

Understanding America

Apr 22: **American Exceptionalism**



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"The position of the Americans is therefore quite exceptional, and it may be believed that no other democratic people will ever be placed in a similar one." Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1840), part 2, p. 36:

America was invented, unlike China or Russia, which had centuries of existence. America was greatly influenced by its geography, timing and character. – George Friedman, 2020

Welcome “Zoomers”

- Thanks for logging in
- I appreciate this opportunity provided by the Senior Learners. For those of you not members, I encourage you to explore joining and taking other courses.
- I appreciate the assistance of Dan Buerke, a volunteer at Senior Learners who is co-hosting this session and can assist with any technical difficulties during the session and Phil Davis, also a volunteer who has provided the leadership and training for implementing and training in Zoom
- Hope you enjoy these 4 lectures on America and gain a better understanding of the underlying forces that molded its past, polarize it's present and will shape its future.
- If you did not receive the email notes, email me and I will send to you. These presentations can also be viewed and downloaded from my website coffeynotes.com. The handouts are in the PowerPoint notes format, which show both what appears on the screen and other background hidden below.
- I have drawn upon the several references footnoted, but my inspiration was the writings and book by George Friedman – *The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond*, Doubleday, 2020
- Most of you have been enrolled in one of my previous classes, but for you newcomers, I've put a brief bio below.
- Joe Coffey holds a PhD in Economics, has taught at the University of California Berkeley, Virginia Tech, NC State, and Purdue, and held executive positions related to agriculture in industry and government. For over a decade, he has made presentations for the Senior Learning Institute, Citrus Hills and 6 cruise lines.

Understanding America

- **American Exceptionalism** – From colony to most powerful and prosperous country in 250 years
- But today undergoing discord and relative decline and alarming Covid-19 pandemic
- Central questions
 1. How was America able to make the spectacular rise?
 2. Why all the present discord and relative decline?
- Lecture Topics
 - I. Apr 22: American Exceptionalism
 - II. April 29: Economic and Political Cycles in America
 - III. May 6: Understanding discord and relative decline
 - IV. May 13: Pandemic prognosis and prospects

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Understanding America: exceptional character, underlying driving forces, and prospects amidst Covid-19 Pandemic

- Over the past 250 years, the U.S. has risen from a small colony to the most powerful and prosperous country in the world – credited to “American Exceptionalism”. But today, we are undergoing discord and relative decline – now exacerbated by the alarming Covid-19 pandemic. This raises two puzzling questions: How was America able to make such a spectacular rise? And, if in fact America is exceptional, why all the present discord and relative decline? These lectures will review the history of America’s cycles of success and failure and conclude by surveying assessments of potential geopolitical impacts of Covid-19 on America’s prospects.
 - I. Apr 22: American Exceptionalism
 - II. April 29: Economic and Political Cycles in America
 - III. May 6: Understanding America’s discord and relative decline
 - IV. May 13: Pandemic prognosis and American prospects

What is American exceptionalism?



- Varying ideas of American exceptionalism
 - Inherently different - "first new nation" based on liberty, equality, individual responsibility, republicanism, democracy and market economics
 - Mission to transform world: Lincoln - duty to ensure "government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."
 - History and mission give it a superiority over other nations
- Historical expressions of exceptionalism
 - Lacked any feudal traditions
 - Puritan John Winthrop - America was "City upon a Hill"
 - Jefferson - a radical break world's great "Empire of Liberty"



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• Ideas of American exceptionalism

- American history is inherently different - "the first new nation" and uniquely American ideology, "Americanism", based on liberty, equality before the law, individual responsibility, republicanism, representative democracy and laissez-faire economics.
- U.S. has a unique mission to transform the world - As Lincoln said at Gettysburg - a duty to ensure, "government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."
- America's history and mission give it a superiority over other nations.

• Historical expressions of exceptionalism

- In 1835, Alexis de Tocqueville, "The position of the Americans is therefore quite exceptional, and it may be believed that no democratic people will ever be placed in a similar one."
- Colonial America lacked any feudal traditions, such as established churches, landed estates and a hereditary nobility.
- Political conflicts in American history remained within the tight boundaries of a liberal consensus
- Puritan leader John Winthrop: America was "City upon a Hill"— model for rest of world
- Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* - America was not just an extension of Europe but a new land, a country of nearly unlimited potential and opportunity that had outgrown the British mother country.
- Jefferson sought a radical break from the traditional European emphasis on "reason of state" (which could justify any action) and envisaged America becoming the world's great "Empire of Liberty"—that is, the model for democracy and republicanism
- American exceptionalism plank of Republican Platform since 2012.

Source: American exceptionalism, From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Is America *Exceptional* ?



- Yes! And increasingly exceptional over time
- Patriotism, individualism, religiosity and enterprise
- Faith in power of individuals to shape their destinies through exercise of freedom
- Belief in success determined by own efforts - ethos of individualism
- Cherish "negative" liberty - freedom from government restraint
- Rather than "positive" liberty - government provides resources

Source: Peter H. Schuck and James Q. Wilson, p628 , in Peter Schuck and (Editor), *Understanding America: The Anatomy of an Exceptional Nation*, Public Affairs, 2009



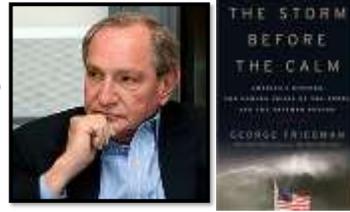
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Is America Exceptional?

