

“Let them make SOUP:” The Essential Ingredients of Euro-American Grand Strategy and the Amerindian Conquest

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Grand strategy is a nebulous concept. It is virtually impossible to define the term in a meaningful and unequivocal manner. Some even doubt that it actually exists. Others acknowledge its existence, but avoid authoritative definitions because of the notion's elasticity. Grand strategy is somewhat akin to Carl von Clausewitz's idea of the culminating point. The concept makes sense in hindsight, but it is extremely difficult to identify when one is engaged in battle or in warfare. Grand strategy offers a similar dilemma. Because it consists of both physical and metaphysical components, grand strategy, much like Clausewitz's use of the paradoxical trinity to describe war, defies a simple, straightforward definition. Nonetheless, historians have a distinct advantage when trying to determine the components and forces that contributed to what can be described as grand strategy.¹ This historical perspective is particularly useful when assessing sweeping paradigmatic changes involving multiple actors and dissimilar cultures over hundreds of years of interaction. The Roman and British

¹ Williamson Murray, "Thoughts on Grand Strategy and the United States in the Twenty-first Century," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, North America, 13 January 2011, 85. Available at: <<http://www.jmss.org/jmss/index.php/jmss/article/view/365/386>>. Date accessed: 30 Jun. 2011. I would like to thank the University of Calgary, the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies, and the participants at this summer's workshop on grand strategy for their support. Special thanks to Ted Wilson and Jon House for their comments and suggestions on this article. While this essay does not address imperial history per se, it does share similar ideas regarding territorial expansion, expropriation of resources, frontier violence, governance and concepts of societal order.

Empires, for example, offer many opportunities to dissect the essential ingredients of imperial strategy. The persistent conflict between Amerindians and European and later American peoples provides another opportunity to break down the critical parts of a grand strategy. From first contact in the late fifteenth century to the tragedy of Wounded Knee in 1890, it is possible to distinguish the key elements of a grand strategy that guided Europeans and Americans, either consciously or subconsciously, in their conquest of the western hemisphere.

Unlike other conventional approaches to grand strategy, the emphasis of this study is not on the traditional components of strategy or the interaction of the standard instruments of national power. One must understand the relationship between ends, ways and means and risks presented by an enemy to grasp the essence of strategy. And one cannot discount the variables of time, space and resources in a nation's strategic calculus. But there is another way to understand the workings of grand strategy. By examining how the United States ultimately subdued Amerindians in its quest to fulfill its strategic vision, one can see the fundamental components of a grand strategy at work during a lengthy and multifaceted period of interaction between Amerindians and Euro-Americans.

Before identifying those components, a working definition of grand strategy is essential. Although there are several excellent choices, this paper uses the US Army War College's description. Grand strategy is

[a]n overarching strategy summarizing the national vision for developing, applying, and coordinating all the instruments of national power (diplomatic, informational, military and economic [DIME]) in order to accomplish the grand strategic objectives, viz., preserve national security; bolster national economic prosperity; and promote national values. Grand Strategy may be stated or implied.²

Like all attempts to define grand strategy, this one is not perfect but it provides a starting point to evaluate what constituted a grand strategy in the centuries of persistent conflict between Amerindians and Euro-Americans.

² See Harry R. Yarger, "Strategic Theory for the 21st Century: The Little Book on Big Strategy," *The LeTort Papers*, (February 2006, 11) <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=641> (accessed on 30 June 2011)

The first element of this definition stresses the criticality of a national vision. As the book of Proverbs suggests, “Without vision, the people perish.”³ The need for a strategic vision is imperative in the construction of a stated or implied grand strategy. A common vision is the nexus of the entire process. Without it, no strategy, let alone grand strategy, can exist. Of course, from the Amerindian perspective, the people perished because of the American strategic vision. But what, then, was this American vision and what elements fulfilled America’s grand strategy?

Williamson Murray, Holger Herwig and Mike Pearlman employed a useful metaphor in their writings that captured the essence of a grand strategy. “In fact, the best analogy for understanding grand strategy,” Murray suggested, “is that of how French peasant soup is made – a mixture of items thrown into the pot over the course of a week and then eaten, for which no recipe can possibly exist.”⁴ Herwig echoed Murray’s observations, “Perhaps, it is like the making of French peasant soup: a mixture of items thrown helter-skelter into the pot over the course of a week without any recipe and then eaten!”⁵ Reinforcing the power of this culinary metaphor, Mike Pearlman observed, “Because autocratic leadership has always been abhorrent to America’s culture and Constitution, its military strategy has often resembled a French stew: many different elements thrown into the pot.” Pearlman elaborated, “[t]he items were likely to retain their disparate (if not contradictory) characteristics. The final outcome of this process has never been a smooth broth.”⁶ The French soup or stew metaphor is a useful one. It creates an image of a holistic product complete with its identifiable and unidentifiable qualities. Moreover, this analogy captures the fundamental challenge of dissecting or constructing a French soup or a grand strategy. No two soups nor are any two grand strategies the same in their texture or in their mixture, yet they possess similar ingredients that give them form and meaning.

