

“inconsistent with the main end of their fathers’ coming to New England.” Cotton Mather, Increase’s son, led the Andros Rebellion in 1689, an armed but bloodless coup which clapt royal governor Edmund Andros and his henchmen into jail. Boston’s patriots proclaimed the independence of New England, with a sovereign judicial system, powers of trade and coinage, and a new system of credit for productive economic improvements.

The effort failed, but was not forgotten — any more than was the date on which Charles II finally revoked and voided the original Massachusetts charter. That infamous day — Oct. 23, 1684 — is given as the birthday of “*Poor Richard, an American Prince, without Subjects,*” by Benjamin Franklin, in the very first issue of *Poor Richard’s Almanack*, in 1733.

Cotton Mather’s own contributions to realizing John Winthrop’s vision are exemplified by his *Essays to Do Good*, the organizing manual he published in 1710 for developing a republican citizenry:

It is an invaluable *honor*, to do *good*; it is an incomparable *pleasure*. A man must look upon himself as *dignified* and *gratified* by God, when an *opportunity* to do (good) is put into his hands. He must embrace it with *rapture*, as enabling him to answer the great End of his being.

America’s mission remained clearly defined. “*Govern-ment* is called, the ordinance of God,” Mather wrote. Thus, “it should vigorously pursue those noble and blessed *ends* for which it is *ordained: the good of mankind.*”

Benjamin Franklin wrote in 1784 to Cotton’s son Samuel — who had read the Declaration of Independence from his pulpit in 1776 — that *Essays to Do Good* had “an influence on my conduct though life; for I have always set a greater value on the character of a doer of good, than on any other kind of reputation; and if I have been, as you seem to think, a useful citizen, the public owes the advantage of it to that book.”

And so the republican nation-state known as the United States was established, on these principles, by these men and others who followed them. In 1807, John Adams wrote to Benjamin Rush, a fellow signer of the Declaration, “I have always laughed at the affectation of representing American Independence as a novel idea, as a modern discovery, as a late invention. The idea of it as a possible thing, as a probable event, nay, as a necessary and unavoidable measure, in case Great Britain should assume an unconstitutional authority over us, has been familiar to Americans from the first settlement of the country, and was as well understood by Gov. Winthrop . . . as by Gov. Samuel Adams.”

Editor’s note: The more elaborated story of the early history of the American republic can be found in H. Graham Lowry, *How the Nation Was Won, America’s Untold Story* (Washington, D.C.: Executive Intelligence Review, 1987).

John Quincy Adams and the Community of Principle

by Nancy Spannaus

John Quincy Adams, the son of Founding Father John Adams, and the intellectual heir of Benjamin Franklin, played a pivotal role in defining the foreign policy of the young United States. His concept for that policy flowed directly from his belief that the United States of America was founded upon principles which were derived from the Christian religion,¹ and that the United States should preserve and extend those principles, without any compromise with imperial or colonial powers, and without becoming an imperial power itself.

During his tenure as Secretary of State, under the Monroe administrations, Adams produced an abundance of memoranda and speeches which defined his view of American foreign policy, especially around the period of the Adams-Onis Treaty of 1818, and the formulation of the Monroe Doctrine (1823). The events around preparing these two documents show that Adams was fully committed to creating a continental republic based on anti-colonial principles, and that he based his idea of international alliances upon the concept of a *community of principle* with fellow sovereign republics.

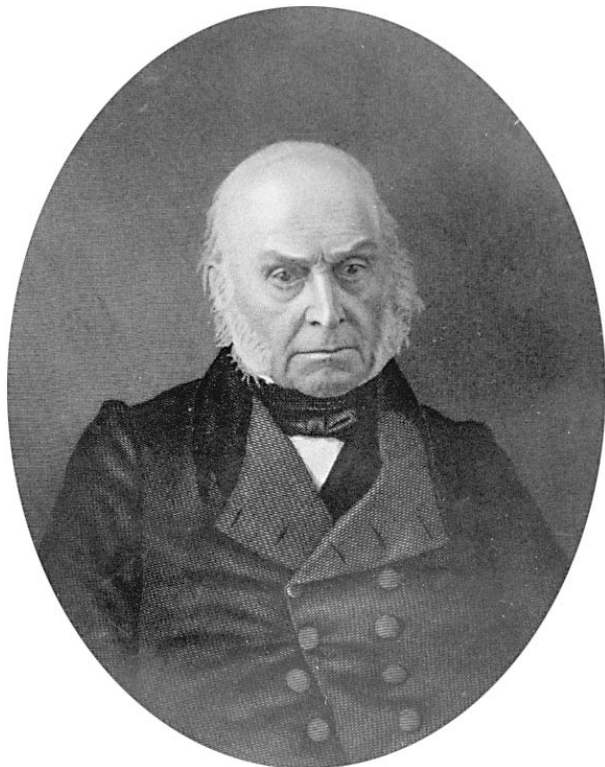
According to Samuel Flagg Bemis, a leading twentieth-century historian, Adams’s diplomatic history defines him as a, if not the, leading protagonist of what became known later as “Manifest Destiny.” But while the specific coiners of that phrase, notably John O’Sullivan of New York,² used it to justify merely a land grab, including President James Polk’s war with Mexico (1846-48), Adams and his faction insisted that the westward expansion of the United States not result in the spread of slavery, or conquest of other lands, but rather the extension of republicanism as expressed in the Declaration of Independence. Adams opposed the Mexican war, and was prepared to dump his continental aspirations, if necessary, if it meant the expansion of slavery.