- America is indeed exceptional by any plausible definition is exceptional and has grown increasingly exceptional over time.
- Principal aspects: patriotism, individualism, religiosity and enterprise
- Americans' faith in the power of individuals to shape their own destinies through their exercises of freedom.
- Americans believe that success in life is determined by their own efforts - ethos of individualism.
- Americans have especially cherished "negative" liberty, freedom from government restraint, rather than "positive" liberty, government as guarantor of resources

Source: Peter H. Schuck and James Q. Wilson, p628 , in Peter Schuck and (Editor), *Understanding America: The Anatomy of an Exceptional Nation*, Public Affairs, 2009

Friedman's Thesis: It's underlying forces not politicians



- Impersonal forces – geography, politics, economics, etc. – govern world leaders not the other way around
- Should focus on underlying structural changes in government's relationship to society and productivity growth
- The way U.S. was invented gave it a rare ability to shift rapidly and transform itself to a dominant world force
- Our polarized times are tremors of the crisis of 2020s

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Friedman's Thesis: It's Underlying forces not politicians

- Impersonal forces – geography, politics, economics, etc. – govern world leaders not the other way around
- Should focus on underlying structural changes in Federal government's relationship to society and economic system's productivity growth
- The way U.S. was invented gave a rare ability to shift rapidly and transform itself from a weak colony to a dominant world force
- Our polarized times are tremors of the crisis of the 2020s that will make changes in government and the new cultural trends resulting from longer life expectancies

Source: George Friedman, *The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond*, Doubleday, 2020

Understanding America: 10 main points



1. Unprecedented rise from colony to superpower
2. Luck of timing (beginning of Industrial Revolution) and British being diverted by French during Revolution
3. America - invented nation where none existed and uniquely propelled by capitalism and governed by democracy
4. Advance punctuated by major cycles
5. On balance, but made unforgiveable mistakes - Slavery and genocide of Indians

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Understanding America: 10 main points

1. America has made an unprecedented rise from an isolated colony huddled near shores of Atlantic to global superpower
2. Due to luck of timing (beginning of Industrial Revolution), vast resources, and British being diverted by French during Revolution
3. But America is an invented and innovative nation – invented nation where none existed and invented form uniquely propelled by capitalism and governed by democracy
4. Spectacular long-term advance has been punctuated by major socioeconomic and institutional cycles
5. While, on balance, America has been exceptional, has also made some unforgiveable mistakes such as slavery of Blacks and genocide of Indians

Understanding America: 10 Main points



6. Polarization is not new:
 - Jefferson's (rural and small gov't) vs. Hamilton's (urban and stronger central gov't)
 - Civil War of North vs. South
7. Current division:
 6. **Middle-America** (blue collar manufacturing)
 7. **Coastal America** (education & technology)
8. Although challenges- history suggests this too will pass and have innovations driving a cyclical upswing
9. Innovations: reorienting government and primary elections, cutting college costs, adjusting to aging...
10. America still is #1, but must keep innovating

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Understanding America:10 main points

6. Today's polarization is not new, we were polarized by Jeffersonian (rural and small government) vs Hamiltonian (urban and stronger central government), and most tragic Civil War of North vs. South
7. Current division of Middle-America (blue collar manufacturing) vs Coastal America (Intellectual and higher income) is driven by technology
8. Although, today plagued by Covid-19, partisan division, sudden economic decline, deglobalization, China's assertiveness ..., American history suggests that this time too will pass, and have recovery and cyclical upswing to a higher level and overcome the headwinds we're now facing
9. Innovations that may bring about this upswing include reorienting federal government, changing primary election system, reducing college costs, and adjusting to aging population
10. America still is #1 in world in military strength, power and influence, and economic size, but as in past, must keep innovating to maintain its pivotal position

American government was invented



- Created where none had existed
- Novel - sprung from minds of founders, had no past
- Designed to restrain government – a balance of power
- Each American ought to be free to succeed or fail in what they wish
- Countries such as France and Japan deeply are tied to their past whereas America is rooted in an invention

Source: George Friedman, *The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond*, Doubleday, 2020



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Founders envisioned U.S. a new era of greatness



- Revolution not against England alone, also against Europe viewed as oppressive and unequal
- Changed Locke's "right to life, liberty, and **property**" to "right to life, liberty and **the pursuit of happiness**"
- Liberty - precondition to pursuit of one's own happiness
- Happiness - emotional engine powering U.S.
- Only U.S. makes pursuit of happiness a fundamental right

Source: George Friedman, *The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond*, Doubleday, 2020



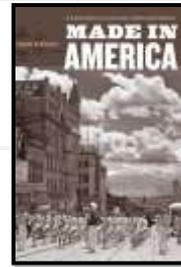
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Founders envisioned U.S. as a new era of greatness

