worse, Communism denies the very existence of God.”¹¹⁸ The president pursued this theme during a speech at Arlington National Cemetery in 1949, declaring that “Stalin and his crowd had no intellectual honesty and no moral code” and that Communism “attacks our . . . basic values, our belief in God, our belief in the dignity of man and the value of human life, our belief in justice and freedom.”¹¹⁹ “Give ‘em hell Harry” Truman’s accusations prefigured Ronald Reagan’s famous characterization of the Soviet Union as an “evil empire.”

Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson, the son of the Episcopal Bishop of Connecticut, shared the president’s moral and ideological antipathy for Soviet Communism. Acheson put forth an early version of the “domino theory” by warning that if Greece succumbed to Communism, then “like apples in a barrel infected by one rotten one, the corruption of Greece would infect Iran and all to the East” and could also “carry infection to Africa through Asia Minor and Egypt and to Europe through Italy and France, already threatened by the strongest Communist parties in Western Europe.”¹²⁰ During this period, about one-third of the electorates in

Italy and France voted Communist, and many labor unions were under Communist control. The Communists exploited their reputation as fierce partisan fighters against the Nazis.

The CIA conducted a covert operation that funneled massive financial aid to the 1948 electoral campaign of Italy's Christian Democratic Party to prevent an electoral victory by the powerful Italian Communist Party. According to F. Mark Wyatt, the Agency officer handling the mission, "We had bags of money that we delivered to selected politicians, to defray their ... campaign expenses, for posters, for pamphlets."¹²¹ The CIA also spread propaganda and disinformation that included fabrications about sexual scandals involving communist leaders and about a Communist threat to the Catholic Church. The U.S. labor movement, too, played a significant role in countering Communism in Western Europe. The American Federation of Labor (AFL) provided democratic labor unions in France, Italy and Germany with money, political support, and such materials as typewriters and mimeograph machines.

The Truman administration also provided massive economic assistance to Western Europe to offset the ravages of the war and the pressures from both the USSR and domestic Communist parties.¹²² On 17 March 1948, Secretary of State George C. Marshall warned the Senate Armed Services Committee that America could "no longer count upon others to carry the ... burden of safeguarding our civilization."¹²³ Congress subsequently passed enabling legislation for the European Recovery Program, better known as the Marshall Plan, which Truman signed into law on 3 April. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund, as well as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and, finally, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, also emerged during this critical postwar period. The legislative process was a model of bipartisanship guided by Democratic President Truman and Republican Sen. Arthur Vandenburg, a former isolationist who chaired the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and declared that "politics stops at the water's edge."¹²⁴

During the four years after the passage of the Marshall Plan, more than \$12 billion (the equivalent of about \$125 billion today) was dispersed

to West European nations. The United States invited all the nations that were allied against Nazi Germany in World War II to participate in the Marshall Plan, but the Soviet Union, viewing it as an instrument to strengthen American influence in Europe, declined the invitation and ordered Poland and Czechoslovakia to follow suit. The Marshall Plan thus solidified the division of the European continent and cemented Washington's realization that it could not penetrate the Soviet sphere of influence in the East.

The Berlin blockade of 1948, which cut off all surface traffic from the Western-occupied zones of Germany to West Berlin, was the most provocative Soviet thrust of the early Cold War period. Washington responded with a heroic airlift to supply Western forces and civilians in the divided city. About 277,000 flights carrying 2 million tons of food, medicine and fuel sustained West Berlin over a 12-month period that ended with Moscow's lifting of the blockade on 11 May 1949.

When Secretary of State James F. Byrnes suggested some compromises with Stalin on European issues, Truman retorted that "unless Russia is faced with an iron fist and strong language, another war was in the making I do not think we should play compromise any longer. I am tired of babying the Soviets."¹²⁵ Truman subsequently declared that "America should take the lead in running the world in the way the world ought to be run."¹²⁶

Under the Truman administration, the United States decisively shed its traditional wariness of entangling alliances and Old World quarrels and indicated its determination to prevent Western Europe from falling into the Communist orbit.

Washington also strengthened its role in the Western Hemisphere by means of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (the Rio Treaty), signed on 2 September 1947. There were 22 signatories to the pact, but Cuba was expelled in 1964. The pact stipulated that an armed attack or threat of force against any member nation, whether by another signatory or by an external power, would trigger collective measures to repel the aggressor. In 1948 the Organization of American States (OAS) was established. Six years later, it ratified the Caracas Declaration, which extended the