A continental republic

From his entry into politics at a very young age, John Quincy Adams advocated the expansion of the United States

1. See “An Oration Delivered Before the Inhabitants of the Town of Newburyport on the Sixty-First Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence,” reprinted in part in *The New Federalist*, Vol. 13, No. 32.

2. See Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963).



John Quincy Adams, who served the United States in many official capacities, including as President and U.S. Representative. Adams worked to ensure that the United States became a continental republic, based on the principles of anti-colonialism and the tenets of the Declaration of Independence.

to dominate the North American continent. He supported the Louisiana Purchase, for example, as a move in this direction—as did Alexander Hamilton. One major underpinning of his reasoning was that allowing any of the European powers to maintain a foothold in North America—Spain, France, Russia, or Great Britain—would tend to lead to constant wars, and toward balkanization of the continent.

In a letter to his mother in 1811, right before the War of 1812, Adams wrote the following: “If that Party [Federalist] are not effectually put down in Massachusetts, as completely as they already are in New York, and Pennsylvania, and all the southern and western states, the Union is gone. Instead of a nation coextensive with the North American continent, destined by God and nature to be the most populous and most powerful people ever combined under one social compact, we shall have an endless multitude of little insignificant clans and tribes at eternal war with one another for a rock, or a fish pond, the sport and fable of European masters and oppressors.”³

During the War of 1812, and thereafter, there was no lack

3. Samuel Flagg Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Foundation of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950).

of evidence that the European imperial powers might want to take advantage of the young, and militarily weak, United States. Spain, at that time, controlled Florida and Cuba. Mexico, which had declared independence in 1813, reached well up into what is now the southwestern United States. Both Russia and Great Britain had claims on the West Coast, and, of course, Great Britain had control over Canada. There was also considerable rivalry between these powers, and various efforts were made by Russia and Great Britain, in particular, to get alliances with the United States for various purposes—the kind of alliances which George Washington would correctly have called “entangling.”

In this context, Adams considered it critical to negotiate expansion of the boundaries of the United States all the way to the Pacific Ocean, thus establishing a foothold for the U.S. becoming a continental republic. The vehicle which he used was his negotiations with Spain over the years 1818 and 1819.

While the detonator for the negotiations was the threat to American lives in Spanish-occupied Florida, the final treaty, called the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819, not only resulted in the cession of Florida to the United States, but it established the claim of the United States to the continent, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the 42nd to 49th parallel. Why did the Spanish do this? According to Bemis, it was because that monarchy, being hard-pressed by the British Empire, wanted a free hand to turn its attention to South America, where its former colonies were making rapid moves toward independence.

Community of Principle

Through the course of the negotiations with the Spanish, the Russians, and the British in the period, Secretary of State Adams was walking a tightrope. On the one hand, he and President Monroe were committed to firm support for emerging republics, in the name of the principles of self-determination, independence, and human liberty. By March 1822, in fact, the United States had recognized the new republics of Chile, the United Provinces of the Rio de la Plata (today Argentina), Peru, Colombia, and Mexico. On the other hand, Adams held firm to Washington’s principle of refusing to enter military, or positive, alliances with any of the imperial powers, or even with their former colonies.

What came first with Adams, was the maintenance of the American System of republican liberty, as it was defined by the principles laid out in the Declaration of Independence. Any nation which did not abide by such principles, could not be part of a “community of principle” with the United States. Adams even told a Spanish diplomat in 1820 that he considered the United States to be the only example of the American System. “There is no community of interests or of principles between North and South America,” he said.