- American Revolution was not directed against England alone, was directed against Europe which was viewed as oppressive and unequal
- Founders changed John Locke's "right to life, liberty, and **property**" to "right to life, liberty and **the pursuit of happiness**"
- Liberty, a precondition to pursuit of happiness, is freedom to define one's own happiness
- Happiness is the emotional engine powering the U.S.
- U.S. is only country to make pursuit of happiness a fundamental right

Source: George Friedman, *The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond*, Doubleday, 2020

The Story of Ordinary Americans - **Modernization**



- Expansion enabled Americans who began as a “people of plenty” to become even more so
- Became more “American”: insistently independent but still sociable, striving, & sentimental
- Modernization story: material conditions, social arrangements, and cultural ideas changed radically to a “modern” society—large, complex, and impersonal
- “Voluntaristic culture” - encourages self-improvement and equality to join or leave a group without coercion

Source: Claude S. Fischer, *Made in America: A Social History of American Culture and Character*, 2010



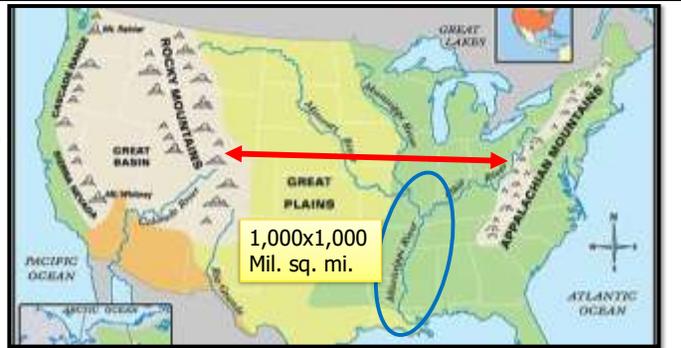
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The Story of Ordinary Americans - **Modernization**

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- America’s a “voluntaristic culture” - encourages people to examine and improve themselves and believe in “procedural equality” to join or leave a group, and none can coerce another

Source: Claude S. Fischer, *Made in America: A Social History of American Culture and Character*, 2010

Capitalized on favorable geography



- Favorable geography:
 - Vast plain between Rockies and Appalachians
 - Rivers flow from mountains through plains to New Orleans
 - Rich in farmland
- Expanded, settled and capitalized on geography
- Creating explosive development

Source: George Friedman, *The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond*, Doubleday, 2020

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Vast farmland and navigable rivers

- Americans have been ambitious in expanding, settling and capitalizing on American geography
- This allowed for explosive development
- Most striking features of America:
 - Vast plain between Rockies and Appalachians
 - Rivers flow from mountains through plains to New Orleans
 - Rich in farmland
- In contrast, Spanish came to Americas to steal not to settle; focused on South America's gold and silver

Source: George Friedman, *The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond*, Doubleday, 2020

Geography led to two ethics different ethnics on Great Plains

East

- Ample rainfall
- Forested needed clearing
- Family farming
- More people supported
- Lived in communities
- Needed political collaboration

West

- Needed well irrigation
- Mostly rangeland
- Ranching and grazing
- Fewer people supported
- More sparsely populated
- Political collaboration less necessary



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Two ethics on (1,000 by 1,000 miles) million sq. mi. Great Plains

- East had ample rainfall; West needed irrigation
- East forests needed clearing; West mostly rangeland
- East family farming; West ranching & grazing
- Because of geography, West supported fewer people than East
- Two different ethics emerged:
 - In East communities; in West more solitary
 - Politically, East needed collaboration but less necessary in West

Source: George Friedman, *The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond*, Doubleday, 2020

Geopolitical differences of **North** & **South** laid foundation for Civil War



North

- Rocky hilly soil
- Cold – short seasons
- Family farming, craftsman, bankers ...
- Domestic industrial
- Opposed British imports
- Smaller colonies – more interchange
- Free, Unionists, industrial

South

- Large plantations
- Warm – long seasons
- Plantations needing cheap labor
- Cotton & tobacco exports
- Traded with Great Britain
- Larger, sparser, limited interchange
- Slave, Confederate, agrarian

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Geographical differences of North & South laid foundation for Civil War

- **North:** rocky soil, hilly, long winters, suited for family farms, craftsmen, merchants and bankers, more densely populated, smaller colonies and more interchange
- **South:** large plantations needed cheap labor, sold cotton and tobacco primarily to England not to North, larger and sparsely populated, limited interchange
- These distinctions defined much American history: slave and free, Confederate and Unionists, industrial and agrarian

Source: George Friedman, *The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond*, Doubleday, 2020

Louisiana Purchase: Crucial to U.S. becoming a world power



- Jefferson - Mississippi River engine of expansion and Louisiana crucial to becoming powerful
- Took advantage of Napoleon's need for cash and made Louisiana Purchase for \$15 mil. – doubled America's size
- Louisiana Purchase - Western settlers would challenge power of Eastern bankers and plantation owners

Source: George Friedman, *The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond*, Doubleday, 2020

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Louisiana Purchase: Crucial to U.S. becoming a world power

