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The United States and the Need for an Improved Global Citizenship in the Twenty-First Century: How History Shaped Our Identity as a Nation

Karin Mika

Cleveland State University College of Law, k.mika@csuohio.edu

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The United States and the Need for an Improved Global Citizenship in the Twenty-first Century: How History Shaped our Identity as a Nation

KARIN MIKA *

ABSTRACT

This Article describes how accidents of geography and history enabled the United States to become the global power that it has become. It examines how the extended warring in Europe during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth century allowed the United States to develop as a country without the repeated necessity of continually rebuilding, as was happening in Europe. The Article explores how the isolation of the United States enabled it to develop continuity in its initially experimental political system—a continuity that was never available to Europe. These factors enabled the United States to be in the position of being able to achieve global status and dominance during and after the Second World War. This Article argues that many in the United States now feel a sense of superiority that is more “God given” than earned. Most are unfamiliar with the history that led to the United States becoming a world leader and thus often feel superior to other countries in the world. This Article concludes that there must be a cultural shift in the United States that recognizes the need to be a global citizen, or the United States faces deterioration as a global power.

* Karin Mika is Senior Professor of Legal Writing at Cleveland State University College of Law where she has taught Legal Writing since 1990.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the Far Right has often hijacked the idea of what constitutes a “patriot.”¹ Even the flag itself has become a symbol of being a true American. Moreover, the Far Right has defined true Americans essentially as white, Christian members of nuclear families who go to church, support local community endeavors, the right to bear arms, and anything military-oriented.² For the Far Right, any criticism

¹ See, e.g., Joseph Lowndes, *Far Right Extremism Dominates GOP, It Didn’t Start—Won’t End With—Trump*, WASH. POST (Nov. 8, 2021), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2021/11/08/far-right-extremism-dominates-gop-it-didnt-start-wont-end-with-trump/>.

² See, e.g., Samuel L. Perry & Philip S. Gorski, *With the Buffalo Massacre, White Christian Nationalism Strikes Again*, WASH. POST (May 20, 2022),

of the police or how the United States might actually be harming other countries in the world is taboo and unpatriotic.³ This is true unless the police are seeking to restrain any claimed “patriot” group from articulating its position (even if violently).⁴

There is no definition set out anywhere of what is a true patriot, but those who have been labeled patriotic feel their own exclusion without need of a definition.⁵ A patriot seems to have become an odd—if not contradictory—combination.⁶ There is pride in being able to trace one’s relations back to the Revolutionary War, co-existing with support for the southern cause during the Civil War.⁷ Immigrants and first generation Americans are not necessarily excluded from being considered patriots, but usually only those of a certain heritage are able to become part of the “club.”⁸ Patriots must reject all aspects of socialism, but still be kind to their neighbors and the underprivileged through community projects.⁹ Patriots must respect authority, but disregard it if authority is used to facilitate an improvement for what they perceive is their agenda for those who are deemed unworthy.¹⁰ Patriots must also, like the

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/05/20/white-christian-nationalism-buffalo-abortion/>.

³ Catherine Vitro et al., *Attitudes About Police and Race in the United States 2021 – 2022*, PUBMED CENT. (July 27, 2022), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9328541/>.

⁴ See, e.g., Jennifer Rubin, *Republican “Law and Order” Hypocrisy Is Off the Charts*, WASH. POST (Aug. 4, 2021), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/08/04/republican-law-order-hypocrisy-is-off-charts/>.

⁵ Natalie Zacek, *‘Patriots’ in America: How Fighting for Your Country Has Taken on New Meaning for Trump Supporters*, THE CONVERSATION (Feb. 17, 2021), <https://theconversation.com/patriots-in-america-how-fighting-for-your-country-has-taken-on-new-meaning-for-trump-supporters-154859>.

⁶ William A. Galston, *In Defense of a Reasonable Patriotism*, BROOKINGS (July 23, 2018), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/in-defense-of-a-reasonable-patriotism/>.

⁷ Richard Kreitner, *The Confederates Loved America and They’re Still Defining What Patriotism Means*, THE NEW REPUBLIC (June 30, 2020), <https://newrepublic.com/article/158305/confederates-loved-america-theyre-still-defining-patriotism-means>.

⁸ Charles Kamasaki, *US Immigration Policy: A Classic, Unappreciated Example of Structural Racism*, BROOKINGS (March 26, 2021), <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/how-we-rise/2021/03/26/us-immigration-policy-a-classic-unappreciated-example-of-structural-racism/>.

⁹ This is not a new concept. There has always been a relationship between (white) Christianity and patriotism, and a disconnect between those claiming to be Christians and their disdain for social welfare programs. See, e.g., Thomas L. Johnson, *Christian Charity v. Government Welfare*, FOUND. FOR ECON. EDUC. (Apr. 1, 1970), <https://fee.org/articles/christian-charity-vs-government-welfare/>.

¹⁰ See, e.g., Nathalie Baptiste, *The Mob at the Capitol Proves That Blue Lives Have Never Mattered to Trump Supporters*, MOTHER JONES (Jan. 8, 2021), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2021/01/the-mob-at-the-capitol-proves-that-blue-lives-have-never-mattered-to-trump-supporters/>.

patriarchal hierarchy of old, love the United States “or leave it,” even if the United States takes actions that are unacceptable and condemned in other countries.¹¹

This Article is not about the correctness or incorrectness of mindsets. It is more a study about what is exceptional about America,¹² and/or why so many believe that America is chosen by God as the most exceptional country in the world—thus being entitled to act within the world as superior.¹³ Believing in the exceptional nature of one’s religion or one’s country is not a novel concept. In fact, it has been the major reason for most of the wars and destruction that have occurred throughout history.¹⁴ However, as at least some of the countries in the world are understanding that it would be a good idea to look at the fate of the world more globally,¹⁵ many in the United States have gone in another direction.¹⁶ They have done so at a time when the United States is no longer the single most dominant force that rules the fate of the world.¹⁷ This Article will explore how it is that the United States got here, and why it is dangerous to remain here.

¹¹ See, e.g., Bonnie Kristian, *The Dysfunction of Love it or Leave it*, THE WEEK (July 27, 2019), <https://theweek.com/articles/854467/dysfunction-love-leave>; David Hinckley, “*Love It or Leave It*: Resurrecting the Worst of America’s Political Legacy”, MEDIUM.COM (July 16, 2019), <https://dhinckley.medium.com/love-it-or-leave-it-resurrecting-the-worst-of-america-s-political-legacy-9fcf028b0cc4>.

¹² This Article uses the terms America and United States interchangeably.

¹³ See, e.g., Lisa Cannon Green, *Majority of American Say U.S. Special to God*, BAPTIST PRESS (July 1, 2015), <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/majority-of-americans-say-u-s-special-to-god/>.

¹⁴ Certainly, the Crusades are an example of a war that was waged primarily based on the belief in a superiority of ideas and culture. In the twentieth century, many wars were waged based on the concept of preserving Democracy or preserving democratic ideals, however, these wars were not entirely fought for ideals. Preserving democracy in a country ensured that the country would remain an ally of the United States. This was especially important during the Cold War where there was a fear that the Soviet Union would attempt to take over the world and ultimately attack the United States. See, e.g., Paul C. Avey, *Confronting Soviet Power: U.S. Policy During the Early Cold War*, 36 INT’L SEC. 151, 154–57 (Spring 2012) (“States balance that more powerful states may one day threaten their security and that there is no guarantee that help will come in a crisis.”).

¹⁵ See Ceri Parker, *Angela Merkel at Davos: We Need Global Cooperation, Not Walls*, WORLD ECON. F. (Jan. 24, 2018), <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/01/angela-merkel-at-davos-we-need-global-cooperation-not-walls/>.

¹⁶ See W.J. Henigan, “*We Reject Globalism.*” *President Trump Took “America First” to United Nations*, TIME (Sept. 25, 2018), <https://time.com/5406130/we-reject-globalism-president-trump-took-america-first-to-the-united-nations/>.

¹⁷ See, e.g., Erik Kirschbaum, *With America in Crisis, a Reluctance in Germany to Be “Leader of the Free World”*, S. CHINA MORNING POST (June 4, 2020), <https://www.scmp.com/news/world/europe/Article/3087531/america-crisis-reluctance-germany-be-leader-free-world>.

II. BACKGROUND

What makes an American an American? If various people were asked this question around the world, the answers would vary depending on unique, individual circumstances. Some view America as the place to be because of the opportunity for wealth—or just plain opportunity.¹⁸ Some view America as the place to be because of individual freedoms.¹⁹ Others view America as the place filled with arrogant, ignorant people who are crass travelers, and do not have any interest in being part of the world citizenry.²⁰

When Americans answer this question, various platitudes come to mind: “Greatest country in the world”; “Land of freedom and opportunity”; “World’s police officers and peacekeepers”; and “Land of religious tolerance and equality.”²¹ In some respects, all of these things are true.²² The United States is a wealthy country with significant military might and international presence; however, not all Americans are wealthy,²³ and not all of the wealthiest people in the world are from the United States.²⁴ Military might is not the product of culture. It happened in the United States because of a series of historic and geographic realities.²⁵ Moreover, although some regard the culture of the United States as “tolerant of others” such that everyone has equal opportunity for

¹⁸ Bedros Keuilian, *Why America is Still the Land of Opportunity*, ENTREPRENEUR (Mar. 14, 2018), <https://www.entrepreneur.com/leadership/why-america-is-still-the-land-of-opportunity/310208>.

¹⁹ See, e.g., RICHARD I. MACK & TIMOTHY ROBERT WALTERS, FROM MY COLD, DEAD FINGERS: WHY AMERICA NEEDS GUNS 203 (1996); Michael Cialdella, *Why Aren't You Proud to be an American?*, THE TENNESSEAN (Aug. 9, 2021), <https://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/2021/08/09/remembering-our-history-why-we-should-proud-americans/5500827001/>.

²⁰ See, e.g., Kaitlin Miller, *Why Locals Get Massively Annoyed with U.S. Tourists*, THE ACTIVE TIMES (Dec. 21, 2018), <https://www.theactivetimes.com/travel/why-locals-get-massively-annoyed-us-tourists>; Joseph Nagle, *America Has an Entitlement Problem*, THE LUMBERJACK (Feb. 18, 2021), <https://thelumberjack.org/2021/02/18/america-has-an-entitlement-problem/>.

²¹ Emily Beaman, *Union: America: “Greatest Country in the World”*, THE WITCHITAN (Feb. 15, 2021), <https://thewichitan.com/68977/op-ed/opinion-america-greatest-country-in-the-world/>.

²² See generally DINSEH D’SOUZA, WHAT’S SO GREAT ABOUT AMERICA? 161, 193 (2015).

²³ See Isabell V. Sawhill & Christopher Pulliam, *Six Facts About Wealth in the United States*, BROOKINGS (June 25, 2019), <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2019/06/25/six-facts-about-wealth-in-the-united-states/>.

²⁴ *Forbes World’s Billionaire List: The Richest in 2021*, FORBES, <https://www.forbes.com/billionaires/> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

²⁵ Blake Stilwell, *5 Reasons Why Geography is America’s Greatest Weapon Against Invasion*, MILITARY.COM, <https://www.military.com/history/5-reasons-why-geography-americas-greatest-weapon-against-invasion.html> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

wealth, that is not necessarily true.²⁶ There is not universal toleration of immigrants or minority groups, nor is there equal opportunity for wealth—even for those who work the hardest.²⁷

A. *The Greatest Country in the World*

Many have often claimed that America is the Greatest Country in the world.²⁸ Immigrants and refugees who found a safe haven after leaving war-torn countries and who were ultimately able to make sufficient money and live in peace repeatedly say this.²⁹ It is hard to compare experiences with those who chose to relocate to other places, but the United States is still first on the list for migrants seeking wealth and security.³⁰

The government of the United States is, at least on paper, the type of government that most countries aspire to have—or at least the *results* are what most countries aspire to have.³¹ Despite the divisiveness of politics, the United States has still managed to have (relatively) peaceful transitions from election-to-election,³² and can still boast an “independent judiciary.”³³ Although many disagree with decisions of the judiciary (especially recently), the judiciary is usually not periodically ousted, bribed,

²⁶ Lane Kenworthy, *Equality of Opportunity*, LANE KENWORTHY (Apr. 2019), <https://lanekenworthy.net/equality-of-opportunity/>.

²⁷ Matthew A. Painter, II & Zhenchao Qian, *Wealth Inequality Among New Immigrants*, 59 SOCIO. PERSPS. 368, 371 (2015).

²⁸ Mugambi Jouet, *The Exceptional Absence of Human Rights as a Principle in American Law*, 34 PACE L. REV. 688, 724 (2014).

²⁹ See, e.g., Alex Nowrasteh & Andrew C. Forrester, *Immigrants Recognize American Greatness: Immigrants and Their Descendants Are Patriotic and Trust America's Governing Institutions*, CATO INST. (Feb. 4, 2019), <https://www.cato.org/publications/immigration-research-policy-brief/immigrants-recognize-american-greatness-immigrants#methodology-and-data>.

³⁰ See Charlotte Edmond, *Which Countries do Migrants Want to Move to?*, WORLD ECON. F. (Nov. 22, 2017), <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/11/these-are-the-countries-migrants-want-to-move-to/>; see also Jim Clifton, *42 Million People Want to Migrate to U.S.*, GALLUP (Mar. 24, 2021), <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/chairman/341678/million-migrate.aspx>.

³¹ Ian Bremmer, *The World Wants Democracy, but Not Necessarily the American Version*, TIME (May 16, 2019), <https://time.com/5590236/what-defines-worldwide-democracy/>.

³² Except, perhaps, on January 6, 2021. See Alexis Coe, *George Washington's Legacy Alone Was Enough to Guarantee a Peaceful Transfer of Presidential Power—Until Now*, TOWN & COUNTRY (Jan. 7, 2021), <https://www.townandcountrymag.com/society/politics/a35154049/peaceful-transition-of-power-history-george-washington/>.

³³ Sheldon L. Snook, *Thank Goodness for the Independence of America's Judiciary*, THE ATL. (Dec. 4, 2020), <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/12/america-judiciary-independence/617289/>.

or even threatened to make decisions that fundamentally change the law of the land of our day-to-day lives.³⁴

But how did our country get here? Many who claim to be patriots believe that America is great because of some type of Manifest Destiny or blessing of a creator.³⁵ Many look at the “Founding Fathers” as if they possessed a wisdom far beyond what any other rulers in other countries may have had.³⁶ There is often a belief that what these exalted men had within their brains and hearts was unique and never thought of by any in the history of humankind.³⁷ This, however, misrepresents a very rich history of a world that has seen many advanced societies come and go.

America was—and is—a great country, but the reason that it is a great country has a lot to do with accidents of history and geography, rather than any type of manifest destiny or designation by God.³⁸ And until most Americans understand how and why the accidents of history and geography enabled the creation and growth of America, America runs the risk of going the way of the many empires of the past that have been destroyed.³⁹

Much of the history taught in the United States is “United States” centric, and from the vantage point of righteous rebels or conquerors.⁴⁰ While memorizing names, dates, and places, most who learn about history—especially the history of the United States—do not really learn that “history” is much larger and more nuanced than what

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ See, e.g., MICHAEL MEDVED, *GOD’S HAND ON AMERICA: DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN THE MODERN ERA* 369–70 (2019); Steve Farrell, *America: The Grand Design of Providence*, THE SELF-EDUCATED AM. (Dec. 13, 2013), <https://selfeducatedamerican.com/2013/12/13/america-the-grand-design-of-providence/> (quoting John Adams, “I always, consider the settlement of America with reverence and wonder, as the opening of a grand scene and design in Providence for the illumination of the ignorant and the emancipation of the slavish part of mankind all over the earth.”). See generally JANET STOOPS, *GOD LOVES AMERICA* (2014) (discussing in its Amazon Prime preview that “[w]e must look to our past and pray that God will restore America to the land she once was and shall be again.” Preview available at <https://www.amazon.com/GOD-LOVES-AMERICA-Janet-Stoops/dp/1498414125>).

³⁶ Bradley Perry, *The Good, the Bad, and the Greatness of the Founding Fathers: Honor v. Worship*, MEDIUM.COM (July 8, 2020), <https://medium.com/@bradcperry/the-good-the-bad-and-the-greatness-of-the-founding-fathers-honor-vs-worship-222fd70a3f02>.

³⁷ Robert Brescia, *America’s Founding Fathers: Full of Wisdom? Or Something Else?*, PA. TIMES (Aug. 29, 2022), <https://patimes.org/americas-founding-fathers-full-of-wisdom-or-something-else/>.

³⁸ See, e.g., Dexter Perkins, *Geographical Influences in American History*, 109 THE GEOGRAPHICAL J. 26, 26–29 (1947).

³⁹ *Id.* at 27.

⁴⁰ Tamara Pearson, *When the U.S. Pretends It’s The Center of the Universe*, MEDIUM.COM (Mar. 18, 2017), <https://medium.com/the-establishment/when-the-u-s-pretends-its-the-center-of-the-universe-f31cb5705976>.

is in textbooks or on standardized tests. Few learn the context for some of the facts we learn as universal history. Even fewer understand that history exists only in the framework of one's own personal experiences.⁴¹

History becomes history for two main reasons: (1) because circumstances enabled the events to occur in the manner that they did, and (2) before the internet enabled access to more research, the concept of history within one's own country was relatively insular.⁴² Most of us learned history based on materials that others directed us to read, and we have regarded these materials as a true representation of facts. Thus, most of the history we studied in school was necessarily filtered and biased in favor of the victor,⁴³ including those who had the power to have their voices heard and preserved⁴⁴ and those who had the power to make the selection as to what would be regarded as history in schools.

The concept of the history of the United States has always been very insular; however, with the expansion of news sources and availability of information through the internet, it is now possible to get a more realistic view of the history of the United States.⁴⁵ It is now possible to understand that the history of the United States is a lot

⁴¹ See Theodore K. Rabb, *Those Who Do Not Learn History*, THE CHRON. OF HIGHER EDUC. (2007), <https://www.chronicle.com/article/those-who-do-not-learn-history/>. The author mourns the lack of emphasis on history in the era of standardized tests and expresses if we allow "talented teachers" the freedom to teach history in depth, their enthusiasm will allow their students to gain a sense of perspective about themselves and their world and learn to analyze the news that surrounds them. Instead, we put the teaching of history into ever narrower straitjackets, and spin test results that demonstrate profound ignorance into symptoms of a brighter future. Additionally, Rabb laments the fact that schools, which once communicated information and helped students develop intellectual abilities, are now forced to "train" students rather than "educate" them in order to meet state-imposed accountability standards. See Julie Hisey Maranto, *The Effect of Standardized Testing on Historical Literacy and Educational Reform in the U.S.* (2015) (M.A. Thesis, Fort Hays State University) (citing Theodore K. Rabb, "No Child" Left Behind Historical Literacy, 70 EDUC. DIG. 18, 20 (2004)).

⁴² Kristen Purcell & Lee Rainie, *More Information Yields More Learning and Sharing*, PEW RSCH. CTR. (Dec. 8, 2014), <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2014/12/08/more-information-yields-more-learning-and-sharing/>.

⁴³ "History is Written by the Victors," is a quote often attributed to Winston Churchill, but there is no real record of him saying exactly that. See Matthew Phelan, *The History of "History is Written by the Victors"*, SLATE (Nov. 26, 2019), <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/173752>. Moreover, it is not always the victor who writes history, but rather an excellent writer whose work is preserved and passed on. See Prateek Dasgupta, *Is History Written by the Victors? Here are 5 Examples of Losers Writing History*, HIST. OF YESTERDAY (Sept. 17, 2021), <https://historyofyesterday.com/is-history-written-by-the-victors-here-are-5-examples-of-losers-writing-history-815b4f28e37c>.

⁴⁴ And sometimes luck.