Meanwhile, Britain, of all places, was putting pressure on the United States to unite with it, allegedly in support of liberation movements against Spain, France, and Russia. In

response, Adams gave a Fourth of July speech in 1821, in which he outlined two basic principles of America's relations with all other nations and peoples: first, the anti-colonial principle, and second, the anti-entanglement principle. It was in this speech that Adams asserted that, from the moral and physical nature of man, "colonial establishments cannot fulfill the great objects of governments in the just purposes of civil society."

He described the American revolution's universal significance thus. "In a conflict [of] seven years, the history of the war by which you maintained that Declaration, became the history of the civilized world. . . . It was the first solemn declaration by a nation of the only *legitimate* foundation of civil government. It was the cornerstone of a new fabric, destined to cover the surface of the globe. It demolished at a stroke, the lawfulness of all governments founded upon conquest. It swept away all the rubbish of accumulated centuries of servitude. From the day of this Declaration, the people of North America were no longer the fragment of a distant empire, imploring justice and mercy from an inexorable master in another hemisphere. [Dr. Mahathir, you have a friend here!]. . . . They were a *nation*, asserting as of right, and maintaining by war, its own existence. A nation was born in a day. . . . It stands, and must for ever stand, alone, a beacon on the summit of the mountain, to which all the inhabitants of the earth may turn their eyes for a genial and saving light . . . a light of salvation and redemption to the oppressed."⁴

Adams said that colonial establishments "are incompatible with the essential character of our institutions," and concluded, "that great colonial establishments are engines of wrong, and that in the progress of social improvement it will be the duty of the human family to abolish them, as they are now endeavoring to abolish the slave trade." The message was not missed by the Russian imperial minister, who reported it to have been "a virulent diatribe against England."

The British under Prime Minister George Canning, however, did not give up. Although Britain had not recognized the new republics of South America, and the United States had, Canning approached the U.S. Ambassador to England with a proposal for an alliance on the question of South America. While others in the cabinet, and former Presidents Jefferson and Madison, were inclined to accept, especially because the United States did not have the military capability to defend its position against recolonization, Adams was adamant, that the United States should not accept, and act as a "cockboat in the wake of a British man-of-war."

But there were principled reasons as well. Despite apparent tactical agreement on the issue of South America, "Britain and America . . . would not be bound by any permanent community of principle," Adams said. In other words, the nation of the Declaration of Independence, and the British Empire,

did not share objectives, and thus could not make such an alliance.

But Adams did outline a positive policy toward South America, which Bemis summarizes as 1) upholding the republican principle against monarchy; 2) support of the American System of separation from the monarchical system of Europe; 3) a positive view toward the idea of an inter-American Congress; and 4) treaties of commerce and amity should be forged on the basis of the "most-favored-nation" principle.

In a memorandum to Richard C. Anderson, U.S. Minister to Colombia, in 1823, Adams put it eloquently: "The emancipation of the South American continent opens to the whole race of man prospects of futurity, in which this union will be called in the discharge of its duties to itself and to unnumbered ages of posterity to take a conspicuous and leading part. It invokes all that is precious in hope and all that is desirable in existence to the countless millions of our fellow creatures, which in the progressive revolutions of time this hemisphere is destined to rear and to maintain. That the fabric of our social connections with our southern neighbors may rise in the lapse of years with a grandeur and harmony of proportions corresponding with the magnificence of the means, placed by providence in our power and in that of our descendants, its foundations must be laid in principles of politics and of morals new and distasteful to the thrones and dominations of the elder world, but coextensive with the surface of the globe and lasting as the changes of time."

The Monroe Doctrine

Thus, on Dec. 2, 1823, President Monroe, feeling impelled to take action in the face of possible European moves to reconquer the infant South American republics, issued his Monroe Doctrine. It was composed of three principal elements, all of which had been shaped by John Quincy Adams:

1. Non-colonization: "The American Continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintained, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European power."

2. Abstention: The United States will not involve itself in European affairs unrelated to its interests: "It is only when our rights are invaded, or seriously menaced, that we resent injuries, or make preparations for our defense."

3. Hands off: "We could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner, their destiny, by any European power, in any other light, than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States."

As Bemis points out, the Monroe Doctrine was the other side of the Manifest Destiny policy of extending the republican principle throughout the continent. If imperialism was not to be allowed, that only left peaceful expansion, or cooperation, by or between sovereign republics. And Adams was clear that he did not see expansion by conquest, even of Canada.