³ Proverbs 29:18 <http://bible.cc/proverbs/29-18.htm> (accessed on 30 June 2011)

⁴ Williamson Murray, “Thoughts on Grand Strategy and the United States in the Twenty-first Century,” *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, North America, 13 January 2011, p. 84. Available at: <http://www.jmss.org/jmss/index.php/jmss/article/view/365/386>. Date accessed: 30 Jun. 2011.

⁵ Holger Herwig, “Military Strategy in War and Peace: Some Conclusions,” *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, North America, 13, January 2011, 130. Available at: <http://www.jmss.org/jmss/index.php/jmss/article/view/368/389>. Date accessed: 30 Jun. 2011.

⁶ Michael D. Pearlman, *Warmaking and American Democracy: The Struggle over Military Strategy, 1700 to the Present* (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 1999), p. 2.

Taking the soup analogy one step further, it offers more insight than Murray, Herwig or Pearlman intended. If you would pardon my military affinity for acronyms, soup is more than an analogy – it is an acronym for the fundamental ingredients of any grand strategy. Whether from great state’s perspective or from an up and coming power’s search for greatness, SOUP, as an acronym, offers a different but hopefully useful way to understand what any grand strategy must accomplish.

In the context of the Amerindian conquest, the “S” represents the security element. This ingredient constitutes the physical, social and economic security necessary to achieve America’s national vision. “O” represents order. It is a variant of Robert Wiebe’s well known thesis, but centers on the dissimilar notions of what constituted racial, ethnic, political, economic and social order between Euro-Americans and indigenous peoples.⁷ The “U” represents unity. To be effective, a grand strategy should have the tacit support of the people (or least a significant number of the people). Unity of effort in seeking the American vision was critical to its success although it required healthy portions of security and order to be useful. The “P” represents two essential components. One is prosperity. How one defines this ingredient depends on cultural and economic perspectives, but its contribution to understanding grand strategy is significant. The second “P” stands for peace. Every society has a notion of this concept, but no two cultures seem to define it in the exact same manner. While there may be other ingredients in this generic recipe for grand strategy, these appear to be consistent with what could be called American SOUP during the American Indian Wars.

In essence, the argument is that the American grand strategy in its dealing with Amerindians from first contact to Wounded Knee can be best understood by identifying the American strategic vision and analyzing the SOUP elements outlined in the preceding paragraph. Like the soup and stew analogy used by Murray, Herwig, and Pearlman, this approach acknowledges the difficulty in separating the physical or tangible elements of grand strategy from the metaphysical or intangible aspects. No strategic ingredient can be fully understood or appreciated in isolation from the others. It is the mixture and the infusion of the component parts that make the soup. As Murray acknowledged, there is no standard recipe for grand strategy; it is the result of

⁷ Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).

the environment and the whims of the chefs involved in the concoction.⁸ As one component or the other changes, so does the consistency of the soup or a nation's grand strategy. Regardless of amount or degree of change, as long as the strategic vision remains the focal point, the need for some combination of SOUP will endure and support a nation's grand strategy.

So what was the strategic vision in context of the Euro-American experience in the western hemisphere? For simplicity and brevity, conventional interpretations of an American strategic vision are used. One of the most recognizable traditional visions was that articulated by John Winthrop and his Puritan followers. The Puritans "set sail from England with a dream. Their new nation would be a guiding light. It would be an example for the whole world. John Winthrop spoke of a 'City Upon A Hill'. This was the Puritan vision for America. And it continues to this day."⁹ Ronald Reagan's echoing of Winthrop's vision validates its longevity and continuity in American folklore. As Ronald Reagan said in his farewell address to the nation,

I've spoken of the Shining City all my political life. ...In my mind it was a tall, proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, windswept, God-blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace; a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity. And if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here. That's how I saw it, and see it still.¹⁰

Both Winthrop and Reagan stressed providential design. Reagan, moreover, outlined the metrics of success in achieving this vision. Strength, harmony and commerce in a society open to all who sought the American dream were fundamental. These are ideals, but they are also part of American mythology and cosmology. To ignore these ideas in context of grand strategy would be the metaphorical equivalent of

⁸ Williamson Murray, "Thoughts on Grand Strategy and the United States in the Twenty-first Century," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, North America, 13 January 2011, 84. Available at: <http://www.jmss.org/jmss/index.php/jmss/article/view/365/386>. Date accessed: 30 Jun. 2011.

⁹ "John Winthrop and a 'City upon a Hill,'" <http://endtimepilgrim.org/puritans02.htm> (accessed on 30 June 2011).