⁴⁵ Douglas Seefeldt & William G. Thomas, *Intersections: History and New Media What is Digital History?*, AM. HIST. ASS'N (May 1, 2009), <https://www.historians.org/research-and-publications/perspectives-on-history/may-2009/what-is-digital-history>.

more complicated (and less one-sided) than has been traditionally understood by the citizens of the country.⁴⁶

III. IMPLICATIONS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY WARS IN EUROPE⁴⁷

When looking at the general history of the world, pretty much all history is related to wars, invasions, empire-building, and empire destruction.⁴⁸ This is true even when we are unaware of the history of a particular people, country, or continent. Thus, what we create as our history can only be understood to the extent that a particular history plays a role in our current existence. For the United States, the major player in constructing the history of our country is “western” history, or the history of the European nations.⁴⁹

In comparison to other current major players in the world, the United States is a new country.⁵⁰ True enough, those coming to the United States ousted Native populations who had existed in North America for thousands of years,⁵¹ but in terms of the modern-day powerhouse countries that govern the world’s economies and military strongholds, the United States is comparatively the new kid on the block. This is important in assessing how or why the United States was able to become what it did become. One can debate where humankind began; however, for purposes of understanding the context of the history of the United States, the focus of historical understanding must be on what was happening in what we now call Europe.

It might be charitable to say that Eighteenth-Century Europe was “a period of intellectual, social, and political ferment.”⁵² This was a time of great change and unending wars; however, in some respects, this has always been true of Europe. It is no secret that many of our most celebrated historical figures are known for their conquests on the battlefield (e.g., Constantine, Charlemagne, Hannibal), and were

⁴⁶ Jack P. Green, *Perspectives on American History*, 91 IND. MAG. OF HIST. 179, 179–80 (1995).

⁴⁷ This Article focuses primarily on the relationship between the United States and Europe (rather than on history and civilizations in Asia and Africa) because of the interconnectedness between American history and European history.

⁴⁸ Daniel Tompsett, *Empire-Building, Then and Now*, VISION (2023), <https://www.vision.org/empire-building-then-and-now-9423>.

⁴⁹ Joshua J. Mark, *European Colonization of the Americas*, WORLD HIST. ENCYCLOPEDIA (Oct. 19, 2020), https://www.worldhistory.org/European_Colonization_of_the_Americas/.

⁵⁰ Condoleezza Rice et. al., *America: Growth of a Young Nation*, HOOVER INST. (July 2, 2021), <https://www.hoover.org/research/america-growth-young-nation-0>.

⁵¹ And, of course, were eventually slaughtered by the European colonizers. See Adam Rutherford, *A New History of the First Peoples in the Americas*, THE ATL. (Oct. 3, 2017), <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/10/a-brief-history-of-everyone-who-ever-lived/537942/>.

⁵² *Europe in the Eighteenth Century*, THE EULER ARCHIVE, <https://eulerarchive.maa.org/historica/eighteenth.html> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

given titles appropriate to their warring victories (e.g., William the Conqueror).⁵³ It is rare that historians chronicle in great detail during times of peace and lack of conflict.⁵⁴ Even when it occurs, there is a war shortly around the corner, either by virtue of the decision to wage war, the need to protect oneself from invasion, or a conflict over resources outside the borders of one's country.⁵⁵

France and England have a particularly robust history of war, especially with each other.⁵⁶ The two countries vied for dominance of the world (including colonialization) for hundreds of years, including a series of wars that are collectively called the Hundred Years War.⁵⁷ However, France and England were also not the only countries (dynasties) in Europe.⁵⁸ In the late 1700s, the Holy Roman Empire still existed;⁵⁹ the Habsburg Dynasty controlled much of what we now consider modern day Europe,⁶⁰ and Russia became a major player in the 1700s after Peter the Great became Tsar.⁶¹ War, or the potential for war, was never very far away, and resources were continuously piped into war and defense efforts.⁶²

⁵³ Colin Ricketts, *Emperor Constantine's Victories and Re-unification of the Roman Empire*, HISTORYHIT (July 30, 2018), <https://www.historyhit.com/emperor-constantines-victories-and-re-unification-of-the-roman-empire/>; *Charlemagne*, HISTORY.COM (July 22, 2022), <https://www.history.com/topics/middle-ages/charlemagne>; *Hannibal*, HISTORY.COM (May 9, 2023), <https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-rome/hannibal>.

⁵⁴ See, e.g., Charles Howlett, *Studying America's Struggle Against War: An Historical Perspective*, 36 THE HIST. TCHR. 297, 297 (2003) ("The basic question educators should ask is why do historians and social studies teachers devote so much of their scholarship and teaching to war and, conversely, so little to peace studies?").

⁵⁵ See generally SIMON JENKINS, A SHORT HISTORY OF EUROPE: FROM PERICLES TO PUTIN 1–2 (2019).

⁵⁶ See generally Stephanie Downes & Andrew Lynch, *War and Emotional Formation, in WRITING WAR IN BRITAIN AND FRANCE, 1370–1854: A HISTORY OF EMOTIONS* 1, 3–4 (Stephanie Downes et al. eds., 2019).

⁵⁷ See generally JONATHAN SUMPTION, THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR, VOLUME 1: TRIAL BY BATTLE 37 (1999).

⁵⁸ *The Grandest Dynasties of Europe*, NOBILITY TITLES (Feb. 11, 2022), <https://nobilitytitles.net/the-grandest-dynasties-of-europe/>.

⁵⁹ See generally *Timeline: Holy Roman Empire*, OXFORD REFERENCE (2012), <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780191737619.timeline.0001>.

⁶⁰ See generally CAPTIVATING HISTORY, THE HABSBURG EMPIRE: A CAPTIVATING GUIDE TO THE HOUSE OF AUSTRIA AND THE IMPACT THE HABSBURGS HAD ON THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE 6 (2021).

⁶¹ See generally ROBERT K. MASSIE, PETER THE GREAT: HIS LIFE AND WORLD 13 (1981).

⁶² Will Kenton, *War Economy: Definition, Priorities, Example*, INVESTOPEDIA (Oct. 25, 2021), <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/w/war-economy.asp>.

A. *What Was Happening in Europe During the Genesis of the American Revolution?*

For the rest of the world, what became the United States was an outpost for the older societies that populated Europe.⁶³ Ignoring the indigenous populations that already called North America home, European countries did not send explorers to the “new” world to establish population centers, but rather to exploit the potential for profitability.⁶⁴ The more colonies a country had, the more resources (or profit) they could provide the parent countries.⁶⁵ These resources, in turn, could provide the needed finances for additional wars.⁶⁶ It was an added bonus that the parent countries could also send supplies and materials that the colonists would not only have to pay for, but eventually pay taxes on.⁶⁷

One of the more underrated events in the 1700s that led to the potential for an American Revolution was the French and Indian War.⁶⁸ American education glosses over the significance of the French and Indian War, and when it does so, it often does not fully describe the complexity of what was happening on the North American continent.⁶⁹

⁶³ See *Colonial Settlement 1600s–1763, Overview*, THE LIBR. OF CONG., <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/united-states-history-primary-source-timeline/colonial-settlement-1600-1763/overview/> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023) (“Successful colonization was not inevitable. Rather, interest in North America was a halting, yet global, contest among European powers to exploit these lands.”).

⁶⁴ See *Motivations for Colonization*, NAT’L GEOGRAPHIC (May 19, 2020), <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/article/motivations-colonization/>. There were other reasons for traveling to the “new world.” Some, who had nothing, did hope to make their fortune in North America; others aspired to convert what was considered a “heathen” continent to Christianity. It took a long time for the ventures to the “new world” to become profitable. Unlike trade with other areas in the world (like Asia) with established populations, trade with North America had to be developed from scratch. See *Colonization and Settlement, 1585-1763*, GILDER LEHRMAN, <https://ap.gilderlehrman.org/essay/colonization-and-settlement-1585%E2%82%AC%E2%80%9C1763?period=2> (last visited Nov. 19, 2023).

⁶⁵ ALEXANDER ANIEVAS & KEREM NIŞANCIOĞLU, *HOW THE WEST CAME TO RULE* 121–73 (2015).

⁶⁶ *Id.*

⁶⁷ Leslie Kramer, *Mercantilism and the Colonies of Great Britain*, INVESTOPEDIA (May 17, 2021), <https://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/041615/how-did-mercantilism-affect-colonies-great-britain.asp>.

⁶⁸ *The Effects of War*, AM. HIST. FROM REVOLUTION TO RECONSTRUCTION, <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/essays/before-1800/french-and-indian-wars/effects-of-the-war.php> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023). See generally WALTER R. BORNEMAN, *THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR: DECIDING THE FATE OF NORTH AMERICA* xxiii (2007).

⁶⁹ JAMES W. LOEWEN, *LIES MY TEACHER TOLD ME: EVERYTHING YOUR AMERICAN HISTORY TEXTBOOK GOT WRONG* 15 (1996).

The French and Indian War, often regarded as a minimal event in American history,⁷⁰ was a world event with far ranging consequences for the history that followed. On the North American continent, it was essentially a war between Great Britain and France over western territories in the United States (starting at the Ohio Valley), and in territories that are now the eastern provinces in Canada.⁷¹ It lasted nine years (1754–1763), and the two European countries allied respectively with Native American populations attempting to protect their own interests.⁷² The majority of fighting in the French and Indian War ended in approximately 1760.⁷³ However, in Europe, a continuation of the war was occurring in what became known as The Seven Years' War.⁷⁴ The Seven Years' War involved the same issues as most wars do: control over territory, resources, and outrage over the loss of territory occurring in treaties from previous wars.⁷⁵

As was predictable, the wars took their tolls on the countries involved, not just with death, but with resources. By the time of the American Revolution, Great Britain had been at war internally and externally for much of the preceding part of the Eighteenth Century.⁷⁶ The same was true of France.⁷⁷

B. Who Were the Revolutionaries?

The Founding Fathers are often invoked with a kind of reverence. Many, especially when attempting to defend all aspects of the United States, conjure an image of wise and honorable men sitting in a room,⁷⁸ discussing a new form of governance that would truly be formed from the will of all the people. These men would form a new

⁷⁰ David Armitage, *A Round Table Discussion of Fred Anderson's Crucible of War: The Global History of the Seven Years' War*, COMMON-PLACE.ORG 1 (Sept. 2000), <https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/armitage/files/common-place.pdf> [https://perma.cc/Y3QA-EXSJ].

⁷¹ FRED ANDERSON, *THE WAR THAT MADE AMERICA* 3–16 (2006).

⁷² See Christina Rose, *Native History: The French and Indian War Ends with the Treaty of Paris*, INDIAN COUNTRY TODAY (Feb. 10, 2014), <https://ictnews.org/archive/native-history-french-and-indian-war-ends-with-treaty-of-paris>.

⁷³ William R. Griffith IV, *The French and Indian War (1754–1763): Its Consequences*, AM. BATTLEFIELD TR., <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/Articles/french-and-indian-war-1754-1763-its-consequences> (last visited Oct. 7, 2023).

⁷⁴ *Id.*

⁷⁵ *Seven Years' War*, HISTORY.COM (Nov. 12, 2009), <https://www.history.com/topics/france/seven-years-war>.

⁷⁶ *Rule Britannia! The English Empire (1660–1763): Wars for Empire*, COURSE HERO, <https://www.coursehero.com/study-guides/ushistory1os/wars-for-empire/> (last visited Oct. 7, 2023).

⁷⁷ *Id.*

⁷⁸ Visions of the Broadway musical “1776” come to mind.

nation based on justice, equality, and the best of what history had to offer in terms of appropriate and representative governments.⁷⁹ For those looking for a nonearthly reason for the existence of the United States, it might be hard to dispute the role that providence had in its creation. By fate, the 1770s brought together several extremely bright and visionary individuals at the same place and time in history.⁸⁰

However, it is incorrect to think that the revolution occurred because of a *sua sponte* collective and uniform demand to be free from British oppression. It is also incorrect to think that those we now remember as the Founding Fathers all got in a room together and decided that there would be a revolution.⁸¹

There are many reasons why the American Revolution played out (and ended) as it did, but it's probably fair to say that money was the greater reason for the revolution than a philosophical objection to tyranny—or at least the first step toward labeling the British as tyrants.⁸² In the mid 1760s, the American, who had not been heavily taxed previously, found themselves being forced to pay taxes to Britain.⁸³ These taxes were not just for the purpose of paying for previous wars fought by Britain, but to pay for the expenses of a military presence that Great Britain felt was necessary in the colonies.⁸⁴ When the colonists—or rather, primarily Massachusetts—objected to the imposition of these taxes, Great Britain responded by “doubling down” on the right of the King to do as he pleased.⁸⁵ Thus, the rebellion was not entirely one about specific taxes or even necessarily a lack of representation for the specific taxes imposed in the 1760s. It was more about the growing desire of many of the wealthier, elite colonists

⁷⁹ Matt Thompson, *Americans Didn't Always Worship the Founding Fathers*, THE ATL. (Feb. 12, 2015), <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/02/when-did-americans-start-worshipping-the-founders/385432/>.

⁸⁰ See JACK RAKOVE, *REVOLUTIONARIES: A NEW HISTORY OF THE INVENTION OF AMERICA* 16–18 (2010).

⁸¹ *Author Interviews: Colonial “Revolutionaries” Were Reluctant Rebels*, NPR (May 15, 2010), <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=126785533>.

⁸² RAKOVE, *supra* note 80, at 29–111.

⁸³ Lynne Oats & Pauline Sadler, *Accounting for the Stamp Act Crisis*, 35 ACCT. HISTORIANS J. 101, 111–12 (2008).

⁸⁴ The various taxation acts were not only enacted to “reimburse” Britain for monies spent warring with France on the European continent, but to fund a military presence that would try to secure the colony borders where there were skirmishes with Native Americans and a continuous threat from France wishing to extend its territory in the “new world.” *Stamp Act (Why the Stamp Act was Passed)*, HISTORY.COM (Nov. 9, 2009), <https://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/stamp-act>.

⁸⁵ The Stamp Act was repealed in 1766, but then Great Britain passed the Declaratory Act, which reasserted Great Britain's power to pass whatever legislation “in all cases whatsoever” in the colonies. See RAKOVE, *supra* note 80, at 28–70; see also WILLIAM R. POLK, *THE BIRTH OF AMERICA: FROM BEFORE COLUMBUS TO THE REVOLUTION* 304–05 (2006).

to want more control over their own rights, especially regarding property and profitability.⁸⁶

Not everyone was enthusiastic about going to war with Great Britain.⁸⁷ Moreover, there were many living on the continent who really were not part of the “revolutionary” hub that existed in New England.⁸⁸ These individuals were not at all interested in opposing British Rule.⁸⁹ Most of those individuals we now consider the Founders (except for a few, such as Samuel Adams) might have been the least interested of all in going to war with Great Britain.⁹⁰ Not only were they in danger of losing their status, wealth, and their lives, but they had their own doubts about how the discussions about philosophies of government would clash with the reality of creating a successful new country.⁹¹

Thus, the American Revolution was much more complex than it is often made out to be. Neither the ending, nor the type of government forged, was a sure thing. This is especially true because, once a declaration of “liberty” is made in any revolution, there must be some way to implement the plan in a way that those purported to be governed will adhere to it. This was a major hurdle for what became the United States. Although there were a lot of philosophical platitudes thrown around at the time the Declaration of Independence was signed, none of the writers of the First Constitution wanted to deal directly or permanently with the question of slavery.⁹² Some of the most prominent statesmen in the country were from Virginia and relied on the slave-driven

⁸⁶ Isaac Makos, *Myths and Realities of the Revolutionary War*, AM. BATTLEFIELD TR. (Feb. 14, 2022), <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/myths-and-realities-revolutionary-war> (“The colonists were also angered by British government policies like the Proclamation of 1763 that reserved western lands for Native Americans. American colonists resented these acts, which they believed deprived them of lands they had won the right to settle after the French and Indian War.”).

⁸⁷ *Big Idea 5: Opposition to Revolution*, MUSEUM OF THE AM. REVOLUTION, <https://www.amrevmuseum.org/big-idea-5-opposition-to-independence> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

⁸⁸ *Florida of 1776 Wasn't Pursuing Independence*, THE ORLANDO SENTINEL (July 2, 1995), <https://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/os-xpm-1995-07-02-9506300214-story.html>.

⁸⁹ In 1776, Florida (which was divided between east and west Florida) was considered under British rule but was not one of the thirteen colonies. Florida did not participate in the War for Independence. *See id.*

⁹⁰ RAKOVE, *supra* note 80, at 29–111.

⁹¹ Merrill Jensen, *The American People and the American Revolution*, 57 J. OF AM. HIST. 5, 9–10 (1970).

⁹² Steven Mintz, *Historical Context: The Constitution and Slavery*, THE GILDER LEHRMAN INST. OF AM. HIST., <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/teaching-resource/historical-context-constitution-and-slavery> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

economy for their lifestyles.⁹³ Even if they personally contemplated the contradiction between their words regarding the tyranny of Britain and their ownership of humans, it did not inspire them to do anything about it.⁹⁴

Those who were not slaveholders were not too forceful in pushing for equality. Even people of color who were not or had never been slaves did not necessarily receive the right to vote after the American Revolution.⁹⁵ Any contemplation of the Native American population seems to have been left out completely from the Founders' views for establishing a new government—even as the Founders tried to establish rules for westward territories that might become part of the new United States.⁹⁶ Overall, the Founders had a very insular and elitist view of who would have rights in the new country. The Founders were never in favor of everyone on the continent having the same rights, and this resulted in a government not much different than what the British Government had been—one that favored wealthy, elite landowners.⁹⁷ Nonetheless, the Founders still had to deal with very disparate viewpoints on what a federal government should be allowed to do,⁹⁸ as well as what the role of taxation would be in the new country.⁹⁹

C. The War

When learning about history, most students learn about the adept leadership of General George Washington. Some possibly learned that one of the reasons for colonial victory was that the British troops all stood in a straight line and shot while the colonists hid behind trees in a new form of war.¹⁰⁰ The history books make it sound as though the British army was inept, choosing pageantry over practicality.¹⁰¹

⁹³ *Slavery at Mount Vernon*, GEORGE WASHINGTON'S MOUNT VERNON, <https://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/slavery/slavery-at-mount-vernon/> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

⁹⁴ See generally Stephen E. Ambrose, *Founding Fathers and Slaveholders*, THE SMITHSONIAN MAG. (Nov. 2002), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/founding-fathers-and-slaveholders-72262393/>; see also RAKOVE, *supra* note 80, at 198–241.

⁹⁵ *The Expansion of the Vote: A White Man's Democracy*, USHISTORY.ORG (May 2022), <https://www.ushistory.org/us/23b.asp>.

⁹⁶ Ambrose, *supra* note 94.

⁹⁷ RAKOVE, *supra* note 80, at 177–78.

⁹⁸ *Id.* at 185.

⁹⁹ Andrew M. Schocket, *Death, Taxes, and the American Founders*, OSU.EDU: ORIGINS: CURRENT EVENTS IN HIST. PERSP. (Dec. 2010), https://origins.osu.edu/history-news/death-taxes-and-american-founders?language_content_entity=en.

¹⁰⁰ Makos, *supra* note 86.

¹⁰¹ Richard H. Kohn, *Feeding the War Machine, Eighteenth-Century Style*, 4 REVS. IN AM. HIST. 178, 178 (1976) (reviewing ARTHUR BOWLER, *LOGISTICS AND THE FAILURE OF THE BRITISH ARMY IN AMERICA, 1775–1783* (1975)).

This is not true, of course. Great Britain had what was regarded as the greatest army in the world.¹⁰²

Initially, there was no colonial army.¹⁰³ There were not even standing state (colony) armies. Some, like George Washington, had been part of the British Army and fought in the French and Indian War,¹⁰⁴ but otherwise, it was volunteer local militias (or Ranger units)¹⁰⁵ that acted as protection for various cities or outposts.¹⁰⁶ These volunteer endeavors were not very formidable in view of what those familiar with the British Army expected to encounter.¹⁰⁷ As a result, George Washington, who was known because of his war experience and because he was involved in Virginia politics, was put in charge of establishing a Continental Army.¹⁰⁸ This was no small feat. It required an ability to provide food and pay authorized by a not-fully-established government, as well as the ability to ensure those committed to the army remained in the army.¹⁰⁹

Given that the United States was not able to tax its citizens, the Revolution was initially financed by printing money and providing IOUs.¹¹⁰ As the war progressed, various colonial leaders solicited help from other European countries to help with their endeavor.¹¹¹ France, which had a bitter history of war with Britain, ultimately

¹⁰² Rebecca Beatrice Brooks, *The British Army in the Revolutionary War*, HISTORYOFMASSACHUSETTS.ORG: HIST. OF MASS. BLOG (Nov. 27, 2017), <https://historyofmassachusetts.org/british-army-revolutionary-war/>.