- Jefferson foresaw Mississippi River as engine of expansion and Louisiana as crucial to becoming world's most powerful nation
- Took advantage of Napoleon's need for cash and made Louisiana Purchase for \$15 mil. – doubled America's size
- Louisiana Purchase also created what Western settlers would use to challenge power of Eastern bankers and plantation owners

Source: George Friedman, *The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond*, Doubleday, 2020

Defeating Mexico and securing the West



- Santa Anna defeated Texans at Alamo in 1836 but Sam Houston defeated Mexicans at San Jacinto, TX
- Texas became a state in 1845 and New Orleans safe
- Defeat of Mexico integrated Southwest to Pacific and completed America
- Americans had a novel approach to colonization:
 - Spanish conquerors did not search for farmland, they searched for gold and silver
 - French focused on furs the trappers brought in
 - British were content with cotton and tobacco imports

Source: George Friedman, *The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond*, Doubleday, 2020



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Defeating Mexico and securing the West

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Source: George Friedman, *The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond*, Doubleday, 2020



Territorial evolution of U.S.

- 1st on July 4, 1776, Declaration of Independence of 13 British colonies
- Recognized by Great Britain in Treaty of Paris of 1783, ending Revolutionary War
- Doubled the size of the colonies to stretch west past Proclamation Line to Mississippi River
- Louisiana Purchase of 1803 doubled the territory
- Disputed southeastern border with Spanish Florida acquired in 1821
- Oregon Country gave access to Pacific, though shared initially with UK
- Annexation of Republic of Texas in 1845 led to Mexican–American War
- After victory, US obtained northern half of Mexico's territory, including California.
- Expansion beyond North America began in 1856 with Guano Islands in Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea
- Pacific expansion - overthrow Kingdom of Hawaii in 1893 and annexation in 1898.
- Alaska, last major acquisition in North America purchased from Russia in 1867
- In 1898 Spanish–American War, US gained Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, and occupied Cuba for several years.
- Last major international change was acquisition in 1904, and return to Panama in 1979, the Panama Canal Zone

Source: Territorial evolution of the United States, From Wikipedia

American Frontier shaped and defined American civilization



- American frontier - westward expansion until 1900
- Frederick Jackson Turner's (1861–1932) "Frontier Thesis"
 - "Perennial rebirth, fluidity of American life, expansion westward furnished the forces dominating American character"
 - Transformed Europeans into a new people, **the Americans**, whose values focused on equality, democracy, and optimism, as well as individualism, self-reliance, and even violence

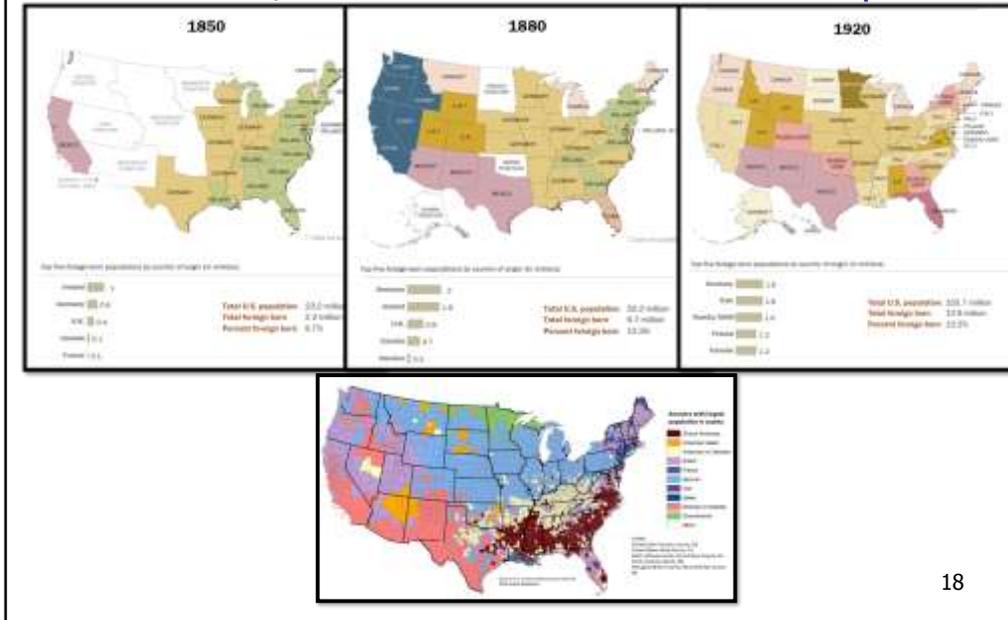
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American Frontier shaped and defined American civilization

- American frontier - forward wave of westward expansion until about 1900
- Frederick Jackson Turner's (1861–1932) "Frontier Thesis"
 - Defining process of American civilization and formation of a composite nationality
 - This perennial rebirth, fluidity of American life, this expansion westward...furnish[es] the forces dominating American character"
 - It's a story of the creation and defense of communities, use of the land, development of markets, and formation of states
 - It's a tale of conquest, but also of survival, persistence, and merging of peoples and cultures that gave birth and continuing life to America
 - Availability of free land attracted pioneering Americans
 - Transformed Europeans into a new people, the Americans, whose values focused on equality, democracy, and optimism, as well as individualism, self-reliance, and even violence