¹⁰ "America is a shining city upon a hill," http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=America_is_a_shining_city_upon_a_hill (accessed on 30 June 2011).

servicing vichyssoise instead of a hearty, hot stew. Grand strategy served cold lacks the passion necessary to make it palatable to most consumers.

The Puritan vision was not the only one that inspired America's strategic chefs in their quest to design an acceptable grand strategy that addressed the indigenous peoples of North America. Walter Russell Mead identified other early American visionaries. These included Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton and Andrew Jackson. One could also add John Adams to this list to get the full range of competing and complimentary visions that guided American grand strategy. Granted these were all politically powerful white males, but that in itself was indicative of the social and political milieu in which these visions were articulated.

John Adams envisioned the United States much the same as Winthrop and Reagan. He "consider[ed] 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."¹¹ George Tindall summarized the competing visions of Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton best. "Hamilton was a hardheaded realist who foresaw a diversified capitalist economy, with agriculture balanced by commerce and industry, and thus was the better prophet." On the other hand, "Jefferson was an agrarian idealist who feared that the growth of crowded cities would divide society into a capitalist aristocracy on the one hand and a deprived proletariat on the other. Hamilton feared anarchy and loved order; Jefferson feared tyranny and loved liberty."¹²

None of these visions specifically addressed or accounted for the role and place of indigenous peoples. Even more disconcerting to Native Americans was Andrew Jackson's vision of a white dominated American society characterized by physical security, racial segregation and economic development. Mead observed, "The absolute and even brutal distinction drawn between the members of the community and outsiders has had massive implications in American life." Mead further stressed,

¹¹ Diary of John Adams, February 21, p. 1765.

http://www.beliefnet.com/resourcelib/docs/80/Diary_of_John_Adams_February_21_1765_1.html
(accessed on 30 June 2011).

¹² George Brown Tindall and David Emory Shi, *America: A Narrative History* 8th Ed., (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), p. 316.

“Through most of American history the Jacksonian community was one from which many Americans were automatically and absolutely excluded: Indians, Mexicans, Asians, African Americans, obvious sexual deviants, and recent immigrants of non-Protestant heritage have all felt the sting.”¹³ Whether idealistic or realistic, each of these visions ultimately translated into an American society that emphasized European or Caucasian civilization united by white Anglo-Saxon Protestantism, providential destiny, and a free market economy dominated by individual yeoman farmers or commercial entrepreneurs.

Although there were individual exceptions, Amerindians, as a distinct people, never quite fit into the strategic visions articulated by Winthrop, Jefferson, Hamilton or Jackson. The only way Amerindians could participate was to assimilate completely. As James Axtell concluded, “Nothing less than total assimilation to European ways would fulfill the uncompromising criteria of ‘civility,’ nothing less than renunciation of the last vestige of their former life, for Christian and savage were incompatible characters in the invader’s cosmology,…”¹⁴ The best and most profound example of this was the Cherokee removal tragedy of the 1830s. No matter how much the Cherokee assimilated into American and southern society, they could not change the color of their skin. Even after the Cherokee adopted white agricultural practices, religion, social practices and other manifestations of white society and culture, the US government forcibly removed them to modern-day Oklahoma in order to save the Cherokee and their ‘culture’ from extinction. The resulting ‘Trail of Tears,’ while heartbreaking, reinforced the commitment of many Americans to their concept of the ideal society – a vision that excluded Amerindians regardless of their desires to assimilate or acculturate into the growing American polity.

Although the Cherokee removal story is but one of several, it clearly reflects how many white Americans saw Amerindians and their role in the nation’s future. But as long as Amerindians existed in sufficient numbers to present a security threat, how could peace be achieved? American notions of peace and security played a significant role in the violent and non-violent encounters between whites and Indians. Could the

¹³ Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 236.

¹⁴ James Axtell, p. 245.

disparate Amerindian cultures co-exist with white, European societies or was it inevitable that one would dominate the other? In hindsight, it seems that the latter was an accurate assessment of what happened. But were there alternative solutions to the challenges presented by the exclusion of Amerindians and could they two societies co-exist in peace or create some sort of *modus vivendi*?