4. Cited by Anton Chaitkin in a speech delivered to the Schiller Institute Labor Day Conference, 1998.

The Monroe Doctrine was honored by those Presidents who clung to the American System. Presidents Abraham Lincoln, James Garfield, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt were the most notable ones to rise to this standard—not to mention John Quincy Adams’s Presidency (1824-28). During the rest of the nineteenth century, the “American System” Presidents also pursued the spread of economic development projects internationally, as an indispensable spur to building republican nations.

But the breaches of these principles became increasingly numerous—from the Mexican-American War, to the Spanish-American War, to the (Teddy) Roosevelt corollary to the Doctrine (calling for intervention to collect debt), to the invasions of Mexico under Woodrow Wilson’s administration. In 1982, when the United States supported Great Britain’s war against Argentina in the Malvinas, the violation of the Monroe Doctrine was complete.

That said, the John Quincy Adams approach to foreign policy remains the standard that must be readopted today.

Secretary Blaine and Manifest Destiny

by Anton Chaitkin

America’s mission, to uplift mankind, was described by the statesman James G. Blaine in an 1892 volume commemorating the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus’s great achievement. Blaine, then Secretary of State under President Benjamin Harrison, wrote:

“The distinctive trait of modern times is that the achievement of the highest is brought down to the service of the lowliest, and thus the impress of value is stamped upon the individual human being.

“The development of the modern world is towards all men, and not towards one man. To build up the marvels of Antiquity the few led, the many followed; the few ruled, the many were driven. The toiler was not considered. He was a beast of burden. He was used and he was sacrificed. He had no voice in affairs. He was built into the walls of cities, his blood outlined the boundary of nations, his labor wrought the luxury of kings, but himself had no civic existence. As a man to be considered or consulted, a man whose happiness or health or wish was to be taken into the account, he was not.

“Through the turbulent centuries the individual man has forged to the front. He is still in the heat of struggle, but he has tasted power, he has tested his strength, he knows that the world is his. . . .

“After the long trance of the Dark Ages, when poetry and art and learning and thought were reawakened by the light

touch of Antiquity, and faced the sun of a new day whose meridian we have not yet reached, there awoke . . . a giant . . . —‘Triumphant Democracy.’ . . . No man knew of its coming. But the world all unconscious was presently astir with preparation of the paths for its victorious feet. The Renaissance, the revival of painting, of art, of letters, is a revival . . . of the old. But the reawakened mind was not to be content with following the paths of the ancients. . . . New paths were struck out, of which the ancient never dreamed, in which the modern world has no rival, whose [scientific and technological] miracles eclipse the mysteries of the past only to unfold greater mysteries in the future; whose end lies even now beyond the utmost stretch of imagination. And every shining path leads to the fireside of the humblest home, to the weal of the smallest child, to the health and the happiness, the purity and the strength, of Triumphant Democracy.”¹

The national power to accomplish this mission grew astonishingly after the Civil War, when the policies of the martyred Abraham Lincoln were applied by a population and government freed of wartime burdens. An ardent Lincoln apostle, James Blaine helped shape the country’s greatest achievements as a Congressman (1863-76), House Speaker (1869-76), Senator (1876-81), Secretary of State (1881 and 1889-92), Presidential candidate, and party leader.

Blaine and the Whigs

Blaine is perhaps best known to posterity as the foreign-policy successor to Henry Clay and John Quincy Adams, in that he aided South and Central America to resist British-directed military and financial aggression, and fostered mutually beneficial economic development. President Theodore Roosevelt reversed Blaine’s hemispheric policy; President Franklin Roosevelt revived it.

To introduce the perspective of that era’s American “Manifest Destiny,” let us look at a huge Federal government-sponsored railroad project, the Northern Pacific, for which Blaine was the political manager. As will be seen, this and other transcontinental railway lines had immediate global implications, and were the economic pivot upon which the United States was turned into the world’s biggest economy.

The Northern Pacific (NP) was to stretch 2,000 miles, from Lake Superior to Puget Sound. It was the first single railroad to link the Pacific Ocean with the water system of the Atlantic (through the Great Lakes and the Erie Canal or the St. Lawrence River). The NP construction created its two terminus cities, Duluth, Minnesota and Tacoma, Washington.

Its objects were to bring in waves of European immigrants, to transform the Far Northwest with coal mining and wheat farming; to make possible the transport of soldiers and military supplies; to help in annexing British Canada’s west-

1. James G. Blaine, “Progress and Development of the Western World,” Book I of *Columbus and Columbia: A Pictorial History of the Man and the Nation* (Philadelphia: Historical Publishing Co., 1892).