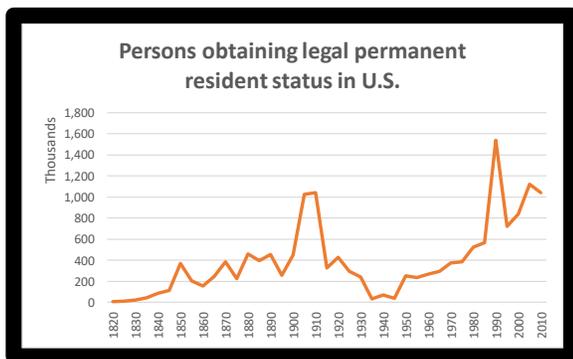
Source: Frederick Jackson Turner, From Wikipedia

Waves of immigrants from many countries, scattered, made America's technicolor map



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Waves of immigrants came from many countries and settled in different regions – hence technicolor map

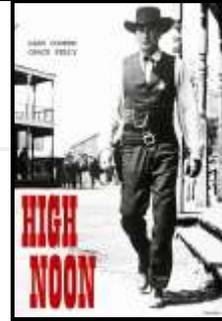


Largest ancestry groups in US, 2015

Rank	Ancestry	Population (mil.)	%
1	German	46.4	14.7%
2	African American	38.8	12.3%
3	Mexican	34.6	10.9%
4	Irish	33.5	10.6%
5	English	24.8	7.8%
6	American	22.7	7.2%
7	Italian	17.3	5.5%
8	French	10.3	3.3%
9	Polish	9.4	3.0%
10	Scottish	5.4	1.7%
11	Puerto Rican	5.2	1.6%
12	Norwegian	4.4	1.4%
13	Dutch	4.3	1.4%
14	Swedish	3.9	1.2%
15	Chinese	3.9	1.2%
16	Asian Indian	3.3	1.0%
17	Scotch-Irish	3.0	1.0%
18	Russian	2.8	0.9%
19	West Indian (non-	2.8	0.9%
20	Filipino	2.7	0.9%
21	Other	2.7	10%

Source: Race and ethnicity in the United States, From Wikipedia

Multiple, diverse and contradictory cultures (cowboy, inventor & warrior)



- **Cowboy:** Struggle between cultures:
 - Gary Cooper (courage) and Grace Kelly (Christian gentleness)
- **Inventor:** Thomas Edison created a business to turn electricity into wealth
- **Warrior:** A warrior culture - sacrifice and duty
 - U.S. born in Revolution: 1% died - 2nd highest of war
 - Now 25 million in Armed Forces or veterans and include their families – total 100 million -1/3 of U.S.
 - U.S. in war 40-90%, 100% in 21st century!

Source: George Friedman, *The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond*, Doubleday, 2020



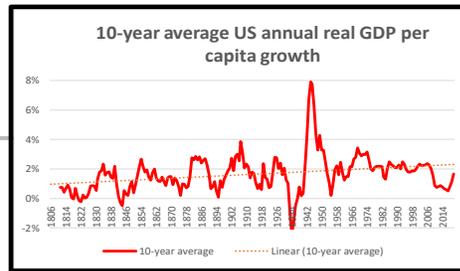
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Multiple, diverse and contradictory cultures (cowboy, inventor, and warrior)

- **Cowboy:** *High Noon* is about struggle between two strands of American character- Gary Cooper (courage) and Grace Kelly (Christian gentleness)
- **Inventor:** Thomas Edison created a business to turn those applications of electricity into wealth
- **Warrior:** America is a warrior culture - sacrifice and duty.
 - U.S. born in Revolution: 1% died- highest of any other war.
 - Now 25 million in Armed Forces or veterans and include their families – total 100 million -1/3 of U.S.
 - U.S. has been in war much of the time, 100% in 21st century!

Source: George Friedman, *The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond*, Doubleday, 2020

Contradictions drive rapidly evolving cycles



- Scientist, cowboy and warrior plus businessman - part of single culture of contradiction and diversity
- Contradictions drive rapidly evolving cycles of history
- Diversity and contradictions greater than among Europeans and Asians millennia of history and culture
- America must be invented repeatedly
- Government invented, use of continent invented, and nation invented

Source: George Friedman, *The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond*, Doubleday, 2020



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Contradictions drive rapidly evolving cycles

- Scientist, cowboy and warrior plus businessman are part of a single culture that has contradiction but also reconciliation
- Contradictions within Americans drive rapidly evolving cycles of history of rise and fall
- Diversity and contradictions greater than among Europeans and Asians millennia of history and culture
- America must be invented repeatedly
- Regime was invented, use of continent was invented, and nation was invented

Source: George Friedman, *The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond*, Doubleday, 2020