¹⁰³ *Creating a Continental Army*, THE LIBR. OF CONG., <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/united-states-history-primary-source-timeline/american-revolution-1763-1783/creating-a-continental-army/> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

¹⁰⁴ *Id.*

¹⁰⁵ See generally JOHN SHY, *A PEOPLE NUMEROUS AND ARMED: REFLECTION ON THE MILITARY STRUGGLE OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE* 25 (2008).

¹⁰⁶ POLK, *supra* note 85, at 305–06.

¹⁰⁷ *The War Experience: Soldiers, Officers, and Civilians*, USHISTORY.ORG, <https://www.ushistory.org/us/13b.asp> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

¹⁰⁸ RAKOVE, *supra* note 80, at 120.

¹⁰⁹ The zeal for war was not quite how it is often depicted in popular culture. Many who thought fighting would somehow be a glorious enterprise found out early that this was not at all true. Moreover, despite popular myths, the British won far more battles than they lost. *Id.* at 127, 132.

¹¹⁰ John L. Smith, Jr., *How Was the Revolutionary War Paid For?*, J. OF THE AM. REVOLUTION (Feb. 23, 2015), <https://allthingsliberty.com/2015/02/how-was-the-revolutionary-war-paid-for/>.

¹¹¹ *French Alliance, French Assistance, and European Diplomacy During the American Revolution, 1778–1782*, U.S. DEP'T OF STATE: OFF. HISTORIAN, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1776-1783/french-alliance> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

committed funds to the war in 1778, although some funds and resources were contributed to the colonies prior to that.¹¹² Although school history classes focus on the significance of Gilbert du Motier—Marquis de Lafayette—as a representative of France’s commitment to the colonies, France did not send Lafayette to help the colonial troops.¹¹³ Rather, Lafayette, a 19-year-old aristocrat with no battle experience, came to the colonies on his own in 1777 in defiance of the King and various family members.¹¹⁴ He paid his own passage.¹¹⁵ Lafayette did, indeed, become a hero of the American Revolution after developing a close, son-like relationship with George Washington.¹¹⁶ Lafayette not only served with distinction by commanding troops during the war, but he was instrumental in negotiating for additional French support for the American colonists.

IV. GEOGRAPHY COMES INTO PLAY

One of the factors that many do not even consider in the victory of the American Revolution was the nature of geography itself.¹¹⁷ Airplanes did not exist.¹¹⁸ It was not easy for Great Britain to send troops or supplies to the colonies, and it was not easy to move soldiers around to the areas of most need.¹¹⁹ This resulted in the colonists’ ability to control their home field and ultimately defeat the British Army fighting on American soil.¹²⁰ That said, the Colonial Army did not really

¹¹² *Id.*

¹¹³ *Marquis de Lafayette*, GEORGE WASHINGTON’S MOUNT VERNON, <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/marquis-de-lafayette/> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

¹¹⁴ Michael Schellhammer, *The Daring Departure of Lafayette*, J. AM. REVOLUTION (Nov. 21, 2013), <https://allthingsliberty.com/2013/11/departure-lafayette/>.

¹¹⁵ *Id.*

¹¹⁶ See *Marquis de Lafayette*, *supra* note 113.

¹¹⁷ Perkins, *supra* note 38, at 28 (“Again, it was geography which from the beginning made British suppression of the colonies difficult, if not impossible. The area of the colonies was great for the effective repression of revolt, the British might, and often did, succeed in putting down resistance in this area or that, but they were never able to control the whole of the colonies with the limited forces at their command. The length of the American coast line made effective blockade impossible under the conditions of the eighteenth century, and the colonists were able to draw from Europe resources for the continuance of their struggle. Only a moral collapse on the part of the colonials, a collapse that could hardly have been hoped for with the magnificent leadership of Washington, could have brought about the defeat of the forces of independence. The cards were stacked in favour of the ‘rebels.’”).

¹¹⁸ *Who Invented the Aeroplane*, NAT’L AERONAUTICS & SPACE ADMIN. (Dec. 1, 2003), https://www.nasa.gov/audience/forstudents/k-4/home/F_Who_Invented_Aeroplane.html.

¹¹⁹ See generally Kohn, *supra* note 102, at 180.

¹²⁰ *Id.* at 180–81; see also RAKOVE, *supra* note 81, at 134.

“overwhelm” the British Army in any traditional sense.¹²¹ The British Army actually won most of the battles it fought against the Colonial Army, but the British Army could not control all aspects of the vastness of the American Colonial geography.¹²² Controlling the frontiers where settlers were often spread apart became an insurmountable challenge for Great Britain.¹²³

France was very much in support of the colonists’ revolt, but not because they were interested in establishing Democracy throughout the world.¹²⁴ France was still very much a monarchy, and it was Louis XVI who ultimately agreed to help the colonists with resources.¹²⁵ However, a colonial victory meant that France’s perpetual rival in war and colonialism would no longer reap the benefits of the taxes and resources they would otherwise receive from the states.¹²⁶ This meant that Great Britain would, perhaps, not have the resources to rebuild a war machine that was perpetually at war with France. Additionally, France saw the American Revolution as an opportunity to extract revenge from Great Britain because of the Seven Years’ War.¹²⁷

The geography of the United States might be the one, primary feature that allowed the United States to grow and flourish as it did in both the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.¹²⁸ Clearly the states were neither undiscovered nor uninhabited before the

¹²¹ See Makos, *supra* note 86.

¹²² See Perkins, *supra* note 38.

¹²³ *Id.*

¹²⁴ James Breck Perkins, *France and the American Revolution*, 4 PROC. OF THE N.Y. STATE HIST. ASS’N 74, 76 (1904) (“The Count of Vergennes was then the minister of foreign affairs in France, and more than any other one man he had to do with the relations between France and the Thirteen Colonies. It must be admitted that it was hatred of England rather than love for the colonists which led him to advise interference in their behalf. ‘England,’ he said . . . ‘is the natural enemy of France; an enemy greedy, ambitious, unjust and treacherous. The results of this war,’ he said again, ‘will reduce England to the condition of a second-class power, will strip her of the empire which she pretends to exercise over the four quarters of the earth with equal pride and injustice, and will deliver the universe from a greedy tyrant that wishes to absorb all power and all wealth.’”).

¹²⁵ John Hardman, *Louis XVI, Vergennes, and the American Independence*, 13 BULLETIN DU CENTRE DE RESEARCH DU CHATEAU DE VERSAILLES 1 (July 5, 2016).

¹²⁶ Perkins, *supra* note 38.

¹²⁷ Suzanne McGee, *Five Ways the French Helped Win the American Revolution*, HISTORY.COM (Sept. 9, 2020), <https://www.history.com/news/american-revolution-french-role-help>; Hardman, *supra* note 125.

¹²⁸ See Aaron David Miller, *How Geography Explains the United States*, FOREIGN POL’Y (Apr. 16, 2013, 8:51 PM), <https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/04/16/how-geography-explains-the-united-states/> (“The United States is the only great power in the history of the world that has had the luxury of having nonpredatory neighbors to its north and south, and fish to its east and west.”).

Europeans arrived, but for all intents and purposes, the United States became a new country in the timeline of the western civilization.¹²⁹ Until the American Revolution, the powers of the western world were dominated by what we now regard as European countries and family dynasties.¹³⁰ These countries, dynasties, and ethnicities were not a very peaceful group. They spent centuries of civilization attempting conquest of neighbors near or far, or wresting power from a one ruling family or another.¹³¹ Although to some extent this did occur during the American Civil War, the United States has never gone through the repeated devastation of the entire country that happened continuously in Europe for centuries.

This has made all the difference in the United States' ability to build wealth and ability to consider long-term moral and social policy.¹³² The turmoil within Europe—and the rest of the world—has always been very far away.¹³³ As a result, the United States had the privilege of considering whether it would intercede in the wars of Europe or stay isolationist in the absence of bombs or invasion.¹³⁴ This changed somewhat after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, but even at that point, the United States was far removed from what was occurring in Europe.¹³⁵

A. World War II: The United States Becomes the Guardians of Justice

Because of the turmoil in Europe, the United States was able to become perhaps the “greatest country in the world” during the Twentieth Century.¹³⁶ At the beginning of the Twentieth Century, Europe remained a warring continent, and the Bolshevik

¹²⁹ Consider that the Battle of Hastings was in 1066, and at that time, the Great Britain territory had already been ruled by the Anglo-Saxons for 600 years. Thus, at the time of the American Revolution, there was well over a thousand years of what could be considered documented British history. See *What Happened at the Battle of Hastings?*, BBC NEWSROUND (Oct. 13, 2016), <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/37645852>.

¹³⁰ See generally Philip T. Hoffman, *Why Was It Europeans Who Conquered the World?*, 72 J. ECON. HIST. 601, 603 (2012).

¹³¹ *Id.* at 603–05.

¹³² Henry Rutgers Marshall, *War and Progress*, 204 N. AM. REV. 391, 395 (1916) (“Protected as we have been by the broad ocean from the warlike nations of the old world, we stand as the only great nation that has ever been in a position to try this experiment in any thoroughgoing manner.”).

¹³³ Peter G. Boyle, *The Roots of Isolationism: A Case Study*, 6 J. AM. STUD. 41, 42–43 (1972).

¹³⁴ *Id.* at 43–44.

¹³⁵ *Id.* at 42–44.

¹³⁶ *How Did the United States Become a Global Power?*, COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELS.: WORLD101 (Feb. 14, 2023), <https://world101.cfr.org/historical-context/world-war/how-did-united-states-become-global-power>.

Revolution sent Russia and the eastern bloc countries into disarray.¹³⁷ Countries vied for control over Middle Eastern resources as the family dynasties and empires of the Nineteenth Century began to crumble.¹³⁸

The United States entered World War I only reluctantly after Germany began a policy of sinking vessels entering the “war zone.”¹³⁹ After World War I, the United States adopted a policy of isolationism and had only a minimal commitment to the military at the start of the Second World War in Europe.¹⁴⁰ This, of course, increased during the Second World War. Although military spending decreased substantially at the end of World War II, military spending began to increase at the onset of the Korean War as the United States began building what is now the most powerful military force in the world.¹⁴¹

Many look back at the United States during the Twentieth Century with a sense of pride for its role as world leader and peacemaker.¹⁴² Indeed, the United States ultimately did play a necessary role in both World Wars and did occupy the moral high ground when it entered the war happening on European soil. However, the United States did not become the world power that it is now until after the Second World War. Thus, what many now regard as what has always been the status of the United States actually occurred during World War II and solidified after the war. This was the period in history when the United States rebuilt Europe, “welcomed” displaced persons, and became the “good guy” that promised to stand up to Communist regimes.¹⁴³ That time period, unique because of the circumstances happening in

¹³⁷ Steven Kreis, *The Aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution*, THE HIST. GUIDE (Apr. 13, 2012), <http://www.historyguide.org/europe/lecture7.html>.

¹³⁸ See James E. Kitchen, *Colonial Empires After the War/Decolonization*, INT’L ENCYCLOPEDIA AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR (Oct. 2014), https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/colonial_empires_after_the_wardecolonization.

¹³⁹ See Annette McDermott, *How the Sinking of the Lusitania Changed World War I*, HISTORY.COM (Feb. 9, 2021), <https://www.history.com/news/how-the-sinking-of-lusitania-changed-wwi>.

¹⁴⁰ *The American Expeditionary Forces*, THE LIBR. OF CONG., <https://www.loc.gov/collections/stars-and-stripes/articles-and-essays/a-world-at-war/american-expeditionary-forces/> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023) (“On April 6, 1917, when the United States declared war against Germany, the nation had a standing army of 127,500 officers and soldiers. By the end of the war, four million men had served in the United States Army, with an additional 800,000 in other military service branches.”).

¹⁴¹ See Chris Sturr, *U.S. Military Spending and the Cost of Wars*, DOLLARS & SENSE (2008), <https://www.dollarsandsense.org/archives/2006/0706sturr.html>.

¹⁴² Robert Kagan, *Benevolent Empire*, CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INT’L PEACE (1998), <https://carnegieendowment.org/1998/06/01/benevolent-empire-pub-275>.

¹⁴³ HOWARD ZINN, *A PEOPLE’S HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES* 425 (2005) (“The war brought higher prices for farmers, higher wages, enough prosperity for enough of the population to assume against the rebellions that so threatened the thirties.”). See generally N. B., *President*

world, has been transposed in recent years as being the entirety of the history of the United States.¹⁴⁴ Many of the warts and realities of our history have largely been forgotten.

Thus, the retrospective narrative of the United States has seemingly become that it has always been strong, moral, ethical, and humble. Many believe that the United States has always had a goodness, if not a blessing—a melting pot of races, nationalities, and religions where all who entered had the opportunity for wealth, security, and above all, fair treatment not predicated on birthright.¹⁴⁵

These characterizations are both true and not true. In comparison to the generations of blood feuds in Europe, the United States can claim it did not have the same type of historic ethnic hatred that resulted in countries destroying each other for centuries.¹⁴⁶ Yet, a true melting pot it was not. The same types of racial, ethnic, and religious hatreds existed, but were not predicated on the traditional borders and bloodlines of Europe.¹⁴⁷ It is not accurate to say that there was not the same type of hate of “otherness” happening in the United States, but the type of hatred was different and manifested itself more through segregation of communities than waging war for one’s homeland.¹⁴⁸

Moreover, some groups did have commonalities that prevented some of what had been occurring in Europe. Immigrants from all nationalities were minorities in relation to those who were already American.¹⁴⁹ These newcomers found themselves separated from “the ruling class” by socioeconomic status.¹⁵⁰ Few could point to the

Eisenhower and Congress: Peace and Prosperity under Strain, 13 THE WORLD TODAY 103, 104 (1957).

¹⁴⁴ Suzy Hansen, *The End of the End of American Exceptionalism*, N.Y. MAG. (July 2, 2021), <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2021/07/american-exceptionalism-insurrection.html>.

¹⁴⁵ *The Melting Pot*, PBS: THE FIRST MEASURED CENTURY, <https://www.pbs.org/fmc/timeline/emeltpot.htm> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

¹⁴⁶ Not that the United States hasn’t consistently been at war (figuratively and then literally) over slavery, but the European continent has traditionally been ethnically nationalistic, resulting in continuous wars over the centuries. *See generally* Lutz Holzner, *Minority Relations and Conflict in the Emerging European Community Specifically Germany, France and Great Britain*, 19 HUMBOLDT J. OF SOC. RELS. 157 (1993).

¹⁴⁷ Erika Lee, *Xenophobia Powers the United States*, PUBLIC BOOKS (June 15, 2022), <https://www.publicbooks.org/xenophobia-powers-the-united-states/>.

¹⁴⁸ Katie Nodjimbaden, *The Racial Segregation of America’s Cities Was Anything But Accidental*, THE SMITHSONIAN MAG. (May 30, 2017), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-federal-government-intentionally-racially-segregated-american-cities-180963494/>.

¹⁴⁹ *See* Lee, *supra* note 147.

¹⁵⁰ *See* ZINN, *supra* note 143, at 382 (“[P]rosperity was concentrated at the top. While from 1922 to 1929 real wages in manufacturing went up per capita 1.4 percent a year, the holders of

generational privilege of birth and caste that was so problematic in causing strife in Europe.¹⁵¹

And yet, what the United States was able to accomplish in the 1950s came about primarily because the country did not have to be physically rebuilt, nor did it have to reformulate a government, as was happening in so many other countries.¹⁵² These factors allowed the United States the privilege of being benevolent with respect to the other countries that suffered for many years following World War II.¹⁵³

The United States might, indeed, be the greatest country in the world.¹⁵⁴ There are certainly millions who currently believe so, as well as millions of European World War II survivors who were forever grateful for the United States' intercession in World War II.¹⁵⁵ True enough, it can be argued that it was Russia that contributed the

common stocks gained 16.4 percent a year. . . . One-tenth of 1 percent of the families at the top received as much income as 42 percent of the families at the bottom”).

¹⁵¹ Nonetheless, racial hatreds and prejudices always existed, and this included hatred against those “most” different such as Asians and persons of color. *Id.* (“Congress, in the twenties, put an end to the dangerous, turbulent flood of immigrants [T]he quotas favored Anglo-Saxons, kept out black and yellow people, [and] limited severely the coming of Latins, Slavs, Jews The Ku Klux Klan was revived in the 1920s, and it spread into the North. By 1924 it had 4 ½ million members.”). Those groups were segregated from the mainstream and could only prosper in their segregated communities. Ironically, these segregated communities often included the Jewish communities. *See Antisemitism in American History*, ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE, <https://antisemitism.adl.org/antisemitism-in-american-history/> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023). This was true even though most looked similar to their Caucasian neighbors of European origin. *Race, Ethnicity, Heritage Among U.S. Jews*, PEW RESEARCH (May 11, 2021), <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/05/11/race-ethnicity-heritage-and-immigration-among-u-s-jews/> (“The majority of U.S. Jews identify as White.”).

¹⁵² *The Post-War United States: 1945-1968*, THE LIBR. OF CONG., <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/united-states-history-primary-source-timeline/post-war-united-states-1945-1968/overview/> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023); *see also* ZINN, *supra* note 143, at 413 (“American diplomats and businessmen worked hard to make sure that when the war ended, American economic power would be second to none in the world. United States business would penetrate areas that up to this time had been dominated by England.”); Kagan, *supra* note 142.

¹⁵³ *See* ZINN, *supra* note 143, at 414 (“Economic assistance is one of the most effective weapons at our disposal to influence European political events in the direction we desire” (quoting the Ambassador to Russia in 1944)); *see also* Kagan, *supra* note 143.

¹⁵⁴ *See* Kagan, *supra* note 142 (“A world without U.S. primacy will be a world with more violence and disorder and less democracy and economic growth than a world where the United States continues to have more influence than any other country shaping global affairs.” (quoting Samuel Huntington)).

¹⁵⁵ For example, several hundred U.S. veterans of WWII have received France’s Legion of Honor, originally established by Napoleon. Margaret Fosmoe, *The Thanks of a Grateful Nation*, NOTRE DAME MAG. (June 10, 2021), <https://magazine.nd.edu/stories/the-thanks-of-a-grateful-nation/>.

most to eradicating Hitler's regime through resources and manpower,¹⁵⁶ but it was the United States that contributed the resources and weaponry to save Great Britain,¹⁵⁷ and it was the involvement of the United States that forced the Nazis to fight more extensively when they were already dealing with dwindling resources and soldiers.¹⁵⁸ The United States was also known for its humanity and integrity when dealing with the defeated Germans,¹⁵⁹ and it was the United States that provided most of the resources when rebuilding Germany following the war.¹⁶⁰ It was also the United States that passed the Displaced Persons Act, which enabled many to immigrate to the United States rather than be forced to return to inhospitable homelands.¹⁶¹

There was much to be proud of, and the patriotism of the current era is understandable. It is also very much understandable for the millions of Baby Boomers to look back on the period with nostalgia and through rose-colored glasses. In World War II, there was literally an "Axis of Evil,"¹⁶² that was vanquished by those on the moral high ground. The 1950s brought an era of prosperity to which an influx of

¹⁵⁶ C.N. Trueman, *Weapons and Manpower*, HIST. LEARNING SITE (July 2, 2022), <https://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/world-war-two/weapons-and-manpower/>.

¹⁵⁷ *Lend-Lease and Military Aid to the Allies in the Early Years of World War II*, U.S. DEP'T STATE: OFF. HIST., <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/lend-lease> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

¹⁵⁸ *Id.*

¹⁵⁹ See Kagan, *supra* note 142; see also Richard L. Sherman, *Italian, Japanese and German POWs in America: Strangers within our Gates*, WARFARE HIST. NETWORK (Oct. 2019), <https://warfarehistorynetwork.com/article/the-german-pow-experience-in-america/>.

¹⁶⁰ Stephanie Hinnershit, *The Marshall Plan and Post-War Economic Recovery*, NAT'L WWII MUSEUM (Mar. 30, 2022), <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/marshall-plan-and-postwar-economic-recovery>.