Paul Seabury and Angelo Codevilla offer a useful construct of the types of historical peace to answer this question. They argued that there have been three types of peace. The first was the peace of the dead. They cite the Roman solution to the Carthaginian problem as the best-known example.¹⁵ Moral and ethical constraints have limited this option, but there were those in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries that advocated this solution as a means of fulfilling America's mission and its manifest destiny. William Tecumseh Sherman's response to the Fetterman Massacre of 21 December 1866 spoke volumes. "We must act with vindictive earnestness against the Sioux," Sherman concluded, "even to their extermination, men, women and children."¹⁶ Even U.S. Grant, author of the Peace Policy approach during his presidential administration, saw extermination as a viable option to fulfilling the nation's expansion. As Commanding General in 1868, Grant proclaimed, "the emigrants would be protected 'even if the extermination of every tribe was necessary to secure such a result.'"¹⁷

Seabury and Codevilla's second form of peace was the peace of the prison. They saw Eastern Europe under Soviet control as the quintessential example of this type of coerced yet stable peace. It is not much of an intellectual stretch to see how the reservation system served the same purpose in American society.¹⁸ By physically separating and isolating Amerindians from the rest of American society, Indians could live in peace and retain their culture and traditions without disrupting American westward advancement. In these equivalents of minimum security prisons, Amerindians could exist without presenting a security threat or as an obstacle to 'progress' in the nation's economic development. If assimilation, acculturation or

¹⁵ Paul Seabury and Angelo Codevilla, *War: Ends and Means* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1989), p. 31.

¹⁶ Russell Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), p. 158.

¹⁷ Weigley, p. 159.

¹⁸ Seabury and Codevilla, pp. 31 and 265.

extermination were unsuccessful, unacceptable or unpalatable policy options, then cultural imprisonment and physical separation seemed to offer a rational and humanitarian solution to the challenge of keeping Amerindians outside of the American strategic vision through 1890.

The last type of peace described by Seabury and Codevilla was the peace of cultural conquest. They argue that this form of peace is the most lasting and the most effective. It emphasizes assimilation or acculturation as the preferred means of integrating disparate cultures and peoples. "Thus, we conclude that cultural conquest, although it may contain various admixtures of force and love, nevertheless always produces a kind of tacit agreement between the winners and the losers that, whatever happened in the past, things now are more or less as they should be. This is," Seabury and Codevilla emphasize, "remarkable testimony to the power of real peace, if given time, to heal wounds and to justify even the victory of unjust causes."¹⁹ They cite Douglas MacArthur's approach to reconstructing Japan as an example of this type of peace. Contemporary American and other western hemispheric societies have integrated Amerindians into their societies to varying degrees, but the legacy of conquest manifested in the peace of the dead exemplified by events such as Sand Creek in 1864 and Washita in 1868 and the peace of the prison the reservation system implies continues.

A recent commentary in the Minnesota Public Radio News reflects the ongoing concerns over the legacy of the American Indian wars and the peace of cultural conquest. In the commentary entitled, "It's time to call the Indian Wars to an end," Winona LaDuke responded to the use of 'Geronimo' as the code name for Osama bin Laden. LaDuke saw the use of Geronimo as 'a grievous insult.' Members of the Onondaga nation captured the essence of the Native American perspective. "This continues to personify the original peoples of North America as enemies and savages . . . The U.S. military should have known better."²⁰

¹⁹ Seabury and Codevilla, p. 269.

²⁰ Winona LaDuke, "It's time to call the Indian Wars to an end," <http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2011/05/25/laduke/> (accessed on 20 June 2011).

Seabury and Codevilla's three types of peace were useful in detailing how the US government has dealt with indigenous peoples, but it still begs the question of what was peace in context of the SOUP framework. More specifically, what was peace in from the perspective of the American strategic vision prior to 1890? Seabury and Codevilla used Saint Augustine's descriptions and characterizations of peace to define this important term. Saint Augustine offered several key insights that help understand peace and its significance as a critical ingredient in understanding how SOUP informs grand strategy.

"It is not that they love peace less," Saint Augustine opined, "but that they love their kind of peace more." Both Amerindians and Americans had a notion of peace, but, as Augustine intimated in the great tradition of Thucydides' Melian dialogue, the more powerful entity has the capability to impose their form of peace over the weak. Even more prescient was Augustine's comment that "People define themselves by the kinds of peace they live and the kinds of war they fight."²¹ If one accepts Hamilton's, Jefferson's and Jackson's visions of American society as characterizations of what peace would look like, then it is clearly antithetical to what most Amerindians would define as peace. Amerindian notions of political and social order were largely, although not exclusively, incompatible with American or European concepts of political, social and economic order.

"Peace," Saint Augustine concluded "is the tranquility that comes of order." But this begs the question of what is tranquility and who determines order. Augustine's response captured the essence of how the US established order and tranquility in its encounter with the various Amerindian peoples as the nation expanded from east to west. "Ordinarily," Augustine surmised, "in the world of the living the tranquility of order can only be built by intelligent choice backed by victorious arms."²² Whether it was an empire of liberty as Jefferson envisioned or the commercial colossus Hamilton imagined, the political, economic and social order espoused by these and other visionaries was incompatible with and in many ways served as a lethal threat to the indigenous peoples' notions of order and tranquility.

²¹ Seabury and Codevilla, p. 25.

²² Seabury and Codevilla, p. 274.