Regional cultural differences and create tensions

- North vs. South – different economies and principles
- Immigrants in West - hostile to Eastern English who looked down upon them
- Sensibilities were deep and caused disunity
- Today's coasts driven by technology + finance have a common self-worth and contempt for those who differ
- Industrial Midwest, once booming heartland, has a sense of rage at their de-industrialization



Source: George Friedman, *The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond*, Doubleday, 2020

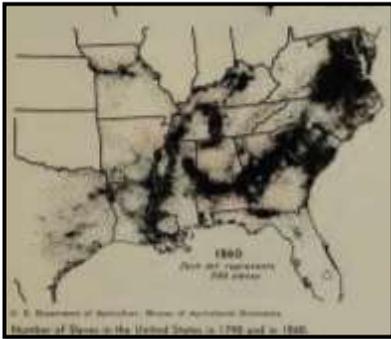
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Regional differences and tensions

- North and South had different economies and moral principles
- Immigrant settlers in West were hostile to Eastern English who looked down upon them
- Sensibilities of different regions were deep and constantly caused disunity
- Today, coastal regions driven by technology and finance have a common sense of self-worth, and contempt for those who differ
- In Industrial Midwest, once booming heartland, has a sense of rage at their de-industrialization

Source: George Friedman, *The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond*, Doubleday, 2020

Exceptional, but monstrous slavery & savagery



- U.S. not only had 4 mil. Slaves, but defined Africans subhuman - 3/5 of a white
- Indians savaged, tricked, discriminated, herded
 - Killed by European diseases, tribal warfare, settlers
 - Not granted citizenship until 1924
 - Today, 5 mil. Native Americans, 78% not in reservations

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America was exceptional, but enslaved Africans and savaged the Indians

- Monstrous that U.S. not only carried out the practice of slavery but defined Africans as subhuman-3/5 of a white
- Declaration of Independence was meant to be a beacon to the world ,but slavery dimmed that beacon
- Deaths of Indians was complex- perhaps 90% of some died of diseases brought to the Americas by the Europeans
- The Indians were savaged in three ways:
 - By diseases introduced by the Europeans
 - By the Comanche Empire which also terrorized European settlers
 - And by the Europeans who took advantage of the D is stabilization of the Plains Indians in order to herd them into reservations
- Indians often made alliances with Europeans and then the Americans
- Americans took advantage of all this killing more Indians, conquering their lands, and then signing treaties with them but violated almost all of them
- Americans guilty of confronting the Indian nations and then systematically betraying them into total dispossession

Source: George Friedman, The Storm Before the Calm: America's Discord, the Coming Crisis of the 2020s, and the Triumph Beyond, Doubleday, 2020

The Invention and Character of America Summary & Conclusions

- **Exceptional** rise from colony to superpower
- Lucky timing (beginning of Industrial Revolution) and British being diverted by French during Revolution
- Favorable geography, but most importantly, to inventing an innovative nation
- While, on balance, **exceptional**, made unforgiveable mistakes - slavery and genocide
- **Exceptional** long-term advance has been punctuated by major socio-economic and institutional cycles

April 29: Economic and Political Cycles in America



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The Invention and Character of America Summary & Conclusions

- America has made an exceptional rise from an isolated colony to global superpower
- Due to luck of timing (beginning of Industrial Revolution), vast resources, and British being diverted by French during the Revolution
- But most importantly, to inventing an innovative nation
- Exceptional long-term advance has been punctuated by major socioeconomic and institutional cycles
- While, on balance, America has been exceptional, has unforgiveable mistakes - slavery and genocide

I. Timeline of American History (1775-1865)

- 1775-83 - Revolutionary War (25,000 military killed, 1.0% of population)
- **1783-1828 -1st Socio-Econ. Cycle, Washington Cycle (Westward expansion)**
- **1787-1865 - 1st Institutional Cycle (Established federal gov't)**
- 1793 - Cotton gin invented
- 1803 - France sells Louisiana territories to U.S. for \$15 mil.
- 1804 - Lewis and Clark expedition to find a route to Pacific Ocean
- 1812 - War of 1812, U.S. defeated in threat to annex British Canada to stop Indian raids
- 1817 - NY Stock Exchange founded
- 1819 - U.S. acquired Florida from Spain and Panic of 1819
- 1823 - Monroe Doctrine proclaimed
- **1828-76 - 2nd Socio-Econ Cycle - Jackson Cycle, West expansion completed**
- 1831 - Cyrus McCormick invents the mechanical reaper
- 1836 - Morse code
- 1837 - Steel plow by John Deere
- 1848 - Mexican War ended; U.S. purchased vast territory in West
- 1849 - California Gold Rush begins
- 1861-65 - American Civil War (750,000 military killed, 2.4% of population)
- 1862 - Homestead Act - 10% U.S. land given to 1.6 mil settlers
- 1865 - Civil War ends; Lincoln assassinated; prohibition of slavery

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Periodization is one of the historian's major tool. Note 4 I have included, I have highlighted Friedman's 2 types of cycles in **green** and **red**. On left is one Wikipedia uses and on right a brief one I created to reflect geopolitical periods.