¹⁶¹ *Learning From Our Past: The Refugee Experience in the United States*, AM. IMMIGR. COUNCIL (Nov. 25, 2015), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/refugee-experience-united-states> ("The situation of displaced persons, however, proved intractable and there was increasing concern that if they did not find a proper refuge, they would be forcibly repatriated back to countries that were now behind, in Winston Churchill's coinage of 1946, an "iron curtain." Both Harry Truman and Franklin Roosevelt's widow Eleanor, with whom he maintained contact for many years on this issue, were appalled by the possibility. Congress, too, now supported action, and in 1948 passed the Displaced Persons Act, permitting some 200,000 to enter the United States. In 1950, Congress roughly doubled that number. As a result of these presidential and congressional actions, overall immigrant admissions in 1946 exceeded 100,000 for the first time since 1930, and reached nearly 250,000 in 1950.").

¹⁶² George W. Bush actually coined the term "Axis of Evil" in 2002. Andrew Glass, *This Day in Politics: President Bush Cites 'Axis of Evil'*, *JAN. 29, 2002*, POLITICO (Jan. 29, 2019), <https://www.politico.com/story/2019/01/29/bush-axis-of-evil-2002-1127725>.

immigrants contributed.¹⁶³ There were numerous technological achievements in the 1950s that seemed to collectively excite the country, such as cars, television, and, of course, space travel.¹⁶⁴ There was also seemingly another singular enemy that the country could rally around in its collective hatred: Communism.¹⁶⁵ At least on the surface, the good guys and the bad guys were easily identifiable.

V. TAKING A PEEK BEHIND THE CURTAIN

History is never as simple as what is portrayed in books after-the-fact. It is much more complicated than what is often presented for public consumption. The 1960s brought with it an interesting phenomenon. Despite the publicly portrayed peace and prosperity of the 1950s, the 1960s brought with it enlightenment, cynicism, and polarization.¹⁶⁶ It is hard to know whether the expansion of mass media caused this, but news reports regarding the Vietnam War and Civil Rights strife contributed to a more realistic public perception about what was happening in the United States.¹⁶⁷ As opposed to what had been more of a blind allegiance regarding the policies of the United States, many began seeing some of the “warts” previously hidden.¹⁶⁸ With more access to information, a substantial amount of the population discovered that many of the things that they thought were agreed upon and/or values of the country were not the values of everyone.¹⁶⁹

There are many reasons why the decades following the 1950s shifted in uniformity of perception in the United States.¹⁷⁰ There was not one event that caused the citizenry to take sides, but rather, the increase of mass transportation and mass communication

¹⁶³ See *The Postwar United States: 1945-1968*, *supra* note 152; see also Philip Martin, *Trends in Migration to the US*, POPULATION REFERENCE BUREAU (May 19, 2014), <https://www.prb.org/resources/trends-in-migration-to-the-u-s/>.

¹⁶⁴ See “*The Future*” in *the 1950s*, PBS, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/tupperware-future/> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

¹⁶⁵ See ZINN, *supra* note 143, at 425 (“The Truman administration, however, presented the Soviet Union as not just a rival but an immediate threat . . . it established a climate of fear—a hysteria about Communism—which would steeply escalate the military budget and stimulate the economy with war-related orders.”).

¹⁶⁶ See Kenneth T. Walsh, *The 1960s, Polarization, Cynicism, and the Youth Rebellion*, U.S. NEWS (Mar. 12, 2010), <https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2010/03/12/the-1960s-polarization-cynicism-and-the-youth-rebellionredirect>.

¹⁶⁷ See, e.g., RICHARD CAMPBELL, *MEDIA & CULTURE: AN INTRODUCTION TO MASS COMMUNICATION* 162–64 (2003).

¹⁶⁸ *The 1960s History*, HISTORY.COM, <https://www.history.com/topics/1960s/1960s-history> (June 26, 2020).

¹⁶⁹ See generally ZINN, *supra* note 143, at 469–501.

¹⁷⁰ See Carolina Matos, *Globalization and the Mass Media*, ENCYCLOPEDIA OF GLOBALIZATION 4 (2012), <https://openaccess.city.ac.uk/id/eprint/5542/1/mass>.

enabled the population to learn more about the world and about each other.¹⁷¹ In many respects, it is often insularity that can give others the perception that everyone else thinks similarly.¹⁷² This has been a useful tool used by governments who wanted to demonize an “other.”¹⁷³ However, this has also been useful for purposes of banding together as a country for good and moral reasons, especially when it can do so in opposition to an indisputable clear villain—such as Hitler.¹⁷⁴

Nonetheless, as history continued in the decades beyond the 1960s, many have glorified the idealism of an era that had existed 60+ years previously.¹⁷⁵ This progressed with the policies of presidents like Ronald Reagan and George Bush Jr. who “talked tough,” invested heavily in the military, and often could point to military victories as proof of the United States’ superiority within the world.¹⁷⁶ Because of both might and prosperity, many in the United States have not felt the need to contemplate the role of themselves or the United States within the rest of the world for a long time.¹⁷⁷ This has come back to haunt the United States in various ways.

¹⁷¹ See generally *id.*

¹⁷² See Jon Bostock, *The Issue with Living in a Bubble*, GREENBOOK ARTICLES (Sept. 2, 2020), <https://www.greenbook.org/mr/market-research-news/the-issue-with-living-in-a-bubble/>.

¹⁷³ This was especially successful in Nazi Germany. See *Nazi Propaganda and Censorship*, U.S. HOLOCAUST MEM’L MUSEUM, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/nazi-propaganda-and-censorship> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

¹⁷⁴ See *World War II Propaganda*, PBS, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/goebbels-propaganda/> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023); see also Madison Horne, *These World War II Posters Rallied the Home Front*, HISTORY.COM (Mar. 13, 2019), <https://www.history.com/news/world-war-ii-propaganda-posters-photos-united-states-home-front>.

¹⁷⁵ See E. J. Dionne Jr., *Remembering the ‘60s: The Way We Were Wasn’t So Simple*, THE WASH. POST (Sept. 8, 1998), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1998/09/08/remembering-the-60s-the-way-we-were-wasnt-so-simple/64ab2f2e-2041-4eed-ad83-e4f100553505/>.

¹⁷⁶ See, e.g., Robert G. Kaiser, *Reagan’s America: An Intoxicating Myth for our Times*, THE WASH. POST (Oct. 14, 1984), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1984/10/14/reagans-america-an-intoxicating-myth-for-our-times/eb8a44a0-c31c-431c-93f3-3bbd59c5d49d/>; see also David A. Smith, *Cowboy Politics: The Changing Frontier Myth and Presidencies of Theodore Roosevelt, Lyndon Johnson, Ronald Reagan, and George W. Bush* (Mar. 31, 2016) (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Saskatchewan), <https://core.ac.uk/outputs/226128990>.

¹⁷⁷ See Stephen M. Walt, *The Myth of American Exceptionalism*, FOREIGN POL’Y (Oct. 11, 2011), <https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/10/11/the-myth-of-american-exceptionalism/>.

A. 2016 and Beyond

Regardless of one's politics, the 2016 election was a rude and cruel awakening for many.¹⁷⁸ Whether one regarded Donald Trump as a hero or a villain, his existence and then election shined a bright light on the previously unacknowledged differences the American citizenry had with each other.¹⁷⁹ Many who believed that the United States had reached a type of racial equanimity discovered that peers and family members had actually despised Barack Obama being president.¹⁸⁰ Many who thought that we had reached a near consensus as a nation about welcoming immigrants, remedying racial injustice, and accepting same-sex marriage discovered that this was not true.¹⁸¹ Many who thought that it would not be unusual for a female to become President of the United States discovered that was untrue.¹⁸² Many who thought that social media and mass communication would bring the world together on issues such as climate change or how to deal with a pandemic discovered that they were mistaken.¹⁸³

The question remains as to how we could have been so wrong as to what we believed were common values? Before Donald Trump arrived on the political scene, most seemed to follow the mandate to keep political discussions out of family

¹⁷⁸ See Brandon W. Yan et al., *Changes in Mental Health Following the 2016 Presidential Election*, 35 J. GEN. INTERNAL MED. 170, 172, 176 (2021).

¹⁷⁹ See Matt Spetalnick et al., *Analysis: Trump's Legacy: A More Divided America, a More Unsettled World*, REUTERS (Jan. 19, 2021), <https://www.reuters.com/Article/usa-trump-legacy-analysis-int/analysis-trumps-legacy-a-more-divided-america-a-more-unsettled-world-idUSKBN29P0EX>.

¹⁸⁰ See Geoffrey Skelly, *Just How Many Obama 2012-Trump 2016 Voters Were There?*, UVA CTR. FOR POL.: SABATO'S CRYSTAL BALL (June 1, 2017), <https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/Articles/just-how-many-obama-2012-trump-2016-voters-were-there/>; see also Belinda Luscombe, *'It Makes Me Sick with Grief': Trump's Presidency Divided Families. What Happens to Them Now?*, TIME (Jan. 21, 2021), <https://time.com/5931349/trump-divided-families/>.

¹⁸¹ See generally Ana Bracic et al., *Is Sexism for White People? Gender Stereotypes, Race, and the 2016 Election*, 41 POL. BEHAVIOR 281, 294, 298–99 (2019); STEPHEN BERRY, *HOUSE OF ABRAHAM: LINCOLN AND THE TODDS, A FAMILY DIVIDED BY WAR* (2007). See Andrew Borsa, *Divided Families: The Shriver Brothers of Union Mill*, DISCOVER THE STORY: CIVIL WAR STORIES, <http://www.crossroadsofwar.org/discover-the-story/communities-at-war/civil-war-stories/> (last visited Oct. 11, 2023).

¹⁸² See Farida Jalalzai, *A Comparative Assessment of Hillary Clinton's 2016 Presidential Race*, 4 SOCIUS: SOCIOLOGICAL RSCH. FOR DYNAMIC WORLD 1, 2, 9 (Mar. 30, 2018).

¹⁸³ See Kristen M.C. Malecki et al., *Crisis Communication and Public Perception of COVID-19 Risk in the Era of Social Media*, 72 CLINICAL INFECTIOUS DISEASES 697, 700 (June 16, 2020).

gatherings and relationships.¹⁸⁴ However, with the election of Donald Trump, similar to what occurred right before the Civil War, this also became impossible to do.¹⁸⁵

One cannot blame Donald Trump alone for what was occurring. The opinions, if not prejudices, that led to the election of Donald Trump existed prior to his candidacy.¹⁸⁶ Moreover, opinions related to the functionality of the United States during the Obama administration were not necessarily the product of selfishness or racism. Those who grumbled about partisan politics or disagreed with some of the policies of the Administration were not necessarily people who were incorrect in their opinions.¹⁸⁷ There are many things that happen in any government that are worthy of criticism, and certainly many different opinions on the proper direction for a country.

The problem, however, was just how much had gone unnoticed, and this was true regardless of political party.¹⁸⁸ Few really knew how even their closest friends and families felt about major issues that shape the destiny of a country.¹⁸⁹ Although there is little doubt that Donald Trump's rhetoric appealed to those with overt and implicit racial biases, a much larger percentage voted for the party whom they felt would not "give their hard-earned money away."¹⁹⁰ This included giving it away through social programs, foreign aid, or taxation.¹⁹¹ Many of these were Baby Boomers whose parents, many of them immigrants, had worked their way up from nothing and who,

¹⁸⁴ See Sabrian Tavernese, *Families Have Been Torn Apart by Politics. What Happens to Them Now?*, N.Y. TIMES (Nov. 26, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/26/us/2020-election-family-conflict.html>.

¹⁸⁵ See generally AMY MURRELL TAYLOR, *THE DIVIDED FAMILY IN CIVIL WAR AMERICA* 15 (Gary W. Gallagher ed., 2009).

¹⁸⁶ Bill Schneider, *Opinion: Trump Didn't Create the Country's Division, but He Stoked It: What's Next?*, THE HILL (Nov. 6, 2020), <https://thehill.com/opinion/white-house/524776-trump-didnt-create-the-countrys-division-but-he-stoked-it-whats-next/>.

¹⁸⁷ See Christi Parsons & Lisa Mascaró, *Obama, Who Sought to Ease Partisanship, Saw it Worsen Instead*, L.A. TIMES (Jan. 14, 2017), <https://www.latimes.com/projects/la-na-pol-obama-partisan/>.

¹⁸⁸ See *id.*

¹⁸⁹ Perry Bacon Jr., *How the 2016 Election Exposed America's Racial and Cultural Divides*, NBC NEWS (Nov. 11, 2016), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/how-2016-election-exposed-america-s-racial-cultural-divides-n682306>.

¹⁹⁰ See John Sides, *The 2016 Election in Print*, CLAREMONT REV. OF BOOKS (Apr. 10, 2018), <https://claremontreviewofbooks.com/digital/the-2016-election-in-print/>; see also Leonard Steinhorn, *Why Race has Bedeviled Republicans for More Than Half a Century*, THE WASH. POST (Oct. 30, 2019), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2019/10/30/why-race-has-bedeviled-republicans-more-than-half-century/>.

¹⁹¹ Kevin Breuninger, *Trump Says He'll Cut Off Foreign Aid to Countries that Send 'Not Their Best' People*, CNBC (June 19, 2018), <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/06/19/trump-cut-foreign-aid-to-countries-sending-not-their-best-people.html>.

they believed, achieved what they did because of work ethic.¹⁹² Many who voted for Trump later explained that they voted as they did because they wanted what everyone wants: to have a safe and secure environment for family, to be able to reap the rewards of their own lifetimes of hard work, and to be able to choose where and how they live without being told their morals or values are wrong.¹⁹³

This Article is not meant to be a political assessment or to present some type of forewarning about the need to listen to each other or engage in civil discourse. Frankly, a good argument could be made that, despite what is seen on social media—and, sadly, the nature of mass shootings¹⁹⁴—people in the United States are more civil than they ever were.¹⁹⁵ This is a country that retained slavery long after many other western countries thought the concept reprehensible, where a Congressman speaking out against slavery was nearly caned to death by a colleague,¹⁹⁶ and where there were routine assassination attempts made against presidents well into the Twentieth Century.¹⁹⁷ A good argument could be made that political groups (and even unions) throughout our history were far more violent than they are now.¹⁹⁸

Nonetheless, there is something big that almost everyone missed during the previous few decades and was exponentially accentuated during the 2016 election cycle. The citizenry of the United States had become complacent in its belief in its own exceptionalism, and, as a result, invoked no strategy to address the changing nature of the world as it developed beyond the Twentieth Century.¹⁹⁹ With no plan for the future, the United States has found itself one of the many countries that, in

¹⁹² Steven Brill, *How Baby Boomers Broke America*, TIME (May 17, 2018), <https://time.com/magazine/us/5280431/may-28th-2018-vol-191-no-20-u-s/>.

¹⁹³ Annie Karni et al., *Trump Plays on Racist Fears of Terrorized Suburbs to Court White Voters*, N.Y. TIMES (July 29, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/29/us/politics/trump-suburbs-housing-white-voters.html>.

¹⁹⁴ The Second Amendment and the current Supreme Court's jurisprudence are beyond the scope of this Article.

¹⁹⁵ Leila Fadel, *In These Divided Times, Is Civility Under Siege*, NPR (Mar. 12, 2019), <https://www.npr.org/2019/03/12/702011061/in-these-divided-times-is-civility-under-siege>.

¹⁹⁶ *Historical Highlights: The Caning of Charles Sumner*, U.S. SENATE, https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/The_Caning_of_Senator_Charles_Sumner.htm (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

¹⁹⁷ *List of United States Presidential Assassination Attempts and Plots*, WIKIPEDIA https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_United_States_presidential_assassination_attempts_and_plots (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

¹⁹⁸ Aine Cain, *The US Celebrates Labor Day Because of a Bloody Clash Over 100 Years Ago that Left 30 People Dead and Cost \$80 Million in Damages*, BUS. INSIDER (Sept. 2, 2017), <https://www.businessinsider.com/labor-day-history-2017-8>.

¹⁹⁹ Moon Chung-in, *America's Shaky Leadership Makes for Uneasy Global Order*, HANKEYOREH (May 30, 2022), https://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/english_editorials/1044987.html.

time, struggles to retain the empire it collectively believes that it has.²⁰⁰ This does not have to be an Empire such as the conquests we associate with barbarians, or an Empire such as the British Empire (or the dynasties of Europe), but an Empire formed on military and economic might.²⁰¹ This is more of a modern day Empire where only a select few countries are able to develop insularity—if not arrogance—with respect to considering what any other country in the world might think, feel, or do. It is a type of Empire where it is expected that everyone else in the world will speak your language, adhere to your norms, and defer to your judgment on all matters.

To many in the United States, the country is still somewhere in the 1950s.²⁰² It is an odd phenomenon because, at this point, even the Baby Boomers (if they were born at all) were not yet old enough in the 1950s to truly appreciate the reality of that era. Yet many who actually grew up in the 1970s and 1980s nostalgically recall an idyllic time period where everything was wonderful in the United States, if not the world.²⁰³ It is this rose-colored version of reality that was the basis for the rallying cry of, “Make America Great Again.”²⁰⁴ Unfortunately, the “Greatness” of America was never a Greatness for all its citizens, and the view of what was happening in the rest of world and the world’s view of the United States is not an accurate one.²⁰⁵

There is no doubt that the discourse in the United States is, at least what we see chronicled on social media, extremely uncivil.²⁰⁶ There is a doubt, however, in terms of the conclusion that the United States is more divided than it has ever been.²⁰⁷ Given the nature of media and the pervasiveness of the internet, there is no way to measure this.²⁰⁸ Even with only a modicum of information, one might guess that the United

²⁰⁰ *Id.*

²⁰¹ Alicia Chavy, *The Future of Stability of Operations: Can the U.S. Do Better?*, GEO. SEC. STUD. REV. (Apr. 2022), <https://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/2018/08/11/the-future-of-stability-operations-can-the-u-s-do-better/>.

²⁰² Sarah Pruitt, *The Post World War II Boom: How America Got into Gear*, HISTORY.COM, <https://www.history.com/news/post-world-war-ii-boom-economy> (May 14, 2020).

²⁰³ Catherine Rampell, *When Did Americans Think America Was Still ‘Great’? Whenever They Were Still Young*, THE WASH. POST (Apr. 27, 2016), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/rampage/wp/2016/04/27/when-did-americans-think-america-was-still-great-when-ever-they-were-still-young/>.

²⁰⁴ *Id.*

²⁰⁵ Anna Maria C. Behler et al., *Making America Great Again? National Nostalgia’s Effect on Outgroup Perceptions*, 12 FRONTIERS IN PSYCH. 1, 4, 11–12 (Apr. 14, 2021).

²⁰⁶ See Fadel, *supra* note 195.

²⁰⁷ *Id.*

²⁰⁸ Richard Carufel, *Civility Remains a “Major” Problem in America and Social Media is Only Making it Worse*, AGILITY PR SOLUTIONS (July 8, 2019), <https://www.agilitypr.com/pr-news/public-relations/civility-remains-a-major-problem-in-america-and-social-media-is-only-making-it-worse/>.

States was pretty divided at the time of the Civil War and, a century later, the Vietnam War (as well as with respect to segregation and Civil Rights' legislation).²⁰⁹ In reality, what has occurred in the United States is a resounding cry from almost everyone everywhere that the leadership (and those who disagree with our opinions) is doing something vastly wrong that is causing the decay of a country so perfect not that long ago.²¹⁰ When this begins to occur, many simply turn to God and morality to attempt to restore the equilibrium.²¹¹ They claim, not much different from civilizations of the past, that our problems as a nation relate more to appeasing a deity than the realities of adjusting to a changing world.²¹²

What many have failed to notice when blaming someone or something else for any problems in the United States is that the fundamental institutions of the country have not changed.²¹³ The United States might, indeed, have the best formed government on paper and is still the land of opportunity for immigrants. It has unparalleled academic institutions, top-notch health care (albeit, often restricted by cost), and a mighty military that is often more effective in policing peaceful situations than in war.²¹⁴ Despite levels of religious persecution, the United States likely has more religious toleration than anywhere in the world.²¹⁵ Moreover, the United States

²⁰⁹ Jeremi Suri, *Our Nation is Still Divided Along the Battle Lines of the Civil War*, TIME (May 6, 2022), <https://time.com/6174297/america-divided-civil-war/>.

²¹⁰ A. Trevor Thall, *The Failure of American Leadership*, CATO INST. (July 1, 2017), <https://www.cato.org/commentary/failure-american-leadership>.

²¹¹ David Domke & Kevin Coe, *The God Strategy: How Religion Became a Political Weapon in America*, OXFORD SCHOLARSHIP ONLINE (Jan. 2008), <https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195326413.001.0001/acprof-9780195326413>.