William Bent and Kit Carson captured the fundamental challenge of two disparate cultures living in close proximity to each other. They believed “that if the Indians were to live close to white men, they must abandon their own way of life and take up the white man’s. Otherwise there could be no lasting peace between white men and red, for their cultures and their economies clashed too much; and if the white men continued coming into the Indian Country without the Indians’ adopting white ways, the red men eventually would be exterminated.”²³ Essentially, American notions of progress, cultural superiority and divine selection as exemplified by the “Manifest Destiny” concept inspired the physical expansion of the American state and the fulfillment of its strategic vision regardless of the impact on Amerindian societies.

William Appleman Williams concluded that ‘Manifest Destiny’ “symbolized the assertion that God was on America’s side . . . the argument was that America was the ‘most progressive’ society whose citizens made ‘proper use of the soil.’ For these and similar reasons . . . the laws of ‘political gravitation’ would bring many minor peoples in the American system.”²⁴ One of the key justifications for American expansion and dominance over Amerindians implied in Williams’ assessment was the notion of land ownership. Few would deny that land and its usage was a major point of contention between two competing visions. Americans saw land as a commodity, as something an individual owned and exploited to his and society’s benefit. Land ownership symbolized prosperity as well as social and political responsibility. In other words, the American understanding of land, its possession and its usage was a fundamental characteristic of an American sense of order. For many Americans, God had created the earth to serve the interests of mankind. “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”²⁵ Alternative explanations, such as those espoused by Native Americans, ran counter to Euro-American understanding of political, societal and economic order.

²³ Weigley, pp. 156-7.

²⁴ William Appleman Williams, “The Open Door Policy: Economic Expansion and the remaking of Societies,” in Dennis Merrill and Thomas G. Paterson, eds., *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations, Volume 1, to 1920* 7th ed., (Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning 2005), p. 9.

²⁵ Genesis, 1:26 <http://bible.cc/genesis/1-26.htm> (accessed on 1 July 2011).

Amerindians who saw humanity's relationship with the land differently were threats to American notions of order. As Thomas Jefferson believed, "Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people, whose breast He has made His peculiar deposit for genuine and substantial virtue." American yeoman farmers were God's people as well as independent individuals. Individual ownership of land, Jefferson assumed, would prevent Americans from "political manipulation and economic exploitation."²⁶ Amerindians, on the other hand, "considered the land to be Mother Earth and treated it with reverence. They believed it was for everyone to use." Europeans had a different conception. "They staked out a claim and coveted it. They used it as a possession to buy, sell, or trade for personal gain."²⁷ These conflicting visions of land and its meaning required resolution. Negotiated cession treaties were one means Americans employed to acquire native lands, but more often than not Americans used an admixture of cession treaties and force to compel their Amerindian neighbors to surrender their homelands. In return, the government compensated the Amerindians who survived with lands in locations that no American would want.

The American emphasis on the commoditization and proper usage of land was evident in the number of governmental policies that existed to govern land acquisition and distribution. As Howard Lamar concluded, "Land was also a substitute for money in that both the British government, and later the American government, paid citizens for military duty with land warrants, and by a series of national land acts offered virtually free lands to promote settlement throughout the nineteenth century. . . . Both of the actions encouraged and perpetuated the speculative concept and the disruption of indigenous polities."²⁸ Other examples of land control policies that reinforced the western philosophy of orderly society included the General Survey Act of 1824, the Pre-Emption Act of 1841 and the Homestead Act of 1862. All reflected the proper use of the land, who should own it, and what those owners should do with it. But there was more to the contest over land. As Patricia Nelson Limerick summarized, "The contest for property and profit has been accompanied by a contest for cultural dominance.

²⁶ Tindall and Shi, pp. 316-17.

²⁷ T.E. Myers *Moccasin Trails of the French and Indian War The Eastern Frontier, 1743-1758* Vol 1, x. in Donald F. Bittner, Syllabus, "The American Indian Wars," p. 8.

²⁸ Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson, eds., *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa Compared* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 29.

Conquest also involved a struggle over languages, cultures, and religions; the pursuit of legitimacy in property overlapped the pursuit of legitimacy in a way of life and point of view. In a variety of matters, but especially in the unsettled questions of Indian assimilation”²⁹

Possession of the land and its implications for an orderly society was but one feature on American notions of peace and order. Another aspect was the concept of prosperity. Peaceful and orderly societies were essential ingredients to a prosperous one. Prosperity itself was also a key ingredient in the grand strategy that guided American dealings with Amerindians. “In North America every factor – the environment, the land, the indigenous people, and the organization and impulse of the British settlers – conspired to make the frontier an integral part of the European system of merchant capitalism.”³⁰ Amerindian societies were certainly no strangers to trade. The key difference and the most destructive aspect of the market revolution was the commoditization of resources that most Native Americans had subsisted upon for generations. The commoditization of beaver and deer pelts for profit disrupted the delicate relationship between Amerindians and their subsistence way of life. It also weakened the Amerindian’s ability to resist expansion.