Periods in United States history

- 1607-1765 - Colonial period
- 1765-1783 - American Revolution
- 1783-1788 - Confederation Period
- 1788-1801 - Federalist Era
- 1801-1817 - Jeffersonian Era
- 1817-1825 - Era of Good Feelings
- 1825-1849 - Jacksonian Era
- 1850-1865 - Civil War Era
- 1865-1877 - Reconstruction era
- 1877-1895 - Gilded Age
- 1896-1916 - Progressive Era
- 1917-1919 - World War I
- 1920-1929 - Roaring Twenties
- 1929- 1941 - Great Depression
- 1941-1945 - World War II
- 1945-1964 - Post-war Era
- 1965-1980 - Civil Rights Era
- 1981-1989 - Reagan Era

US Geopolitical Periods

- 1776- 1865 - Revolution, expansion & Civil War
- 1865-1929 - Industrial Revolution & Rising Power
- 1917-18 - World War I (116,516 military deaths, 0.11%)
- 1918-1920 - Spanish Flu; 105 mil. infected & 675,000 deaths
- 1929-41 Great Depression (27% decline) Banking panic, stock market crash
- 1945- 1990 - Age of growth & Cold War
- 1970-1980 - Oil Crisis & Age of Stagflation
- 1980-1990 - Reagan Age of Optimism, China opens
- 1990-2008 - Collapse USSR, US superpower and globalization
- 2008- 2020 - Great Recession, China challenges, fading dynamism
- (2020-??) Coronavirus pandemic & Artificial Intelligence

II. Timeline of American History (1865 -1945)

- **1865-1945 - 2nd Institutional Cycle (Federal gov't sovereignty)**
- 1867 - U.S. purchased Alaska from Russia
- 1869 - First Transcontinental Railroad completed
- 1870 - Rockefeller founds Standard Oil Co.
- 1873-79 - U.S. longest depression (34% decline) and bust of post-Civil War bubble
- **1876-1929 - 3rd Socio-Econ(Hayes) Cycle - U.S. largest industrial power**
- 1877-1895 - Gilded Age era of rapid economic growth
- 1877 - Bell Telephone Co. founded
- 1879 – Thomas Edison invented electric light bulb
- 1892 – General Electric founded
- 1903 - U.S. acquired Panama Canal Zone; Wright brothers first flight
- 1908 – Ford Model T appears on market & GM founded
- 1911 - IBM founded
- 1913 – Federal Reserve Bank Act and Income Tax 16th Amendment enacted
- 1917-18 - World War I (116,516 military killed, 0.1% U.S. population)
- 1918-1920 - Spanish Flu, 105 mil. Infected & 675,000 deaths
- 1924 - U.S. immigration quotas enacted
- **1932-80 - 4th Socio-Econ (Roosevelt) Cycle - New Deal, WW II and boom**
- 1935 – Social Security Act – policy change, no income requirements
- 1941-45 – Great Depression ends, WW II (405,399 military deaths, 0.3% U.S. population)

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These Depressions were major times of economic decline

U.S. Depressions (2 year real GDP decline of 10% +)

Date	Length, depth and causes
1807	1807-10 Depression - US embargo and UK and trade restrictions , commodity and securities prices fell
1836	1836-38 Depression(33% decline) Bank failures, lack of confidence in currency, tightening of credit, crop failures
1838	1839-43 Depression (34% decline) Long and deep depression, deflation and defaults on debt
1865	1865-67 Depression (34% decline) After Civil War deflation during Reconstruction and international instability
1873	1873-79 Depression (34% decline) Longest contraction arising from economic problems in Europe prompting failure of largest bank in US which burst the post-Civil War speculative bubble.
1882	1882-85 Depression (33% decline) Boom in railroad construction ended hurting iron and steel industries
1902	1902-04 Depression (16% decline) Came about a year after a 1901 stock crash
1910	1910-12 Depression (15% decline) Mild but lengthy recession and deflation
1913	1913-14 Depression (26% decline) Decline not ended until start of WW I, Federal Reserve Act signed
1929	1929-41 Great Depression (27% decline) Banking panic, high unemployment, stock market crash
2007	2007-07 Great Recession (Only 5% decline-Not depression) Mortgage crisis, bust of housing bubble, banks and autos
2020	(2020-??) Now unknown extent of decline sparked by Coronavirus global 2020 pandemic

Source: List of recessions in the United States, Wikipedia.

III. Timeline of American History (1945-80)

1945-2025 - 3rd Institutional Cycle - Technocracy, Expansion of federal gov't

- 1945 – Oppenheimer invented the nuclear bomb
- 1947 – Marshall Plan aid for WW II European recovery
- 1947 - Semiconductor at AT&T Bell Labs by William Shockley
- 1955 – McDonald's fast food restaurant opens
- 1957 – Soviets launch Sputnik; "space race" begins
- 1958 - Integrated circuit by Jack Kilby
- 1961-75 - Vietnam War (58,209 military deaths, 0.03% of population)
- 1962 - Walmart founded
- 1962 – Cuban Missile Crisis, confrontation with USSR
- 1964 – Civil Rights Act outlawing racial segregation
- 1965 – Medicaid and Medicare enacted
- 1968 – Martin Luther King Jr. & Robert Kennedy assassinated
- Aug 1971 - Nixon ends convertibility of dollars to gold and enacts price controls
- Oct 1973 - OPEC oil embargo spikes gas prices; long lines at gas pumps
- 1974 - Nixon resigns over Watergate
- 1975 – Bill Gates founds Microsoft
- 1975 – Vietnam War ends
- 1976 – Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak, and Ronald Wayne found Apple
- 1979 - U. S. diplomatic ties with China, Iran hostage crisis

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Civil War deaths greater than sum of all others. Revolutionary war had 2nd highest percent of deaths relative to total population of 1%.