²¹² Julie Butters, *Why America Can't Separate Religion and Politics*, THE BRINK (Dec. 2, 2015), <https://www.bu.edu/articles/2015/american-cant-separate-religion-politics/>.

²¹³ *The Public, the Political System and American Democracy*, PEW RSCH. (Apr. 26, 2018), <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2018/04/26/the-public-the-political-system-and-american-democracy/>.

²¹⁴ *Healthcare and Military Expenditure as a Percentage of GDP in Select Countries Worldwide in 2020*, STATISTA (June 20, 2022), <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1175077/healthcare-military-percent-gdp-select-countries-worldwide/#main-content>.

²¹⁵ Peter Henne, *How the U.S. Compares with the Rest of the World on Religious Restrictions*, PEW RSCH. (Mar. 25, 2015), <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/03/25/how-the-u-s-compares-with-the-rest-of-the-world-on-religious-restrictions/>.

has an unparalleled national parks system,²¹⁶ there are solid and trustworthy banks,²¹⁷ and we do not normally cross state lines fearing for our lives when we arrive. In some places, there is a Starbucks every other mile.²¹⁸

Frankly, it is likely all the “good” things (in addition to our wealth and excess) that enables many of us the time and privilege to comment on how bad things are and how divisive the country is. That is not to say that things are not horrifyingly bad for many in the United States. These people are often used as anonymous “straw” people on both sides to either demonstrate the social changes that need to occur, or to restrict external benevolence and “take care of our own.”²¹⁹

But the question is not what is wrong with the United States, the question is why so many feel so strongly regarding the “ego” of the United States. The answer to that is within the nature of history itself as well as what the other countries in the world have been doing while the United States has been flexing its muscles since the end of World War II.²²⁰

Even the most stable civilizations do not last forever.²²¹ Stability is often the result of unique circumstances coming together at the right time in history, rather than as the result of any plan, or because of any particular leader. Some leaders have been what were called “great statesmen,” while others “great generals.”²²² Some were both.²²³ However, their “reign” in leadership may also be affected by history itself, such as

²¹⁶ *Why was the United States the First Country to Establish National Parks?*, DAILYHISTORY.ORG, https://dailyhistory.org/Why_was_the_United_States_the_first_country_to_establish_National_Parks (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

²¹⁷ *How Does the U.S. Banking System Compare with Foreign Banking Systems*, FED. RES. BANK OF S.F. (Apr. 2012), <https://www.frbsf.org/education/publications/doctor-econ/2002/april/us-banking-system-foreign/>.

²¹⁸ Gary Stern, *Yes, Starbucks Is Everywhere—But Expect It To Keep Opening Locations*, FORBES (Mar. 3, 2020), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/garystern/2020/03/03/starbucks-proliferating-in-downtown-manchattan-and-elsewhere-faster-than-you-can-say-latte/?sh=798d547065ee>.

²¹⁹ Ron Elving, *Trump Vows Policy Vision of ‘America First,’ Recalling Phrase’s Controversial Past*, NPR (Jan. 21, 2017), <https://www.npr.org/2017/01/21/510877650/trump-vows-policy-vision-of-america-first-recalling-phrases-controversial-past>.

²²⁰ John A. Tures, *Is the US Economy ‘Just OK’ Compared to Other Countries?*, THE OBSERVER (Jan. 13, 2020), <https://observer.com/2020/01/us-economy-vs-other-countries-how-america-stacks-up/>.

²²¹ Luke Kemp, *Are We on the Road to Civilization Collapse?*, BBC (Feb. 18, 2019), <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20190218-are-we-on-the-road-to-civilisation-collapse>.

²²² See, e.g., Daniel L. Byman & Kenneth M. Pollack, *Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In*, 25 INT’L SECURITY 107, 143–44 (2001).

²²³ See, e.g., *id.*

natural disasters, shifts in weather patterns (causing problems such as famine), or what their neighbors do or do not do.²²⁴ Although books often depict Rome as one of the most idyllic civilizations to have existed, Rome did not have a Republic until over 200 years into its existence.²²⁵ Rome also dealt with invading entities and had its own issues with poverty, corruption, inflation, and the integration of conquered peoples into its citizenry.²²⁶ Because of its size, Roman leaders had to invest vast resources in the military in order to maintain the integrity of the Empire.²²⁷ Greek Civilization, although similarly studied for its positive aspects of governance and innovation, also fell after internal strife concerning disputes about what type of government the people thought best.²²⁸ Greece also had to deal with its own invading neighbors, a drought causing famine, and class conflict caused by the disparity in wealth.²²⁹

The United States has found itself at a similar crossroad. In relation to most of the “empires” or great civilizations that have ever existed, the United States is still a young country; however, it is not as young or as isolated as it once was.²³⁰ In the 1770s, not only was a form of democratic republic a rather new concept in governance, but the United States was far away from the bulk of the connected civilizations of Europe, Asia, and even Africa.²³¹ This allowed the United States to develop in relative isolation. The centuries-old blood feuds of countries and families on the European continent were not transferred to what was regarded as the new world.²³²

²²⁴ Alejandro Quiroz Flores & Alastair Smith, *Leader Survival and Natural Disasters*, 43 BRIT. J. POL. SCI. 821, 843 (Oct. 2013).

²²⁵ See generally Harry Sanders, *The Chronology of Early Rome*, 3 CLASSICAL PHILOLOGY 316, 316–17 (1908).

²²⁶ See, e.g., Jeff Desjardins, *Currency and the Collapse of the Roman Empire*, VISUAL CAPITALIST (Feb. 19, 2016), <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/currency-and-the-collapse-of-the-roman-empire/>; see also Anthony Annett & Joshua Lipsky, *Past as Prologue*, FIN. & DEV. (Mar. 2019), <https://www.imf.org/Publications/fandd/issues/2019/03/ancient-rome-and-sustainable-development-annett>.

²²⁷ See sources cited *supra* note 226.

²²⁸ See generally F.W. Wallbank, *The Causes of the Greek Decline*, 64 J. OF HELLENIC STUD. 10, 11 (1944).

²²⁹ *Id.* at 13.

²³⁰ *American Isolationism in the 1930s*, DEP’T OF STATE: OFF. OF THE HISTORIAN <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/american-isolationism> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

²³¹ Margaret MacMillan, *Why the U.S. has Spent 200 Years Flip-Flopping from Isolationism to Commitment*, HISTORY.COM (Jan. 31, 2019), <https://www.history.com/news/american-isolationism> (“Geography has played a large part in fostering American isolationism. From the perspective of America’s heartland, the rest of the world can seem very far away.”).

²³² Niall Ferguson, *Empires with Expiration Dates*, FOREIGN POL’Y (Oct. 14, 2009), <https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/10/14/empires-with-expiration-dates/>.

That is not to say that the United States had no strife in its development, nor is it to suggest that the residents of the United States were any less violent in how they dealt with the Native American population.²³³ However, its geographic location and lack of centuries' involvement in funding wars enabled the United States to develop resources and even a system of government that the Founders hoped would be for the long term.²³⁴

At the turn of the Twentieth Century, the United States was only on the cusp of being regarded as a world power.²³⁵ It initially remained neutral in World War I, and it was not until 1917 (a year before the war ended) that the United States entered the war.²³⁶ Nonetheless, while World War I completely devastated all of Europe, the United States remained intact.²³⁷ Because it remained intact and was, in fact, developing economically, its doors were opened to immigrants.²³⁸ Although a better look at history now tells us that the United States was not quite as welcoming as immigrants might have believed, the public relations of the era cast the United States as the land of opportunity.²³⁹ Despite the prejudice of the era, the opportunities for

²³³ *Genocide of Indigenous Peoples*, HOLOCAUST MUSEUM Hous., <https://hnh.org/library/research/genocide-of-indigenous-peoples-guide/> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

²³⁴ *Isolation and U.S. Foreign Policy After World War I*, NORWICH UNIV. (Nov. 6, 2017), <https://online.norwich.edu/academic-programs/resources/isolationism-and-us-foreign-policy-after-world-war-i>.

²³⁵ *1898: The Birth of a Superpower*, DEP'T OF STATE: OFF. OF THE HISTORIAN, <https://history.state.gov/departments/history/short-history/superpower> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

²³⁶ The United States entered World War I because of German attacks on passenger and cargo ships, as well as the fear that Germany was enticing Mexico to wage war with the United States. The United States' entry into the war was not predicated on overseas alliances as it was during World War II. *Why Did the U.S. Enter World War I?*, UNIV. OF ROCHESTER NEWS CTR. (Apr. 5, 2017), <https://www.rochester.edu/newscenter/looking-back-100-years-u-s-enters-world-war-i-on-april-6-1917/>.

²³⁷ David Smith, *The First World War Helped Shape Modern America. Why is it so Forgotten?*, THE GUARDIAN (Apr. 6, 2017), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/06/world-war-1-centennial-us-history-modern-america>.

²³⁸ *Mass Immigration and WWI*, U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGR. SERVS., <https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/our-history/mass-immigration-and-wwi> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

²³⁹ *Id.*

wealth and survival were often much better than in the devastated homelands of many immigrants.²⁴⁰

However, the emergence of the United States as “the greatest country in the world” occurred, in large measure, because of World War II and what happened afterward.²⁴¹ A struggling Europe devastated by World War I was still rebuilding when Hitler arrived to proclaim his plan for establishing the Third Reich.²⁴² By the time the United States entered the war with ground troops, much of Europe had already suffered catastrophic losses.²⁴³ This was also true in various areas where the War of the Pacific was going on.²⁴⁴ The United States, having not sustained these types of losses within the country itself, was not only able to help rebuild countries, but was able to take advantage of alliances based on the resources provided.²⁴⁵

B. *The Times Have Changed*

When World War II began, the United States did not have that strong of a military—at least in comparison to today’s standards.²⁴⁶ Since the end of World War II, however, the military budget has become one of the largest expenses within the federal budget, now encompassing an amount that is more than the next nine countries combined.²⁴⁷ The amount of military spending is justifiable. After World War II, the United States wanted restrictions on the militaries of the “warring” countries, countries whose history appeared to dictate that they could not be trusted with weaponry.²⁴⁸ Moreover, through its alliances, and especially those in the Middle East,

²⁴⁰ *A Nation of Immigrants*, CORE KNOWLEDGE 1, https://www.coreknowledge.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CKHG_G6_B2_U7_Immigration_WTNK_C01_NationofImmigrants.pdf (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

²⁴¹ S. Mintz & S. McNeil, *Overview of the Post-War Era*, DIGITAL HIST.: POST WAR ERA (2018), <https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/era.cfm>.

²⁴² *Rebuilding Europe After WWI Took Decades*, GLOB. NEWS (Oct. 19, 2014), <https://globalnews.ca/news/1623002/rebuilding-europe-after-ww1-took-decades/>.

²⁴³ Matthew Jones, *When, Why, & How Did the United States Enter WW2?*, *The Date America Joins the Party*, HIST. COOP. (Feb. 9, 2020), <https://historycooperative.org/when-did-the-us-enter-ww2>.

²⁴⁴ *Id.*

²⁴⁵ Kristen D. Burton, *Great Responsibilities and New Global Power*, THE NAT’L WWII MUSEUM (Oct. 23, 2020), <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/Articles/new-global-power-after-world-war-ii-1945>.

²⁴⁶ *The U.S. Army in World War II, The 50th Anniversary: Mobilization*, U.S. ARMY CTR. OF MIL. HIST., <https://history.army.mil/documents/mobpam.htm> (last visited Oct. 11, 2023).

²⁴⁷ See Nick Routley, *U.S. Military Spending Compared to the Rest of the World*, VISUAL CAPITALIST (July 30, 2021), <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/u-s-military-spending-vs-other-top-countries/>.

²⁴⁸ See, e.g., *Occupation and Reconstruction of Japan, 1945-1952*, DEP’T OF STATE: OFF. OF THE HISTORIAN, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/japan-reconstruction> (last

the United States needed to invest in the military to be a “watchdog” over various resources and strategic base locations.²⁴⁹

The United States’ focus on military spending has caused less spending on infrastructure.²⁵⁰ In the meantime, other countries have been able to strategically develop their own economies.²⁵¹ With the increased globalization in the world, the United States has found itself on a more equal playing field with various countries that it had once considered “lesser.”²⁵² Various nations, once beholden to the United States for survival, are now at the point where they are also equal players on the world stage and are demanding that their influence be recognized.²⁵³

This is not to diminish, in any way, the United States’ position in the world. The United States still has the largest economy of all nations,²⁵⁴ is still the “watchdog” and benefactor for many countries, and still has a system of government that is enviable in comparison to even the countries that are striving to replicate something similar.²⁵⁵ However, the rallying cry of being a nation “favored by God”—and a Christian God no less—that exists in a world where everyone should be expected to speak English is something that is more harmful than helpful.²⁵⁶ One of the

visited Oct. 31, 2023) (“In 1947, Allied advisors essentially dictated a new constitution to Japan’s leaders. Some of the most profound changes in the document included downgrading the emperor’s status to that of a figurehead without political control and placing more power in the parliamentary system, promoting greater rights and privileges for women, and renouncing the right to wage war, which involved eliminating all non-defensive armed forces.”).

²⁴⁹ U.S. *Military Expansion and Intervention*, GLOB. POL’Y F., <https://archive.globalpolicy.org/us-military-expansion-and-intervention.html> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

²⁵⁰ See Julie McCarthy, *With U.S. Focused on Defense, China’s Trade and Infrastructure Sweep Southeast Asia*, NPR (Jan. 20, 2022), <https://www.npr.org/2022/01/20/1073764647/us-china-southeast-asia-trade-defense>.

²⁵¹ *Id.*

²⁵² Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Global Playing Field: More Level, but it Still has Bumps*, N.Y. TIMES (Apr. 30, 2005), <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/30/books/global-playing-field-more-level-but-it-still-has-bumps.html>.

²⁵³ See Rainer Hillenbrand, *Germany and the New Global Order, The Country’s Power Resources Reassessed*, E-INT’L REL. (Sept. 22, 2019), <https://www.e-ir.info/2019/09/22/germany-and-the-new-global-order-the-countrys-power-resources-reassessed/>.

²⁵⁴ See *The World’s Largest Economies*, WORLD DATA INFO (2021), <https://www.worlddata.info/largest-economies.php>.

²⁵⁵ See generally Stuart Gottlieb, *American Democracy, Still the Envy of the World*, THE HILL (Nov. 11, 2020), <https://thehill.com/opinion/campaign/525572-american-democracy-still-the-envy-of-the-world/>.

²⁵⁶ See Ulrike Hunt, *Evangelical Christians Must Stop Saying Donald Trump Has Been Chosen by God*, PREMIER CHRISTIANITY (Sept. 20, 2020),

characteristics that seemed to distinguish the United States from other countries, especially during the world wars in the Twentieth Century, was a sense of humility.²⁵⁷ Even if not necessarily completely true in relation to the country's own minorities, the collective mindset of the United States seemed to be that it was above the fray of the ethnic hatreds occurring in other countries.²⁵⁸ This "above the fray" mindset has translated into "above all others" in recent years,²⁵⁹ and "above all others" has sadly translated into actions comparable to the very actions the citizenry of the United States condemns in other countries.²⁶⁰

It should go without saying that the United States was not hand selected by a Christian God to dominate the world stage. The position of the United States in the world came about because of a degree of insularity and because of geography.²⁶¹ It is a young country that did not establish hateful and spiteful relationships with neighbors that resulted in endless years of war and rebuilding.²⁶² Additionally, the United States has been lucky—in a nation-building sense—to have Canada and Mexico as its border neighbors.²⁶³ Neither Mexico nor Canada has demonstrated any aspirations to invade

<https://www.premierchristianity.com/home/evangelical-christians-must-stop-saying-donald-trump-has-been-chosen-by-god/3859.article>.

²⁵⁷ See John Warner, *John Warner on the Greatest Generation*, PEW: TREND MAG. (Jan. 26, 2018), <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/trend/archive/winter-2018/lessons-from-the-greatest-generation>.

²⁵⁸ See generally Ted Galen Carpenter, *Arrogant Narcissism: The Essence of U.S. Foreign Policy*, CATO INST. (Jun. 23, 2021), <https://www.cato.org/commentary/arrogant-narcissism-essence-us-foreign-policy>. See Rashawn Ray, *Is the United States a Racist Country?*, BROOKINGS (May 4, 2021), <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/is-the-united-states-a-racist-country/>; see also *Best Countries for Racial Equality*, U.S. NEWS (2022), <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/best-countries-for-racial-equality>.

²⁵⁹ See, e.g., Ted Galen Carpenter, *Arrogant Narcissism: The Essence of U.S. Foreign Policy*, CATO INST. (June 23, 2021), <https://www.cato.org/commentary/arrogant-narcissism-essence-us-foreign-policy>.

²⁶⁰ See Michael H. Fuchs, Opinion, *The U.S. Would Condemn Other Countries Who Acted This Way. What a Sad State of Affairs*, THE GUARDIAN (June 4, 2020), <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jun/04/the-us-would-condemn-other-countries-who-acted-this-way-what-a-sad-state-of-affairs>.

²⁶¹ See Aaron David Miller, *How Geography Explains the United States*, FOREIGN POL'Y (Apr. 16, 2013), <https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/04/16/how-geography-explains-the-united-states/>.

²⁶² See Brenton Weyi, Opinion, *The Case for American Humility*, NEWSWEEK (Feb. 23, 2021), <https://www.newsweek.com/case-american-humility-opinion-1571125>.

²⁶³ See Taylor McNeil, *Why the United States is the Only Superpower*, TUFTSNOW (Nov. 21, 2019), <https://now.tufts.edu/2019/11/21/why-united-states-only-superpower>.

and conquer the United States.²⁶⁴ This has not been the history that many countries in the world have been fortunate to have.

However, the grace period of the United States has come to an end, and now the United States runs the risk of following the path of all previous empires and dominant civilizations. It must now deal with a citizenry that is growing more and more angry over both perceived and real internal neglect,²⁶⁵ while also trying to retain its position of power and influence over an overextended world stage.²⁶⁶ The United States must also deal with the realities of one of the very characteristics that it has touted as making the United States a great country—the differences of its residents. Although the United States has portrayed itself as the champion of celebrating our differences, as well as its toleration for those differences, it is becoming more apparent that celebrating too many differences is not what many now consider to be the hallmark of being a patriotic American.²⁶⁷

Even though one can argue that the United States was a nation once culturally defined by white Christians of European descent, this is only true because those in power were mostly white Christian (males) of European descent.²⁶⁸ Those who were “different” had little access to power and often worked toward assimilation in order to be part of the majority.²⁶⁹ That is not to say that there were not segregated neighborhoods of similar ethnicities, races, or religions.²⁷⁰ In fact, segregation—especially racial segregation—has been the hallmark of American society and has enabled many to simply choose not to be aware of life outside their own immediate

²⁶⁴ See Kevin Lippert, *That Time the U.S. Almost Went to War with Canada*, POLITICO MAG. (Jun. 28, 2019), <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/06/21/that-time-the-us-almost-went-to-war-with-canada-218881/>; see also *U.S. Relations with Mexico*, U.S. DEP’T OF STATE (Sept. 16, 2022), <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-mexico/>.

²⁶⁵ See, e.g., Isabell Sawhill, *What the Forgotten Americans Really Want—and How to Give it to Them*, BROOKINGS (Oct. 2018), <https://www.brookings.edu/longform/what-the-forgotten-americans-really-want-and-how-to-give-it-to-them/>; see also Leona Dunn, *Can You Not Understand Why Black People Are Angry?*, THE TENNESSEAN (July 17, 2016), <https://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/contributors/2016/07/17/can-you-not-understand-why-black-people-angry/87083500/>.

²⁶⁶ See Robert Kagan, *Why America Must Lead*, THE CATALYST (2016), <https://www.bushcenter.org/catalyst/leadership/why-america-must-lead>.

²⁶⁷ See Shireen Younus, *The Myth of American Diversity*, THE HARV. CRIMSON (Sept. 21, 2017), <https://www.thecrimson.com/column/other/Article/2017/9/21/younus-myth-of-american-diversity/>.

²⁶⁸ See Mark Edwards, *Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?*, CNN (Jul. 4, 2015), <https://www.cnn.com/2015/07/02/living/america-christian-nation/>.