The most notorious example of this changing relationship was the near extinction of the American bison on the Great Plains. Whether overhunting of deer by the Cree of Alabama or the wholesale slaughter of bison on the plains by Indians and sportsman alike, the consequences were devastating for Amerindian cultures, not to mention the animals themselves. The demise of the bison was disturbing for practical reasons of sustenance and clothing, but there were also spiritual consequences. The reduced herds resulted in increased dependency on the US government for the basics of life. The bison as a spiritual symbol could not be replaced, but European and American societies offered Christianity as the preferred substitute for native spirituality.

Americans presented a largely unified front when it came to their dealings with Amerindians. Protestant Christianity was a powerful unifying mechanism to further

²⁹ Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken past of the American West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987), p. 27.

³⁰ Lamar, p. 28.

the nation's strategic vision and a key part of American SOUP. American concepts of political, social and economic order and unity were clear. American federalism provided structure to its political system that complicated government relations with Amerindians. This system worked amazingly well for a society as widely dispersed as the United States was in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. For numerically smaller, tribal peoples, federalism was an alien and perhaps useless concept. What Americans saw as political disorder and disunity within these tribal societies was in reality a manifestation of pure democracy. Most Amerindian polities operated under the principle of consensus. Whether deciding to go to war or to re-locate the village, tribal leaders sought consensus before taking action. The notion of a principal chief or a single leader to make tribal decisions was an alien concept. The solution to this perceived political weakness was to impose American models of governmental order and unity on subdued Amerindians. General William S. Harney's imposition of such a system on the various bands of the Lakota with the Treaty of Fort Pierre in 1856 reflected the government's goal to transform Amerindian political structures.³¹ The objective was to eliminate seemingly decentralized and ineffective political processes into ones that looked and functioned like American ones. If Amerindian political processes mirrored those of the US, they could simplify and expedite interactions between the two peoples and aid in the creation of American SOUP.

Religion was another means to civilize Amerindian society. A common spiritual experience and the values of Christianity would ease relationships and enhance understanding between the various Amerindians and the American people. While Americans were not all of the same faith, the generic Protestant weltanschauung provided the unity of effort necessary to propel them toward a common religious explanation and understanding of America's strategic vision. As James Axtell observed, "religious men had ensured the public goals of exploration and colonization included a prominent place for the conversion of the natives to Christianity."³² The cost to Amerindian spiritual life ways was substantial. "To convert the Indians of America," James Axtell concluded, "was to replace their native character with European personae,

³¹ See Tony R. Mullis, *Peacekeeping on the Plains: Army Operations in Bleeding Kansas* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004), pp. 86-95.

³² James Axtell, "The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America," in Lamar and Thompson, eds., *The Frontier in History: North America and Southern Africa Compared*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 238.

to transmogrify their behavior by substituting predicable European modes of thinking and feeling for unpredictable native modes.”³³ Religion was not only a unifying force for Americans; its acceptance by Amerindians provided the predictability necessary for an orderly society, which, in turn, contributed to the grand strategic objectives and vision associated with American SOUP.

American concepts of peace, order, unity and prosperity were critical ingredients in the attainment of the various visions articulated from Winthrop to Reagan, but perhaps the most significant of all grand strategy ingredients was security. While security has many manifestations, the most important was physical security. Colonists and settlers alike had many fears, but there was nothing quite like the Indian or Red threat to motivate Americans to arms.

At least until the end of the War of 1812, one can justify the various Amerindian peoples as a national security threat, especially along nation’s frontier regions. After 1815, Amerindians represented a potential threat to national development, but the decisive defeat of the Red Sticks in Alabama in 1814 and the demise of Tecumseh and his brother during the War of 1812 signified the elusive culminating point of a possible unified Indian resistance to American expansion. With the exception of the Seminole Wars and perhaps the Black Hawk War, Amerindian resistance east of the Mississippi after 1815 constituted more of a homeland security or law enforcement problem than a national security threat.

Although the Amerindian security threat may have been real or imagined, once motivated, Americans tended to pursue absolute security. Although absolute security can never be achieved, American use of the military instrument of power in conjunction with the treaty process and other diplomatic means linked with the forces of the market revolution came as close as possible to achieving absolute or perfect security. Once French, Spanish and most importantly British power in the western hemisphere was either eliminated or reduced significantly, Americans could deal with any future Amerindian threat, for the most part, without fear of external support or interference. Mexico provided sanctuary to Amerindians of the Southwest and Canada offered the

³³ Axtell, p. 238

same option to northern Plains peoples on occasion, but these proved little more than a nuisance to the ultimate fulfillment of the American strategic vision.