Wars ranked by total number of U.S. military deaths

Rank	War	Years	Deaths	Deaths as percentage of population
1	American Civil War	1861–65	750,000	2.385% (1860)
2	World War II	1941–45	405,399	0.307% (1940)
3	World War I	1917–18	116,516	0.110% (1920)
4	Vietnam War	1961–75	58,209	0.032% (1970)
5	Korean War	1950–53	54,246	0.036% (1950)
6	American Revolutionary War	1775–83	25,000	1.00% (1780)
7	War of 1812	1812–15	15,000	0.207% (1810)
8	Mexican–American War	1846–48	13,283	0.057% (1850)
9	Iraq War	2003–2011	4,576	0.002% (2010)
10	Philippine–American War	1899–1902	4,196	0.006% (1900)
11	Spanish–American War	1898	2,246	0.004% (1890)
12	War in Afghanistan	2001–present	2,216	0.001% (2010)
?50th	Cold War	1947-91	31	.000% (1991)

Source: United States military casualties of war from Wikipedia

IV. Timeline of American History (1980-2030)

- **1980-2030 - 5th Socio Econ (Reagan) Cycle - Superpower, computer, rust belt**
- 1980 - Reagan elected president
- 1991 - U.S. led coalition Desert Storm to drive Iraqis out of Kuwait
- 1991- World Wide Web Internet service
- 1991 - Cold War ends; USSR dissolved, "End of History"
- 1996 - Google founded by Larry Page and Sergey Brin
- 1998 - Modern hydraulic fracking begins
- Mar 2000- Oct 2002 - Bust of dot.com stock bubble
- 2001- 9/11, War in Afghanistan (2,216 military deaths, 0.001% U.S. Population)
- 2003-11 - Iraq War (4,576, 0.002%)
- 2007 – I-Phone by Apple
- Dec 2007-Jun 2009 - Great Recession, greatest downturn since Great Depression
- 2011 Occupy Wall Street movement
- 2015 - Tesla Model X electric car
- 2015 - Same-sex marriage is legalized in all 50 U.S. states.
- 2016 – Trump's American First, globalism and multilateralism retreat
- Jan 21, 2020 — First patient in U.S. diagnosed with coronavirus.
- Mar 27, 2020 - \$2 trillion emergency spending law for pandemic
- 2025-30 - Crisis: Clashing of 6th Socio-economic and 4th Institutional cycles

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Later we will discuss the fact that American was always a rich nation. I'm surprised by some of those that ranked highest, except for UK.

US long ranked high in GDP/Capita

Year	No. Countries	Rank of U	Top Rankin
1720	8	6	S. Africa
1800	17	3	UK
1820	48	2	UK
1860	30	2	Australia
1870	65	4	Australia
1900	44	1	US
1929	59	1	US
1945	46	1	US
1970	150	2	Libya
1990	168	1	US
2008	169	9	Qatar

Source: Maddison Project Database, version 2018.

How to Use Zoom for Online Meetings

[Ben Stegner](#)

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If you work from home, you've probably heard of Zoom, a meeting tool that has recently exploded in popularity. But you might not be familiar with what Zoom does or how to use it.

Let's take a look at what Zoom offers, how to join Zoom meetings, and also how to get the most out of the service.

What Is a Zoom Meeting?

A Zoom meeting is a virtual gathering of people. Each person joins in using their desktop, laptop, or mobile device. Thanks to (often built-in) webcams and microphones, everyone can chat and have a meeting without being physically together.

How to Join a Zoom Meeting

If someone has invited you to a meeting in Zoom, getting in is simple. They may have sent you an email with a unique meeting URL. If that's the case, you can click that link to jump right to the meeting page without worrying about a meeting ID.

If not, don't worry. Just head to the [Zoom Join a Meeting page](#), which you can access by clicking **Join a Meeting** at the top-right of Zoom's homepage. Here, you'll need to input a meeting number. The meeting organizer should have sent you this via email or other means. Input the number and choose **Join**.

Assuming this is the first time you've joined a Zoom meeting, you'll see a prompt to install the Zoom app, which you should do for best performance. In case it doesn't load correctly, click **Download & run Zoom** here.



Once it installs, choose a display name for and hit **Join Meeting** to jump in.

Using Tools and Options in a Zoom Meeting

Now, you'll need to make sure your audio and video settings are working properly. In the **Join Audio** box, you can choose **Test Speaker and Microphone** to make sure everything is set, then click **Join with Computer Audio** to enter the room. Check the box at the bottom to skip this step in the future.