²⁶⁹ At one point, an “Americanization Movement” was promoted for immigrants to the United States. See Alex Nowrasteh, *The Failure of the Americanization Movement*, CATO INST. (Dec. 18, 2014), <https://www.cato.org/blog/failure-americanization-movement>.

²⁷⁰ See generally Kathleen Neils Conzen, *Immigrants, Immigrant Neighborhoods, and Ethnic Identity: Historical Issues*, 66 J. OF AM. HIST. 603, 604 (1979).

circle of acquaintances.²⁷¹ However, with the increased mobility and the level of communication that now exists in our world, there is much more blending and potentially less segregation based on any one characteristic of a person.²⁷²

This change in the overall functioning society has forced many to have to think outside their own bubbles and be aware (and perhaps dislike) the differences that do exist. It has also caused the United States to become a country of more constituencies than leaders once needed to appease.²⁷³ Unfortunately, the result in recent years has been that the United States has divided itself between those who claim to have created true American values (generally white and Christian) and those who are “different” and want to be acknowledged and respected for their differences.²⁷⁴ Unfortunately, those who claim to have created true American values often consider any other perspective to consist of those who are destroying the country and should not be welcomed or tolerated.

1. What is Blameworthy?

In the contentiousness of current politics, it is difficult not to see things in terms of absolutes and an “us versus them” mentality. Nonetheless, it is inappropriate to suggest that we somehow “just need to listen to each other” and get along as we somehow did during the idyllic period of the United States where we all allegedly had common values.²⁷⁵ To the extent that it can be said that those in the United States had “common values,” those common values were often galvanized by an external villain,²⁷⁶ as well as internal prejudices and ingrained stereotypes that were rarely

²⁷¹ See Alana Semuels, *The U.S. is Increasingly Diverse, So Why is Segregation Getting Worse?*, TIME (Jun. 21, 2021), <https://time.com/6074243/segregation-america-increasing/>.

²⁷² Higher education in a diverse environment leads to more exposure to other races, religions, ethnicities, and cultures. See, e.g., Elin Johnson, *Varied Friendships Make Students More Tolerant*, INSIDE HIGHER ED (Oct. 15, 2019), <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/10/15/college-students-friends-different-worldviews-are-more-tolerant-study-finds>.

²⁷³ Certainly, women voters didn’t need to be appeased because women did not have the vote. Jim Crow laws often prevented Black Americans from voting, and few presidents prior to those in the 1960s gave much of a consideration to doing anything at all to secure the black vote. See Nikole Hannah-Jones, *Our Founding Ideals of Liberty and Equality were False When They were Written. Black Americans Have Fought to Make them True*, N.Y. TIMES MAG. (Aug. 14, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/black-history-american-democracy.html>.

²⁷⁴ See Michael Rotolo et al., *45% of Americans Say U.S. Should Be a ‘Christian Nation’*, PEW RSCH. CENT. (Oct. 27, 2022), <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/10/27/45-of-americans-say-u-s-should-be-a-christian-nation/>.

²⁷⁵ David Brooks, *America is Having a Moral Convulsion*, THE ATL. (Oct. 5, 2020), <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/10/collapsing-levels-trust-are-devastating-america/616581/>.

²⁷⁶ This was certainly true of Hitler, the Japanese Empire, and later, Communism. Uniting against a common villain has occurred to a large extent when Russia invaded Ukraine. See, e.g., William A. Galston, *The Invasion of Ukraine Unites a Divided America*, BROOKINGS (Mar. 3,

questioned.²⁷⁷ However, even some of the core “common values” that many thought were common were never as universal as some might now pretend they were.²⁷⁸

Even the “hard work” ethos is questionable as a common value.²⁷⁹ That is, the wealth of the United States economy, to an extent,²⁸⁰ *was* built with ingenuity and hard work.²⁸¹ The country *did* enable immigrants and refugees more opportunities for sustenance and wealth-building than existed in their home countries.²⁸² There also was a time when a blue-collar worker could purchase a home and sustain a family, even without the necessity of having a spouse go to work.²⁸³

However, the entire idea of capitalism has been to encourage individuals to aspire to an aggregation of wealth so that truly hard physical work can be assigned to someone else. This is especially true today. Horatio Alger is not the “hero” youths are

2022), <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2022/03/03/the-invasion-of-ukraine-unites-a-divided-america/>.

²⁷⁷ See *How Does Prejudice Come About? Prejudice and Stereotypes*, ANNE FRANK HOUSE, <https://www.annefrank.org/en/topics/prejudice-and-stereotypes/how-does-prejudice-come-about/> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

²⁷⁸ See, e.g., William Booth, *One Nation Indivisible: Is It History? The Myth of the Melting Pot*, WASH. POST (Feb. 22, 1998), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/meltingpot/melt0222.htm> (“Fear of strangers, of course, is nothing new in American history. The last great immigration wave produced a bitter backlash, epitomized by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the return, in the 1920s, of the Ku Klux Klan, which not only targeted blacks, but Catholics, Jews and immigrants as well.”).

²⁷⁹ See, e.g., Jeffrey Dorfman, *The Myth of the Overworked American*, FORBES (Sept. 6, 2016), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jeffreydorfman/2016/09/06/the-myth-of-the-overworked-american/?sh=650e4764591a>.

²⁸⁰ It is hard to ignore that some of the ingenuity and hard work was facilitated by women who took care of home and children, slaves and minorities who were exploited, but there is preferential treatment for only a certain category of person (usually white, male, Christian, and of European descent). However, that discussion is beyond the scope of this Article. See Asha Banerjee & Cameron Johnson, *African American Workers Built America*, CLASP (Feb. 26, 2020), <https://www.clasp.org/blog/african-american-workers-built-america/>; see also Margaret G. Reid, *The Economic Contributions of Homemakers*, 251 THE ANNALS OF THE AM. ACAD. OF POL. AND SOCIAL SCI., 61, 63–65 (May 1947).

²⁸¹ The concept of “The American Dream” is attributed to James Truslow Adams, who wrote about opportunity in his 1931 book. See JAMES TRUSLOW ADAMS, *THE EPIC OF AMERICA* 415–16 (1931).

²⁸² See David W. Haines, *Learning From Our Past: The Refugee Experience in the United States*, AM. IMMIGR. COUNCIL (Nov. 25, 2015), <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/refugee-experience-united-states>.

²⁸³ Elizabeth Warren, *The Middle Class on the Precipice*, HARV. MAG., Jan.–Feb. 2006, at 28.

encouraged to emulate.²⁸⁴ Rather, many look at the lifestyles of entertainers, athletes, billionaire business owners, YouTubers, and social influencers as the aspiration of where they would like to be.²⁸⁵ There is currently a trend toward aggregating and hoarding massive wealth,²⁸⁶ which, arguably is no different from what occurred when elite families aggregated wealth in the Nineteenth Century.

Although the United States is still filled with hard working and industrious people, most would opt for white-collar jobs or to not have to work hard at all, if given the choice.²⁸⁷ High schools themselves “push” the idea that success in life is defined by memorizing information, grades, a college degree (especially from a highly-ranked college), and a high-paying job that does not require physical labor.²⁸⁸ Few will settle for a mere subsistence wage, and if that subsistence wage is attached to work where extreme physical labor is involved, few Americans will opt to do that work.²⁸⁹

This scenario is no different than any other country in the world that has become wealthier and begun to rely on immigrant labor or refugees to fill service professions.²⁹⁰ The result is predictable: the development of a lower caste, and, often, the condemnation of that lower caste for diluting the culture of a country.²⁹¹

²⁸⁴ See, e.g., Roy Schwartzman, *Recasting the American Dream Through Horatio Alger's Success Stories*, 23 STUD. IN POPULAR CULTURE 75, 76 (2000).

²⁸⁵ See Robert Skidelsky, *Why Don't More People Aspire to Living a Good Life?*, THE GUARDIAN (Aug. 24, 2013), <https://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/2013/aug/25/robert-skidelsky-interview-good-life>; see also Gilliam B. White, *Getting to the Bottom of Americans' Fascination with Wealth*, THE ATL. (May 16, 2017), <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/05/greenfield-generation-wealth/526683/>.

²⁸⁶ Nick Hanauer & David M. Rolf, *The Top 1% of Americans Have Taken \$50 Trillion From the Bottom 90%—And That's Made the U.S. Less Secure*, TIME (Sept. 14, 2020), <https://time.com/5888024/50-trillion-income-inequality-america/>.

²⁸⁷ Dana Wilkie, *The Blue-Collar Drought*, SHRM (Feb. 2, 2019), <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/all-things-work/pages/the-blue-collar-drought.aspx>.

²⁸⁸ Indra Sofian, *The Problem with High School*, MEDIUM.COM (Feb. 4, 2019), <https://medium.com/@indrasofian/the-problem-with-high-school-caf770c87797>.

²⁸⁹ See, e.g., Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, *Hard Work is What Immigrants Do*, N.Y. TIMES (Oct. 9, 2013), <https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2011/10/09/what-happened-to-the-american-work-ethic-2/hard-work-is-what-immigrants-do>.

²⁹⁰ Emma Wallis, *Germany Needs Migration to Maintain Productivity*, INFOMIGRANTS (Jan. 12, 2022), <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/37802/germany-needs-migration-to-maintain-productivity>.

²⁹¹ See, e.g., Matt Broomfield, *Majority of Germans Think Islam Does Not 'Belong' in Their Country*, THE INDEPENDENT (May 13, 2016), <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugee-crisis-germany-islam-does-not-belong-in-country-a7027361.html>. In the case of people of color, there was already a ready-made caste that got the worst of all possible worlds. No matter what the status was of a person of color at any point of time in the history of the United States, the person was treated as an

What has happened in the United States is no different than what has happened to any other civilization in history that has had the opportunity to develop its wealth and power over time.²⁹² There is an increasing disparity between the “haves” and the “have nots,” as well as a lack of recognition that the world around has not remained stagnant.²⁹³ Many are still functioning in a world that did not really exist as remembered and was not all that idyllic for everyone who happened to also have lived in that world. Those in power often hold on to a memory of the past as if it can somehow be re-created when insistence and subjugation of the dissenting voices is strong enough. This is a mindset that has never worked in maintaining an enduring civilization.

2. Are There Solutions?

Sadly, if empires had all the answers to maintaining the empire into perpetuity, it would already have been done. There are too many variables that cannot be controlled that might change the fate of a nation.²⁹⁴ However, there are some commonalities that go along with the demise of an empire. Some cited include, “declining moral values and political civility at home, an overconfident and overextended military in foreign lands, and fiscal irresponsibility by the central government.”²⁹⁵ However, there are some other factors that warrant attention. Some of these factors include that a country (as a whole) cannot ignore the need for self-evaluation, and a country must consider how it exists within the wider framework of the world (and how that changes over time).²⁹⁶

The United States is an exceptional country, but that exceptionalism has not come about necessarily by an exceptional game plan for existence or because it is somehow “better” than other countries. The United States as we know it has come about, in many respects, by being in the right place at the right time. That is not to shortchange

outsider. African slaves were “imported” for undesirable physical labor, and when the slaves were freed, they were still treated as being outside the dominant culture and continued to be penalized for that. See Terry Gross, *It’s More than Racism: Isabel Wilkerson Explains America’s Caste System*, NPR (Aug. 4, 2020), <https://www.npr.org/2020/08/04/898574852/its-more-than-racism-isabel-wilkerson-explains-america-s-caste-system>.

²⁹² Harmeet Kaur, *Even in US, South Asians say Caste Has Proved Hard to Escape*, CNN (Sept. 8, 2020), <https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/04/us/caste-discrimination-us-trnd/index.html>.

²⁹³ See Hanauer & Rolf, *supra* note 286.

²⁹⁴ See generally Jeremy Williams, *Geographical Factors that Affect Development*, THE EARTHBOUND REP. (Jul. 1, 2007), <https://earthbound.report/2007/07/01/geographical-factors-that-affect-development/>.

²⁹⁵ See Tom Holland, *Why Empires Fall: From Ancient Rome to Putin’s Russia*, THE NEW STATESMAN (May 23, 2014), <https://www.newstatesman.com/uncategorized/2014/05/why-empires-fall-ancient-rome-putins-russia>.

²⁹⁶ Patricia Donovan, *Researcher Says Americans Are “Deluded” Regarding What They Know About the Rest of the World*, UNIV. BUFFALO NEWS CENT. (Sept. 14, 2004), <https://www.buffalo.edu/news/releases/2004/09/6899.html>; see also S. REP. NO. 116-56, at 34–39 (2020).

the ingenuity, work ethic, or governmental structure, but the country had other attributes that enabled prosperity. These included its vast territory, as well as the abundance of natural resources.²⁹⁷ It also was able to function as being more isolated from the turmoil that existed in other parts of the world.²⁹⁸ This enabled the United States to develop a structure and economy that facilitated lasting prosperity.²⁹⁹

However, it cannot be denied that much of the prosperity of the United States was built on genocide and slavery, the exploitation of immigrant labor.³⁰⁰ Yes, popular culture emphasizes those who have been able to rise up and build prosperity, but that number is far more rare than many think and has not been an available goal for large segments of society.³⁰¹ Moreover, many who were able to rise to the top found themselves able to take advantage of a system that allowed them to exploit the labor of others in a lower caste.³⁰²

²⁹⁷ Guy Sorman, *A Brief History of American Prosperity*, CITY J. (Autumn 2012), <https://www.city-journal.org/html/brief-history-american-prosperity-13510.html>.

²⁹⁸ Charles A. Kupchan, *Isolationism is Not a Dirty Word*, THE ATL. (Sept. 27, 2020), <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/09/virtue-isolationism/616499/>.

²⁹⁹ See Miller, *supra* note 261.

³⁰⁰ See, e.g., Matthew Desmond, *In Order to Understand the Brutality of American Capitalism, You Have to Start on The Plantation*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 14, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/slavery-capitalism.html>; *Immigration and Relocation in American History: Removing Native Americans from Their Land*, THE LIBR. OF CONG., <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/native-american/removing-native-americans-from-their-land/> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023); Lakshmi Ghandi, *The Transcontinental Railroad's Dark Costs: Exploited Labor, Stolen Costs*, HISTORY.COM (Oct. 8, 2021), <https://www.history.com/news/transcontinental-railroad-workers-impact>.

³⁰¹ It was also impossible for some people to “rise up” at all given societal prohibitions (e.g., restrictions on women), or status based on birth. Slaves, for obvious reasons, were not afforded inclusion within any dream of prosperity, but even after the end of slavery, various minorities (especially Native Americans, Asians, and People of Color) were never on a singular playing field where hard work and ingenuity resulted in immense reward. There were a few exceptions (e.g., Madame C.J. Walker), but these exceptional people were able to capitalize on their hard work and ingenuity within a restricted world. The idea that anyone could arrive in America, work hard, and become prosperous was mostly restricted to the white, European male. It is even fair to say that the “American Dream” was mostly restricted to the white, European male who could (and would) assimilate, blend in, and often hide their nationality, religion, or minority status. See, e.g., Mark A. Musick & John Wilson, *Work, Race, and the American Dream*, 31 SOCIOLOGICAL FOCUS 17, 20–21 (1998); Ran Abramitzky et al., *Cultural Assimilation During the Age of Mass Migration*, 4, 27 (NBER Working Paper No. w22381, 2016), <https://www.nber.org/papers/w22381>.

³⁰² E.g., George Pullman. Although George Pullman was able to take advantage of an invention of his father’s (who had worked on the Erie Canal), Pullman left school earlier and developed the family business into a multimillion-dollar enterprise. See *George Mortimer Pullman*, THE PULLMAN HISTORY SITE, <https://www.pullman-museum.org/theMan/> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023). Pullman is perhaps most famous for his techniques in aggregating labor and

Many, especially white members of the Baby Boomer generation, complain that they are being unfairly made to feel guilty about their lives.³⁰³ This is especially true with respect to acknowledging “white privilege.”³⁰⁴ Many point to the fact that they had ancestors who were exploited immigrants themselves, or that their ancestors neither owned slaves nor supported slavery.³⁰⁵ Most will assert that their children especially should not be made to feel responsible for events that occurred at least a century before they were born.³⁰⁶

There is merit to these positions. In fact, it is the same argument that is occurring in Germany at this point, where many parents in Germany are asking how long they must atone for Nazi Germany?³⁰⁷ The arguments have come to the forefront in the debates concerning Critical Race Theory—why should children be made to feel guilty about something their great grandparent may or may not have done?³⁰⁸

When phrased in that way, it is difficult to argue with that position. However, learning about the history of one’s country and acknowledging responsibility for the wrongs of the past is not the same thing as specifically being made to feel guilty and shameful about “self.” It is simply to understand where one fits into the big picture of the world, whether the understanding relates to one’s advantages through time, place,

making the labor force completely dependent on the employer. *See, e.g.,* MICHAEL K. ROSENOW, *DEATH AND DYING IN THE WORKING CLASS* 50–51 (2015).

³⁰³ *See, e.g.,* Lisa Bailey, *Baby Boomers Sick of Being Blamed for Climate Change*, CYPRUSMAIL (May 15, 2022), <https://cyprus-mail.com/2022/05/15/sick-of-baby-boomers-being-blamed-for-climate-change/>.

³⁰⁴ *See* Nat Irvin II, *White Baby Boomers, What Did You Do to Create an Equitable America?*, THE COURIER-J. (June 18, 2020), <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/opinion/2020/06/18/white-baby-boomers-what-did-you-do-create-equitable-america/3208806001/>.

³⁰⁵ *See generally* Jennifer Seibel Trainor, “My Ancestors Didn’t Own Slaves:” *Understanding White Talk About Race*, 40 RSCH. IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH 140, 146 (2005).

³⁰⁶ Michael Harriot, *Maybe White People Should Feel Bad*, THE ROOT (Oct. 22, 2021), <https://www.theroot.com/maybe-white-people-should-feel-bad-1847918518>.

³⁰⁷ *See, e.g.,* Joseph Cronin, *Germany’s Holocaust Memory Problems*, GEO. J. OF INT’L AFF. (Apr. 20, 2022), <https://gjia.georgetown.edu/2022/04/20/germanys-holocaust-memory-problems%EF%BF%BC/>.

³⁰⁸ *See* Jeremy Helligar, *We Don’t Want to Make White Kids Feel Bad for Being White*, LEVEL (Nov. 21, 2021), <https://level.medium.com/we-dont-want-to-make-white-kids-feel-bad-for-being-white-fcbb71f5ee7>.

and ancestry, or even comparing various disadvantages of the same.³⁰⁹ The object is the same—developing empathy.³¹⁰

Empathy is not necessarily related to morality or any religiously-dictated directive. Empathy has the potential to result in practicality.³¹¹ Understanding one's place in history may result in the ability to better connect with history and to prevent repeating the worst of it.³¹² Given that human nature trends toward "preferring our own," maximizing our ability to understand the worst of ourselves in history would likely result in preventing the very actions that have wound up destroying civilizations.³¹³ The United States would do well to focus on developing a culture where empathy—rather than success in standardized testing—is prioritized.³¹⁴ The earliest teaching should focus on exposure to different cultures and situations, as well as acknowledging the entire history of the United States as a nation with flaws.³¹⁵

³⁰⁹ See, e.g., Ezra Klein, *Bryan Stevenson on How America Can Heal: A Conversation about Truth and Reconciliation in the U.S.*, VOX (July 20, 2020), <https://www.vox.com/21327742/bryan-stevenson-the-ezra-klein-show-america-slavery-healing-racism-george-floyd-protests> ("Knowing the actual history. If you don't know your history, you can't really begin to understand what your obligations are, what your responsibilities are, what you should fear, what you should celebrate, what's honorable and what's not honorable.").

³¹⁰ See, e.g., Lina Mai, *Use Historical Empathy to Help Students Process the World Today*, FACING HIST. AND OURSELVES (Mar. 27, 2018), <https://facingtoday.facinghistory.org/use-historical-empathy-to-help-students-process-the-world-today>.

³¹¹ See, e.g., K.N.C., *How to Increase Empathy and Unite Society*, THE ECONOMIST (June 7, 2019), <https://www.economist.com/open-future/2019/06/07/how-to-increase-empathy-and-unite-society>.