The most direct and most complete element of the security portion of American SOUP was warfare. Historians have analyzed the initial wars fought between American colonials and American Indians prior to independence and they have drawn some intriguing conclusions. Some saw “these early [colonial] wars [Pequot and King Philip’s] against the Indians [as] the origin of an American view of war: Major threats to American security can be eliminated through crusades by an aroused populace dedicated to complete victory.”³⁴ Based on the outcomes of these two New England wars, it is hard to argue with this conclusion. Even before the Pequot War of 1636, relations were strained between colonists and Indians in Virginia. The Tidewater Wars culminated in the ultimate defeat of the local Amerindians but the outcome also generated an attitude of perpetual enmity toward the natives. “Although some people continued to advocate moderate treatment of the Indians, the 1622 attack, seemingly without provocation, confirmed the ignoble savage image in the minds of most settlers, ensuring the predominant attitude toward Indians would be hatred, mingled with fear and contempt.” As Allan Millett and Peter Maslowski concluded, the “relations between whites and Indians were irreconcilable and the natives were perpetual enemies.”³⁵

A closer look at King Phillip’s War reveals the depth of colonial security fears but also the desire for Narragansett land. The colonists of Connecticut and Massachusetts “saw to it that their victory was complete enough to extinguish the Indians as a military force throughout the southern and eastern parts of New England, the heart of the English settlement in the region.” Moreover, the American colonial crusade against the Indian threat mirrored their concern regarding the French presence in Canada. According to Russell Weigley, “Accustomed to thinking of warfare against the Indians as a struggle for existence, England’s American colonists regarded the contest with New France [French and Indian War] in a similar light, believing that they could never be

³⁴ “Introduction,” “The Colonial Era: Native American Versus European State Warfare,” in John Whiteclay Chambers II and G. Kurt Piehler, eds., *Major Problems in American Military History* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1998), p. 38.

³⁵ Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America* (New York: Free Press, 1984), p. 13.

secure as long as they had to share North American with France, and that accordingly their security demanded the complete elimination of New France.”³⁶ Whether one agrees with Weigley’s overarching thesis or not, American colonials tended to seek absolute security through superior military means. Even when the use of military force backfired, as it did with Harmar’s and St Clair’s defeats in the early 1790s, Americans redoubled their efforts to eliminate the threat of the Miami confederacy through force. They succeeded under “Mad” Anthony Wayne at Fallen Timbers in 1794. The Treaty of Greenville of 1795 procured great portions of the current state of Ohio and parts of modern-day Indiana.

Wayne’s military success in Ohio set a precedent for future patterns of Amerindian encounters. There were seemingly only two options available for Native Americans living east of the Mississippi River: negotiate land cession treaties peacefully or resist military. If Amerindians opted for a military response, they lost. Once defeated, Amerindians would then cede their homelands and remove to permanent Indian Territory in the west. Both options resulted in Amerindians ceding large swaths of their traditional homelands, seeking refuge with neighboring nations or suffering forced or voluntary removal. American military forces coerced or physically removed those who resisted this new approach to achieving America’s strategic vision. The intertribal rift between those who accommodated the US government’s desire to procure Amerindian lands through cession treaties and those who actively resisted American aims generated animosity and disunity among the remaining nations in the east. Regardless of the means employed, American SOUP necessitated removal.

Andrew Jackson characterized this policy as a humanitarian initiative to save the Indian from the perils and temptations associated with the advance of western civilization. “The government adopted removal as official policy for several reasons. Increased trans-Appalachian settlement made eastern territory more desirable, while humanitarians, motivated by arrogant paternalism, argued that removal would save the Indian from extinction, the inevitable fate for people who resisted ‘superior’ white civilization.”³⁷ Despite the efforts of the Cherokee and others of the so-called civilized tribes of the southeast to assimilate into American society, they were removed. Many

³⁶ Weigley, p. 19.

³⁷ Millett and Maslowski, p. 134.

Choctaw, Chickasaw and Creek relocated peaceably. Others fled south to Florida to join the Seminole, and still others attempted to use the American judicial system to seek justice for their people in an attempt to uphold the sanctity of the treaties they had signed in good faith with the US government. The Cherokee were ultimately unsuccessful. The legacy of the removal program was a proverbial black eye on American idealism, but the policy and its implementation did achieve its strategic objectives. Jacksonian SOUP freed more land for white settlement and Jackson's policies achieved near perfect security. The US government and the American people achieved relative peace and security east of the Mississippi through a grand strategy that included all the necessary American SOUP ingredients.