³¹² See, e.g., *Is Empathy an Aid or a Hindrance to Historians?*, HIST. TODAY (May 5, 2019), <https://www.historytoday.com/archive/head-head/empathy-aid-or-hindrance-historians> ("People have treated the world and its inhabitants badly—they still do. But the route to improvement lies through exposure and discussion, not concealment and denial.").

³¹³ Many point to Germany as the "ideal" for developing empathy and preventing the worst of history. However, as the Holocaust recedes further into the past, accomplishing empathy and tolerance through education is becoming harder to do. See Monica Vitale & Rebecca Clothey, *Holocaust Education in Germany: Ensuring Relevance and Meaning in an Increasingly Diverse Community*, 5 F. FOR INTELL. RSCH. IN EDUC. 44, 45 (2019).

³¹⁴ Avery Liebrecht, *Empathy Should be Taught in School: How Our Current Culture Has Forced Us to Understand Each Other and Why It Has Become Increasingly Crucial to the Well-Being of the Nation*, MEDIUM.COM (Mar. 13, 2017), <https://medium.com/@aliebrecht001/empathy-should-be-taught-in-school-65103d714493>.

³¹⁵ Ashley Berner, *What American Schools Can Learn About Civic Disagreement from other Countries*, THE CONVERSATION (Nov. 4, 2021), <https://theconversation.com/what-american-schools-can-learn-from-other-countries-about-civic-disagreement-169332>.

C. Military Matters

The United States must also come to understand that if it continues to maintain a military presence in the world as it currently exists, it will overextend itself. By having such an extensive emphasis on the military, it will neither succeed in controlling what occurs in the world, nor be able to finance necessary initiatives at home.³¹⁶

One part of the “America First” campaign of 2016 was pointing out that the United States has been the world’s peacekeeper and nation builder without proper compensation.³¹⁷ Donald Trump stoked up crowds by claiming that the United States was “owed” by many countries and that he intended to do something about it.³¹⁸ Even if many of those claims were overstated,³¹⁹ there is much truth in the assertion that it has been the United States that has invested more than other countries in providing military might in the rest of the world since the end of World War II.³²⁰ However, and not entirely shortchanging empathy and compassion following World War II, a larger reason for the role the United States took on was more of a self-serving one.³²¹ The cultivation of allies throughout the world by providing arms and other resources has enabled the United States to maintain strategically-placed military bases,³²² as well as develop alliances that facilitate numerous military endeavors.³²³ This protects resources, which protects economic interests.³²⁴

³¹⁶ See, e.g., Doug Bandow, *Overspent and Overextended*, CATO INST. (Jan. 7, 2009), <https://www.cato.org/commentary/overspent-overextended>.

³¹⁷ *US Election 2016: Trump Details ‘America First’ Foreign Plan*, BBC (Apr. 28, 2016), <https://www.bbc.com/news/election-us-2016-36152947>.

³¹⁸ See David Welna, *FACT CHECK: Trump’s Claims on NATO Spending*, NPR (July 11, 2018), <https://www.npr.org/2018/07/11/628137185/fact-check-trumps-claims-on-nato-spending>.

³¹⁹ *Id.*

³²⁰ See Amy Ebitz, *The Use of Military Diplomacy in Great Power Competition*, BROOKINGS (Feb. 12, 2019), <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/02/12/the-use-of-military-diplomacy-in-great-power-competition/>.

³²¹ See *The Marshall Plan and Postwar Economic Recovery*, THE NAT’L WWII MUSEUM (Mar. 30, 2022), <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/marshall-plan-and-postwar-economic-recovery>.

³²² David Vine, *The United States Probably Has More Foreign Military Bases Than Any Other People, Nation, or Empire in History*, THE NATION (Sept. 14, 2015), <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/the-united-states-probably-has-more-foreign-military-bases-than-any-other-people-nation-or-empire-in-history/>.

³²³ Especially in the Middle East. See David Vine, *The U.S. Has an Empire of Bases in the Middle East—And It’s Not Making Anyone Safer*, FOREIGN POL’Y IN FOCUS (Jan. 20, 2016), <https://fpif.org/u-s-empire-bases-middle-east-not-making-anyone-safer/>.

³²⁴ MICHAEL J. LOSTUMBO ET AL., OVERSEAS BASING OF U.S. MILITARY FORCES: AN ASSESSMENT OF RELATIVE COSTS AND STRATEGIC BENEFITS xxi, xxii (2013),

However, as the United States has been investing resources in the military and military alliances, this has allowed for other countries in the world to reduce money spent on militaries and invest that money in infrastructure and technology.³²⁵ Many restrictions of what was then a conventional military were purposely demanded by the United States at the end of World War II in order to minimize the capacity to wage war in the future.³²⁶ Thereafter, the United States expanded its empire-like military might, which actually allowed for the expansion of global power in other countries that were not as invested in global military domination.³²⁷

There is no blame to assign, but it is counterproductive at this point to complain about how the United States was never reimbursed for good deeds done on the world stage.³²⁸ There is no doubt that it was the United States that facilitated the rebuilding of Germany and Japan, as well as a large portion of Europe.³²⁹ However, the destruction caused by World War II was what was primarily responsible for the United States becoming a global superpower.³³⁰ The United States benefited both militarily and economically from the destruction of World War II even though it poured money and resources into rebuilding.³³¹

There is a great debate about whether the United States should be as extended militarily as it currently is.³³² Funding the military takes up the largest share of the United States budget, and the United States has an inordinate amount of military bases around the world.³³³ The presence of these bases gives the United States the

https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR200/RR201/RAND_RR201.sum.pdf.

³²⁵ See, e.g., Michael D. Ward et al., *A Century of Trade-Offs: Defense and Growth in Japan and the United States*, 39 INT'L. STUD. Q. 27, 27–28 (1995).

³²⁶ See, e.g., *The Potsdam Agreement*, DEP'T OF STATE, II–III (Aug. 1, 1945), https://www.nato.int/ebookshop/video/declassified/doc_files/Potsdam%20Agreement.pdf.

³²⁷ See generally G. John Ikenberry, *Illusions of Empire: Defining the New American Order*, 83 FOREIGN AFF. 144, 147–48 (2004).

³²⁸ See, e.g., Welna, *supra* note 318.

³²⁹ See *The Marshall Plan and Postwar Economic Recovery*, *supra* note 321.

³³⁰ Max Fisher, *How America Became the Most Powerful Country on Earth, in 11 Maps*, VOX (May 20, 2015), <https://www.vox.com/2015/5/20/8615345/america-global-power-maps>.

³³¹ See *Great Responsibilities and New Global Power*, THE NAT'L WWII MUSEUM (Oct. 23, 2020), <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/new-global-power-after-world-war-ii-1945>.

³³² See Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Is US Defense Spending Too High, Too Low, or Just Right?*, BROOKINGS (Oct. 15, 2019), <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/is-us-defense-spending-too-high-too-low-or-just-right/>.

³³³ See Douglas Bandow, *750 Bases in 80 Countries is Too Many for Any Nation: Time for the U.S. to Bring its Troops Home*, CATO INST. (Oct. 4, 2021),

opportunity to engage in costly and lengthy wars that ultimately yield little to no benefit.³³⁴ However, the United States has created such a behemoth of presence that a decision to withdraw on large scale would have disastrous consequences.³³⁵ Not only do many countries depend on the long-term commitment of the United States to maintain stability,³³⁶ but citizens of the United States are quick to condemn the U.S. for failing to be more proactive to curtail harm, human rights abuses, and genocide.³³⁷

The re-envisioning of the role the United States should play is nothing new. Government strategists, as well as “think tanks,” have debated the best way to go about reducing the military footprint while maintaining an ability to protect economic interests and strategic alliances.³³⁸ There is no easy solution, nor one that would placate all or even achieve anything like world peace. But what the United States must do as it moves forward in the Twenty-first Century is to cease reflecting on the “glory of the past,” and what is owed. It must fully grasp that the game itself has changed entirely and understand that it is only one of many nations that has immense power as well as a vested interest in the stability of the world.³³⁹

D. Climate Change

One way the United States has demonstrated its lack of world cooperation is its collective reaction to climate change. Although the Biden administration re-joined the Paris Accord after the Trump Administration’s withdrawal, environmentalists have commented that this is not enough to deal with the cataclysmic climate issue the world

<https://www.cato.org/commentary/750-bases-80-countries-too-many-any-nation-time-us-bring-its-troops-home>.

³³⁴ *Id.*

³³⁵ See, e.g., Niall Ferguson, *Niall Ferguson on Why the End of the Empire Won’t Be Peaceful*, THE ECONOMIST (Aug. 20, 2021), <https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2021/08/20/niall-ferguson-on-why-the-end-of-americas-empire-wont-be-peaceful>.

³³⁶ *Id.*

³³⁷ See, e.g., Risch: *We Can and Must do More for Syria*, U.S. FOREIGN REL. COMM. (Mar. 14, 2022), <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/ranking/release/risch-we-can-and-must-do-more-for-syrians>; see also Stuart Anderson, *United States Must Save Afghan Refugees from the Taliban*, FORBES (Aug. 15, 2021), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/stuartanderson/2021/08/15/america-must-save-afghan-refugees-from-the-taliban/?sh=75ed55ff45fa>.

³³⁸ See, e.g., Bruce Riedel & Michael E. O’Hanlon, *How to Downsize the U.S. Presence in the Middle East*, BROOKINGS (Oct. 20, 2020), <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/10/20/how-to-downsize-the-us-presence-in-the-middle-east/>; see also Michael E. O’Hanlon & James N. Miller, *Focusing on Quality over Quantity in the U.S. Military Budget*, BROOKINGS (Dec. 2, 2019), <https://www.brookings.edu/policy2020/bigideas/focusing-on-quality-over-quantity-in-the-us-military-budget/>.

³³⁹ See generally Gordon Adams, *U.S. Global Engagement and the Military*, 2018 GREAT DECISIONS 69, 69.

is facing.³⁴⁰ On one level, it can be argued that the United States has done more to address climate change than many other nations in the world, including global powers such as China and India.³⁴¹ However, climate change should not be looked at as being a strategic foreign policy matter where the United States will choose to only do as much as other countries are doing while simultaneously appeasing constituent businesses that abhor “overregulation.”

Regrettably, the divisive nature of American politics has made the science of climate change into an “us versus them” topic of conspiracy theorists.³⁴² The “angry mob of skeptics” mentality of the country has developed at a time when no one on the planet can afford further delay in acting.³⁴³ Whether one believes in the science of climate change, or is on the bandwagon of a belief that whatever is happening on earth is the product of an uncontrollable cycle,³⁴⁴ there is no downside to addressing what might be done to preserve the planet. The naivety about what is happening to the planet is almost Kryptonian at this point.³⁴⁵

It is hard to ignore that climate changes are occurring; however, instead of focusing on how to fix major problems caused by weather or other natural disasters, the United States mostly focuses energy on debating whether climate change exists.³⁴⁶ Even when there has been acknowledgment that something must be done to address climate change, the United States, at least as promoted by the Trump Administration, focused on efforts being “unfair” to the United States rather than the proactive solutions.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁰ See Denise Chow, *Biden Rejoins Paris Climate Pact. Environmentalists Hope the Best is Yet to Come*, NBC NEWS (Jan. 20, 2021), <https://www.nbcnews.com/science/environment/biden-rejoins-paris-climate-pact-scientists-hope-best-yet-come-n1255070>.

³⁴¹ See Anna M. Phillips, *The U.S. is the Biggest Carbon Emitter in History. Where do Other Nations Stand?*, PHYS.ORG (Apr. 22, 2021), <https://phys.org/news/2021-04-biggest-carbon-emitter-history-nations.html>.

³⁴² See Dan Paterson, *Climate Change Conspiracies are Spreading Rapidly During UN's COP26 Event*, CBS NEWS (Nov. 9, 2021), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/climate-change-conspiracies-are-spreading-rapidly-during-uns-cop26-event/>.

³⁴³ John Copeland Nagle, *Humility, Climate Change, and the Pursuit of Scientific Truth*, 97 NOTRE DAME L. REV. REFLECTION 125, 145 (2022).

³⁴⁴ Paterson, *supra* note 342.

³⁴⁵ See, e.g., Jonathan Franzen, *What If We Stopped Pretending?*, THE NEW YORKER (Sept. 8, 2019), <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/what-if-we-stopped-pretending>.

³⁴⁶ Patrick J. Egan & Megan Mullin, *Climate Change: U.S. Public Opinion*, 20 ANN. REV. OF POL. SCI. 209, 209 (2017).

³⁴⁷ See Donald Trump Blames India, China for his Decision to Withdraw from the Paris Climate Deal, ECON. TIMES (Feb. 24, 2018), <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/donald-trump-blames->

Whether one believes in climate science or is simply aware that there seem to be many more catastrophic natural disasters in areas that did not ordinarily have as many, it seems logical that one should try to take preventative measures. The United States does not have unlimited resources to fix an environmental catastrophe once it has occurred.³⁴⁸ The best methodology for minimizing the necessity for fixing the consequences of catastrophic events is to globally work together to figure out the best methodology to study or combat climate change rather than to withdraw from those discussions.³⁴⁹

E. Social Programs

Although the “rags to riches” lore of America is somewhat of a myth—at least where the majority is concerned³⁵⁰—prior to the late Twentieth Century, it was conceivable that many really could go from rags to riches.³⁵¹ It was a phenomenon that made the United States the land of opportunity for so many immigrants. The influx of immigrants after World War II further made the United States “the land of milk and honey.”³⁵² Many European immigrants “displaced” by the destruction of Europe helped build an enormous wealth in the United States during the 1950s.³⁵³ They were often rewarded with stability in the workforce.³⁵⁴ Most wound up with what was then the middle-class American dream: a house in the suburbs where they were able to raise

india-china-for-his-decision-to-withdraw-from-paris-climate-deal/articleshow/63057148.cms?from=mdr.

³⁴⁸ See Adam B. Smith, *2010-2019: A Landmark Decade of Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters*, CLIMATE.GOV (Jan. 8, 2020), <https://www.climate.gov/news-features/blogs/beyond-data/2010-2019-landmark-decade-us-billion-dollar-weather-and-climate>.

³⁴⁹ See Gim Huay Neo, *Climate and Nature Action—Together in Partnership for a Better Future*, CLIMATE CHANGE: WORLD ECON. F. (May 23, 2023), <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/05/climate-and-nature-action-together-in-partnership-for-a-better-future/>.

³⁵⁰ Jessica Wildfire, *Rags Aren't Going to Riches Anymore*, AN INJUSTICE! (Apr. 12, 2021), <https://aninjusticemag.com/rags-to-riches-ales-were-invented-by-a-disgraced-pastor-from-harvard-ff81f8e5f2e6>.

³⁵¹ See, e.g., Emmie Martin, *Home Prices Have Risen 114% Since 1960—Here's How Much More Expensive Life Is Today*, CNBC (Apr. 17, 2018), <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/04/17/how-much-more-expensive-life-is-today-than-it-was-in-1960.html>.

³⁵² The “land of milk and honey” is a Biblical reference to the promised land. See Eric Troy, *Where Does ‘Land of Milk and Honey’ Come From?*, CULINARY LORE (Nov. 24, 2015), <https://culinarylore.com/food-history/where-does-land-of-milk-and-honey-come-from/>.

³⁵³ See generally Alex Nowrasteh, *Post World-War II Migration and Lessons for Studying Liberalized Immigration*, CATO INST. (Jan. 28, 2014), <https://www.cato.org/blog/post-world-war-ii-migration-lessons-studying-liberalized-immigration>.

³⁵⁴ See Todd Henneman, *The Age of Employer Paternalism*, WORKFORCE.COM (Mar. 15, 2012), <https://workforce.com/news/the-age-of-employer-paternalism>.

the children.³⁵⁵ These children are now the elders controlling the destiny of the United States and often look back on their childhoods as idyllic and a representation of how the country should be.³⁵⁶

Many in this age range recall a time when their parents worked hard and expected the same of their children. They talk of the number of part-time jobs they had to pay for college,³⁵⁷ and of having to walk places because there was only one family vehicle. They lament the current generation's desire for "handouts" and question why "kids today" do not act and do as they did.³⁵⁸

Frankly, the concept that "the youth" are any different than they were at any point in time is a myth. Teens, especially, are rebellious by nature and, even in Ancient Greece, were thought to be spoiled and have a much different work ethic than their elders.³⁵⁹ People naturally become more conservative as they grow older and have to take on the responsibility of adulthood.³⁶⁰ Moreover, people tend to romanticize their childhoods, especially when they grew up and consider that everything turned out "fine," no matter how they were raised.³⁶¹

But the reality is that the world has changed vastly in the last fifty years, perhaps undergoing the swiftest change in any comparable fifty-year time period.³⁶²

³⁵⁵ *Suburban Growth*, USHISTORY.ORG, <https://www.ushistory.org/us/53b.asp> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

³⁵⁶ Linda DeMers Hummel, *Let's Put an End to the 'My Childhood was Better than Yours' Wars*, WASH. POST (Feb. 2, 2017), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting/wp/2017/02/02/lets-put-an-end-to-the-my-childhood-was-better-than-yours-wars/>.

³⁵⁷ *But see* Jillian Hauschild, *Hey Baby Boomers, Part-Time Jobs Can't Pay for College Anymore*, ODYSSEY (July 4, 2016), <https://www.theodysseyonline.com/part-time-jobs-cant-pay-college>.

³⁵⁸ *See* Brian Resnick, *Why Old People Will Always Complain About Young People*, VOX (Nov. 12, 2019), <https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2019/11/12/20950235/ok-boomer-kids-these-days-psychology>.

³⁵⁹ Jason Feifer, *Why Older People Have Always Trashed Younger People*, GEN (Sept. 6, 2018), <https://gen.medium.com/why-older-people-have-always-trashed-young-people-8f918529009a>.

³⁶⁰ Won-Tak Joo, *Why and How Should We Understand the Aging of Political Party Affiliation?*, GENERATIONS TODAY: AM. SOC'Y ON AGING (Mar. 15, 2023), <https://generations.asaging.org/understanding-aging-political-party-affiliation>.

³⁶¹ Justin Coulson, *The Fallacy of the 'I Turned Out Fine' Argument*, N.Y. TIMES (Nov. 27, 2018), <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/27/well/family/the-fallacy-of-the-i-turned-out-fine-argument.html>.

³⁶² *See* Sarah Crow, *50 Ways Life Has Changed in 50 Years*, BESTLIFE (July 2, 2018), <https://bestlifeonline.com/ways-life-changed-in-50-years/>.

Technology has expanded our world, as has mass transportation.³⁶³ Communities are no longer as isolated as they once were, and the majority of households no longer have a nuclear family where the dads went to work while the moms stayed home, did household chores, and collectively watched over the neighborhood children.³⁶⁴ But for anyone who might be yearning for “the good old days,” there are two things that are true. First, the “good old days” weren’t universally idyllic, nor was even the idealism exactly as portrayed in mainstream media.³⁶⁵ The further reality is that the world has changed so much in terms of demands and costs that it would be impossible to turn back the clock to the mythical time period envisioned.³⁶⁶

In 1962, the median price of a home was approximately \$12,500,³⁶⁷ while in 2023, it was over \$350,000.³⁶⁸ In 1962, the average cost of a new car was approximately \$2,500-\$3,000,³⁶⁹ while in 2022 it has been reported that the *average* price consumers pay for a new car was over \$47,000.³⁷⁰ In 1962, the median family income was \$6,000 a year.³⁷¹ During the 1950s and into the early 1960s, an individual (most likely the male or father) having a job with an “average” income could be the sole breadwinner

³⁶³ See Richard Florida, *The Global Mass Transit Revolution*, BLOOMBERG (Sept. 20, 2018), <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-09-20/the-global-mass-transit-revolution>; Daniel Gutierrez, *The Birth of Modern Technology—50 Years Ago to Now a Look at How Far We’ve Come*, INSIDE BIG DATA (Aug. 27, 2018), <https://insidebigdata.com/2018/08/27/birth-modern-technology-50-years-ago-now-look-far-weve-come/>.

³⁶⁴ See, e.g., Stephanie Pappas, *Five Ways Motherhood Has Changed Over Time*, LIVESCIENCE (May 10, 2013), <https://www.livescience.com/29521-5-ways-motherhood-has-changed.html>.

³⁶⁵ See John Woods, “Leave It to Beaver Was Not a Documentary”: *What American Educators Need Know About the American Family*, 24 AM. SECONDARY EDUC. 2, 5–6 (1995).

³⁶⁶ See generally John Waggoner, *50 Year of Inflation: What Things Cost in 1972*, AARP (July 7, 2022), <https://www.aarp.org/money/budgeting-saving/info-2022/prices-compared-to-50-years-ago.html>.

³⁶⁷ With the average being \$12,500. See Jane Kenney, *Here’s How Much a House Cost the Year You were Born*, DOYOUREMEMBER.COM (2019), <https://doyouremember.com/91242/how-much-house-cost-year/2>.

³⁶⁸ *Historical US Home Prices, Monthly Median Value from 1953-2022*, DQYDJ, <https://dqydj.com/historical-home-prices/> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

³⁶⁹ *Flashback 1962!*, 348-409.COM, <http://www.348-409.com/1962flash.html> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

³⁷⁰ Sebastian Blanco, *New Car Prices Keep Climbing, with Average Now at Almost \$47,100*, CAR AND DRIVER (Jan. 12, 2022), <https://www.caranddriver.com/news/a38748092/new-car-average-sale-prices-47100/>.

³⁷¹ U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, *INCOME OF FAMILIES AND PERSONS IN THE UNITED STATES: 1962*, at 1 (1963).

and afford being a typical homeowner and raising a family.³⁷² That individual, who might be receiving benefits and a livable wage through a union, could expect to be able to perhaps work in one place for his entire career and not worry about saving for retirement because of Social Security and Medicare.³⁷³ However, education costs have risen exponentially over the past few decades,³⁷⁴ as have health care costs.³⁷⁵ Social Security and Medicare alone no longer are able to support anyone during retirement.³⁷⁶

The reality of history is that those who feel they are being treated unfairly will only tolerate their plight for so long.³⁷⁷ Although there are often more complex reasons for revolution (such as political philosophy), revolutions are most unlikely to occur when a population feels secure economically.³⁷⁸ Currently, the wealth gap in the United States is the highest it has been in at least fifty years.³⁷⁹ Moreover, 10% of the population in the United States control approximately 77% of the wealth in the

³⁷² See Handman3, *Why is it that Families in the 1950s Seemed to be More Financially Stable with Only One Parent Working, While Today Many Two Income Households are Struggling to Get by?*, REDDIT (2015), https://www.reddit.com/r/explainlikeimfive/comments/33zjdy/eli5why_is_that_families_in_the_1950s_seemed_to/.

³⁷³ Comment to *Why is it that Families in the 1950s Seemed to be More Financially Stable with Only One Parent Working, While Today Many Two Income Households are Struggling to Get by?*, REDDIT (2015), https://www.reddit.com/r/explainlikeimfive/comments/33zjdy/eli5why_is_that_families_in_the_1950s_seemed_to/.

³⁷⁴ See Emmie Martin, *Here's How Much More Expensive It Is for You to Go to College Than It Was For Your Parents*, CNBC: MAKEIT (Nov. 29, 2017), <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/11/29/how-much-college-tuition-has-increased-from-1988-to-2018.html>.

³⁷⁵ See Victor R. Fuchs, Ph.D., *Major Trends in the U.S. Health Economy since 1950*, 366 NEW ENG. J. MED. 973 (2012); see also Nisha Kurani et al., *How Has U.S. Spending on Healthcare Changed Over Time*, HEALTH SYS. TRACKER (Feb. 25, 2022), <https://www.healthsystemtracker.org/chart-collection/u-s-spending-healthcare-changed-time/>.

³⁷⁶ See Annie Nova, *Living Only on Social Security Can Be Difficult. There are Many Resources That Can Help Struggling Seniors*, CNBC: FIXED INCOME STRATEGIES (Feb. 14, 2022), <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/02/14/living-only-on-social-security-can-be-difficult-these-resources-can-help.html>.

³⁷⁷ See generally Gia Nardini et al., *Together We Rise: How Social Movements Succeed*, 31 J. CONSUMER PSYCH. 112, 112–13 (2020).

³⁷⁸ See, e.g., James C. Davies, *Toward a Theory of Revolution*, 27 AM. SOCIO. REV. 5, 5–6 (1962).

³⁷⁹ Associated Press, *U.S. Income Inequality Highest Level in 50 Years, Economic Gap Growing in Heartland*, NBC NEWS (Sept. 26, 2019), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/u-s-income-inequality-highest-level-50-years-economic-gap-n1058956>.

country.³⁸⁰ Although the United States might still be the “land of opportunity” on some levels, the opportunity to be secure at the level of the population from fifty years ago is becoming rarer and rarer.³⁸¹ It is not only becoming rarer for immigrants—who are often delegated to low paying, menial labor—but for those already in the United States. Union jobs have become a rarity,³⁸² as has lifetime employment with the same company.³⁸³ Health care costs have soared, even with employer-paid plans, and many, after having invested at least a hundred thousand in a college degree, find no jobs where the salary enables them to pay off those loans, purchase a home, and consider starting a family.³⁸⁴

Moreover, the historical economic success of the United States was, in part, predicated on minorities “knowing their place.” This included racial minorities, ethnic minorities, and gender minorities.³⁸⁵ In the “good old days,” it was expected that people of color and ethnic minorities be appreciative of work, such as house cleaning or other manual labor.³⁸⁶ The “good old days” also required that females accept being paid less than males for comparable work while also doing the uncompensated work

³⁸⁰ Ana Hernández Kent et al., *What Wealth Inequality in America Looks Like: Key Facts and Figures*, FED. RESERVE BANK ST. LOUIS: OPEN VAULT BLOG (Aug. 14, 2019), <https://www.stlouisfed.org/open-vault/2019/august/wealth-inequality-in-america-facts-figures>.

³⁸¹ See, e.g., Grant Webster, *Here's Why Millennials are Trailing Behind Financially*, FORBES (Nov. 19, 2018), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lawrencelight/2018/11/19/heres-why-millennials-are-trailing-behind-financially/?sh=7c6c51065ed0>.

³⁸² See, e.g., Natalie Kitroeff, *Vying for the Rare Prize: A Union Job Paying Up To \$200,000*, NORTHJERSEY.COM (Feb. 1, 2017), <https://www.northjersey.com/story/money/workplace/2017/02/01/vying-rare-prize-union-job-paying-up-200000/97338542/>.

³⁸³ See, e.g., Mike Armstrong, *Opinion: What Bygone Days of Lifetime Employment Can Teach Us in the “Great Resignation”*, TIMES OF SAN DIEGO (Apr. 20, 2022), <https://timesofsandiego.com/opinion/2022/04/20/what-bygone-days-of-lifetime-employment-can-teach-us-in-the-great-resignation/>.

³⁸⁴ See Megan Leonhardt, *More and More Young People Have to Choose Between Paying for College and Buying a Home*, CNBC (May 31, 2018), <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/05/31/young-people-choosing-between-paying-for-college-and-buying-homes.html>.

³⁸⁵ See, e.g., Stephanie Coontz, *Opinion, The Not-so-Good Old Days*, N.Y. TIMES (June 25, 2013), <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/16/opinion/sunday/coontz-the-not-so-good-old-days.html>.

³⁸⁶ See, e.g., *Perspective, In Trump's Vision of a White America, Immigrants Should Be Servile and Grateful*, WASH. POST (July 18, 2019), https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/in-trumps-vision-of-a-white-america-immigrants-should-be-grateful-and-servile/2019/07/18/0afb70c6-a8e3-11e9-a3a6-ab670962db05_story.html.

of running the household.³⁸⁷ Racial minorities have fared even worse as far as comparable salaries for comparable work.³⁸⁸

This situation has always been unacceptable. No one should have to accept a role as being a supporting cast member within a country where the only truly secure individuals are those who have historically been given the privileges of wealth and status. If the United States is to thrive as a country, it must rethink its social systems, as well as provide for a social safety net.³⁸⁹ The response to the pandemic is an example of the country's flawed social system.³⁹⁰ The response, or lack of planning, had a disproportionate effect on those in the lower paid service professions,³⁹¹ as well as its most vulnerable populations (e.g., low-income seniors).³⁹² The United States must take the opportunity to stop arguing about the extremes of capitalism versus socialism and develop a system—especially as related to housing and health care—that does not favor only those whose security comes from happenstance³⁹³ or generational wealth.³⁹⁴ Failure to do so will cause a rot from within that will result in the very situations that have caused the downfall of empires in the past.³⁹⁵

³⁸⁷ Helen McCarthy, *The Rise of the Working Wife*, HIST. TODAY (May 5, 2020), <https://www.historytoday.com/history-matters/rise-working-wife>.

³⁸⁸ Stephen Miller, *Black Workers Still Earn Less than their White Counterparts*, SHRM (June 11, 2020), <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/compensation/pages/racial-wage-gaps-persistence-poses-challenge.aspx>.

³⁸⁹ See Adam A. Millsap, *Rethinking the Social Safety Net*, FORBES (Jan. 14, 2021), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/adammillsap/2021/01/14/rethinking-the-social-safety-net/>.

³⁹⁰ Neelam Sekhri Feachem, MHA et al., *The United States' Response to COVID-10: A Case Study*, INST. FOR GLOB. HEALTH SCI. 1 (May 13, 2021), https://globalhealthsciences.ucsf.edu/sites/globalhealthsciences.ucsf.edu/files/summary_us_case_study5.pdf.

³⁹¹ Julia Raifman et al., *The Unequal Toll of COVID on Workers*, ECON. POL. INST. (Feb. 7, 2022), <https://www.epi.org/blog/the-unequal-toll-of-covid-19-on-workers/>.

³⁹² *Serving Low-Income Seniors: Lessons and the Impact of COVID-19*, ALL. FOR HEALTH & POL'Y (Nov. 6, 2020), <https://www.allhealthpolicy.org/serving-low-income-seniors-lessons-and-the-impact-of-covid-19/>.

³⁹³ Even if hard work is a key to success, not everyone who works hard achieves success or security. Many other factors come into play, including good luck. See, e.g., Zoe Beaty, "Work Hard & You'll Succeed" Simply Isn't True, So Let's Stop Saying It, REFINERY 29 (March 12, 2020), <https://www.refinery29.com/en-gb/work-hard-and-youll-succeed-is-a-myth>; see also Zachary Crockett, *The "Self Made" Myth: Why Hard Work Isn't Enough to Reach the Top*, THE HUSTLE (Mar. 15, 2019), <https://thehustle.co/self-made-myth-luck-versus-hard-work/>.

³⁹⁴ Gene Marks, *Entrepreneurs are Great, But It's Mom and Dad Who Gave Them Their Start*, THE GUARDIAN (Jan. 31, 2021), <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/jan/31/small-business-entrepreneurs-success-parents>.

³⁹⁵ See generally CARLO M. CIPPOLA, *THE ECONOMIC DECLINE OF EMPIRES* x–xvi (2006).

F. Education

Although the United States is known for its great universities and access to education, it is difficult not to see the problems that have developed in unequal public school systems.³⁹⁶ When public schools are funded by the property taxes of a community, it is impossible to have any type of universally equal education. Not surprisingly, predominantly minority communities in urban centers suffer the most in terms of access to education.³⁹⁷

However, money is not the only issue when it comes to appropriate education. As the wealth gap has increased, those with fewer resources not only have fewer resources in schools, but often do not have the resources that give a wide range of experiences or exposure to the world outside the homogenous neighborhood.³⁹⁸ Although families with more wealth have the opportunity to travel and provide educational opportunities through outings to concerts and museums, children from poorer families often have none of those opportunities nor a staff of school counselors who can truly counsel about career aspirations, or deal with the psychological issues that impede achievement in the poorest school districts.³⁹⁹ Teachers in lower-income districts often have to act as parents, psychologists, coaches, law enforcement officials, and medical professionals, all in a day's time.⁴⁰⁰ A lack of resources often means that schools do not provide extracurricular activities such as art, music, clubs, or even

³⁹⁶ See Linda Darling-Hammond, *Unequal Opportunity: Race and Education*, BROOKINGS (Mar. 1, 1998), <https://www.brookings.edu/Articles/unequal-opportunity-race-and-education/>; see also Bruce Baker & Mark Weber, *Separate and Unequal: Racial and Ethnic Segregation and the Case for School Funding Reparations in New Jersey*, N.J. POL. PERSP. (Sept. 13, 2021), <https://www.njpp.org/publications/report/separate-and-unequal-racial-and-ethnic-segregation-and-the-case-for-school-funding-reparations-in-new-jersey/>.

³⁹⁷ Baker & Weber, *supra* note 396.

³⁹⁸ See, e.g., Matt Barnum, *The 'Shadow Education System': How Wealthier Students Benefit from Art, Music, and Theater Over the Summer While Poor Kids Miss Out*, CHALKBEAT (May 30, 2018), <https://www.chalkbeat.org/2018/5/30/21105061/the-shadow-education-system-how-wealthier-students-benefit-from-art-music-and-theater-over-the-summer>.

³⁹⁹ Alana Semuels, *Good School, Rich School, Bad School, Poor School: The Inequality at the Heart of America's Education System*, THE ATL. (Aug. 25, 2016), <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/08/property-taxes-and-unequal-schools/497333/>.

⁴⁰⁰ *Addressing Teacher Burnout: Causes, Symptoms, and Strategies*, AU SCH. OF EDUC. (Feb. 16, 2021), <https://soeonline.american.edu/blog/teacher-burnout>.

organized sports teams.⁴⁰¹ Many school children also rely on schools to provide healthy meals.⁴⁰²

Until the United States recognizes that it must invest in education as a social program that will be the pillar that unifies and builds the infrastructure of the country, the future of the United States will remain ominous. Moreover, education must not only be looked at as memorization of facts and passing standardized tests. Education must be looked at as the place where there must be an introduction to ideas and the understanding of other people and cultures. This, in turn, fosters the type of cooperation necessary to solve both the problems in this country, and in the world.⁴⁰³ Unfortunately, schools have become stages on which political battles are fought, rather than havens where youth are introduced to new ideas and concepts that might not necessarily occur otherwise.⁴⁰⁴ Adding the continuous media feeding frenzies covering what occurs in a school system on any given day, and we are left with the destruction of what should be the main building block of a nation.

In order for a nation to flourish, especially one such as the United States, it needs to disabuse itself of the idea that self-criticism is inappropriate or that various aspects of history are too upsetting to be taught. History is upsetting, and the United States has engaged in its own atrocities over the centuries.⁴⁰⁵ Whether one disagrees on what actions were necessary or whether reparations are owed anybody, there must be acknowledgment of the reality of the past of our country.⁴⁰⁶ This past includes what was done to Native Americans,⁴⁰⁷ the truths about how slavery built the economic

⁴⁰¹ See Julia Freeland Fisher & Amy Anderson, *Extracurriculars Are More Than Nice-to-Have: They're Essential*, EDSURGE (Apr. 24, 2019), <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2019-04-24-extracurriculars-are-more-than-nice-to-have-they-re-essential>.

⁴⁰² See, e.g., Prudence L. Carter, *Poor Schools Need to Encompass More than Instruction to Succeed*, N.Y. TIMES (Sept. 16, 2016), <https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2016/09/14/is-school-reform-hopeless/poor-schools-need-to-encompass-more-than-instruction-to-succeed>.

⁴⁰³ Jeremy Sutcliffe, *Why Global Awareness Matters to Schools*, THE GUARDIAN (Nov. 5, 2012), <https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2012/nov/05/global-awareness-schools-education>.

⁴⁰⁴ Kyung Lah & Jack Hannah, *Discussions of Critical Race Theory, Covid-19 Rules Whip Up School Board Meetings to the Dismay of Students*, CNN (Oct. 31, 2021), <https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/31/us/nevada-douglas-county-school-crt-row/index.html>.

⁴⁰⁵ See *Massacres in U.S. History*, ZINN EDUC. PROJECT: TEACHING PEOPLE'S HIST., <https://www.zinnedproject.org/collection/massacres-us/> (last visited Oct. 31, 2023).

⁴⁰⁶ See, e.g., *How to Acknowledge a Shameful Past*, THE ATL. (Feb. 27, 2015), <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/02/how-to-acknowledge-a-shameful-past/386372/>.

⁴⁰⁷ Injustices to Native Americans are ongoing and are being upheld by the United States Supreme Court. Among the decisions is *Arizona v. Navajo Nation*, 143 S. Ct. 1804, 1807, 1816 (2023) in which the Court held that a “1868 treaty establishing the Navajo Reservation reserved necessary water to accomplish the purpose of the Navajo Reservation but did not require the United States to take affirmative steps to secure water for the Tribe.” Essentially, the Court held

wealth of the United States, the exploitation of immigrant labor, and the realities of the American military empire that exists as both the peacemaker of the world, and the entity that controls by military might.⁴⁰⁸ It is only the education about “self” that will allow the United States to move forward and exist in a world filled with countries that are now equals, and not subordinates, on the world stage.⁴⁰⁹

VI. CONCLUSION

My father, who essentially lost his country in World War II,⁴¹⁰ called the United States “the greatest country in the world.” Like many immigrants, he looked to the United States as the country that would help the oppressed and welcome those who had nowhere else to go. Unfortunately, like many immigrants who made a new life in the United States, he found his senior years to be difficult as he discovered that the United States could be rather heartless with respect to the most vulnerable. After dedicating the best years of his life contributing to the economic wealth of his adopted country, he found himself left with a minimal social security check that did not cover household expenses nor the rising costs of his prescription drugs. He, and many other peers, then began wondering whether it might have been better to have taken their chances in Europe as it rebuilt.

There is no doubt that the United States, at least philosophically, developed one of the best governments that has ever existed. It is still the envy of many countries around the world, especially those who have been trying for centuries to create systems where there are peaceful transitions of power. But it must be acknowledged that the United States was able to develop as it did partially because it is a young country that was

that the 1868 Treaty imposed no affirmative duty on the federal government to provide water for the Navajo Nation, despite the fact that a drought in the Colorado Basin has left a substantial proportion of the Navajo population without water. *See U.S. Supreme Court Rules Against Navajo Nation in Water Rights Case*, AL-JAZEERA (June 22, 2023), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/6/22/us-supreme-court-rules-against-navajo-nation-in-water-rights-case>. In 2016, the Sioux Nation was denied its request to stop the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline after alleging that it had not been consulted about the pipeline in violation of federal law. *See Rebecca Hersher, Key Moments in the Dakota Access Pipeline Fight*, NPR (Feb. 27, 2017), <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/02/22/514988040/key-moments-in-the-dakota-access-pipeline-fight>.

⁴⁰⁸ *See generally* Ron Rosenbaum, *The Shocking Savagery of America’s Early History*, SMITHSONIAN MAG. (Mar. 2013), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-shocking-savagery-of-americas-early-history-22739301/>; Matthew Desmond, *In Order to Understand the Brutality of American Capitalism, You Have to Start on the Plantation*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 14, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/slavery-capitalism.html>; Michael Sainato, ‘A Lot of Abuse for Little Pay’: How US Farming Profits from Exploitation and Brutality, THE GUARDIAN (Dec. 25, 2021), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/dec/25/us-farms-made-200m-human-smuggling-labor-trafficking-operation>; Robert Higgs, *Has the U.S. Government Committed War Crimes in Afghanistan and Iraq?*, INDEP. INST. (May 23, 2004), <https://www.independent.org/news/article.asp?id=1311>.

⁴⁰⁹ Barrett Holmes Pitnor, *Viewpoint: US Must Confront Its Original Sin to Move Forward*, BBC (June 3, 2020), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52912238>.

⁴¹⁰ My father was from Poland.

able to benefit from trying not to make the mistakes of various predecessor countries and empires. It simply did not have the baggage of kings, family bloodlines, and historic homelands that its counterparts in Europe were constantly battling over.

It must also be acknowledged that the geographic location of the United States kept it far afield from the wars that forced Europe to have to rebuild time and time again. Its geographic isolation also enabled it to commandeer the vast resources of the territorial United States through overwhelming the Native population while not having to continuously war with European countries that had claimed their own pieces of the new world. These factors (and then some) allowed the United States to follow a path that allowed it to become the superpower it became in the Twentieth Century.

But it is no longer sufficient nor appropriate for the United States to assume its own superiority, especially when some of the benefit of that superiority was only available for a minority of its population. To not wind up on the trash heap of empires past, the United States must cultivate a level of humility and take its place as more of an equal among other countries. It must also develop more of a social conscience regarding its own citizens instead of seemingly targeting many citizens as villains.