If assimilation and acculturation were unsatisfactory policy options, the Jacksonian's resorted to physical separation to realize the country's grand strategy associated with Amerindians. The permanent Indian Territory created to support those removed from the east lasted only about 30 years. Between 1825 and 1855, thousands of emigrant Indians made their way to modern day Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma to re-establish their home fires and tribal traditions as best they could. They were dispersed in designated areas among indigenous Plains tribes with little thought to the needs and cultural sensitivities of any of the affected peoples. Unfortunately, "The idea of a permanent Indian frontier," as Millett and Maslowski point out, "died under the deluge of land hungry and gold seeking whites." Since the federal government did not protect the Indians within the confines of permanent Indian Territory, "the government devised a policy of concentrating the Indian on reservations, usually in areas that whites did not covet – at least immediately."³⁸ The concept of separation took a different form in the guise of the reservation, but the intent was the same. The reservation system would free more Amerindian lands for white settlement through additional cession treaties and bring SOUP to the trans-Missouri West.

Before the reservation system became official policy, the US government adopted a clear strategy to deal with the various Amerindian peoples of the Plains and to create conditions necessary to provide the security, order, unity and prosperity needed to realize the national vision. In conjunction with the growing migration to Oregon and the California gold rush in the 1840s, the federal government developed the various

³⁸ Millett and Maslowski, pp. 236-237.

trails that facilitated the movement of thousands of Americans to the Pacific coast. These trails and their usage were negotiated under terms codified in the Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1851.³⁹ Plains Indians had agreed to respect the freedom of movement along the Oregon and other trails west, and the army established forts to ensure compliance and trail security. It did not take long for this arrangement to falter. Indian raids and emigrant actions kept tensions high along the various overland routes.

The anxiety among indigenous Plains Indians increased with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. Ostensibly, the act would bring security and prosperity to the region through the formation of sovereign states and the acquisition of even more Indian land. The act also secured territory needed to construct a transcontinental railroad through lands previously “owned” by emigrant and indigenous Indians. These national developmental actions made sense to most Americans, but from the Native American perspective, the Kansas-Nebraska Act was an insurmountable wedge designed to divide the northern plains from the southern plains.⁴⁰ This wedge segmented the Indian Territory into three digestible portions. Once the government secured the central plains by relocating even more emigrant and indigenous peoples to modern-day Oklahoma, it turned its attention to the northern plains. After the federal government secured and stabilized this region, even with the temporary setback at Little Big Horn in 1876, the federal government used negotiation, economic coercion, and military force to compel the last remaining Amerindians to settle on reservations thus opening the last remaining region in the continental United States to white settlement.

The suppression of the last elements of Amerindian resistance in the southwest ended almost 400 years of persistent conflict between the various Amerindian peoples and Euro-Americans. The last vestiges of resistance to US authority played out tragically in South Dakota. The last gasp of Amerindian conflict came in the form of

³⁹ “Treaty of Fort Laramie, 1851” <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/Vol2/treaties/sio0594.htm> (accessed on 1 July 2011).

⁴⁰ See Tony R. Mullis, *Peacekeeping on the Plains: Army Operations in Bleeding Kansas* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004), pp. 70 and 122-23.

spiritual revitalization manifested in the Ghost Dance.⁴¹ With no physical or economic means to resist the power and authority of the US government, many northern plains Indians sought comfort and power in the Ghost Dance and its promises to return to the old ways. The appeal of a bygone era when Amerindians roamed the plains and their life ways existed unchallenged by Christianity or Euro-American notions of land ownership and sovereignty had a powerful appeal. The misfortune of Wounded Knee formally ended the so-called Indian Wars. Despite the heartbreaking outcome of this engagement, it signified the ultimate success of the American strategic vision of a continent secure from internal and external threats. It satisfied the American definition of peace by establishing American notions of order and unity. Americans were free to seek prosperity as they defined it without Amerindian obstacles.

The strategy that guided the United States in its dealing with Amerindians was distinctive, yet it also informs our understanding of what elements constitute a grand strategy. First, the American grand strategy associated with the Amerindian conquest met all the requirements outlined in the Army War College's definition. The United States ultimately preserved national security; bolstered national economic prosperity; and promoted national values albeit at the expense of Amerindian culture. Second, the US government and its people harmonized, though haphazardly, ends, ways and means in order to accomplish their national vision. Third, they used all instruments of national power to ensure success. However, there is more to understanding grand strategy and how the United States dealt with Amerindians. By identifying and understanding the strategic vision that guided policymakers and policy implementers, we can see how the critical ingredients of American SOUP contributed to the fulfillment of that vision. America's strategic vision motivated a grand strategy that attained security, order, unity, peace and prosperity over a lengthy, multifaceted 400-year period. Without Euro-American SOUP, served in different portions and dished out in a variety of combinations over time, the vision would have been incomplete. And without a unifying strategic vision, grand strategies and great nations perish.

⁴¹ For more on Wovoka, the Ghost Dance and Wounded Knee, see Michael Hittman, *Wovoka and the Ghost Dance* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997); and Robert M. Utley, *The Indian Frontier, 1846-1890* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), pp. 243-249.