

UK BIBLE STUDENTS NEWSLETTER

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THE LAW OF LIBERTY (PART II)

By Will Resume

The first part of this two-part article appeared in the end-April 2010 Newsletter.

During the twentieth century, liberty in the political, social and economic spheres expanded in irregular and unprecedented fashion in Britain and around the world, as nation-states were made and unmade in the wake of regional wars, revolutions, and re-alignment along lines of ideology.

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IN THE REAR-VIEW MIRROR: 1945

From *Foundations of National Power*, ed by Harold & Margaret Sprout (Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1945), 148, 149

‘Great Britain, more than other European power, forms a connecting link between the United States and the European realm. Hence the fortunes of the British nation are of vital concern to the United States. Americans may “twist the lion’s tail” and otherwise irritate their British cousins. But in moments of grave peril ancient grudges are pushed into the background, and the Anglo-Saxon peoples stand shoulder to shoulder against the common enemy.

‘Twice, in 1917 and again in 1940, we have mobilized our great strength in support of Britain. In doing so, many Americans were doubtless moved by sentiment. But deeper than sentiment was widespread realization, usually unexpressed, that defeat of Britain and break-up of the British Empire would seriously weaken American defenses, if not imperil the very existence of the United States.

‘One hears it often said that the British navy has been America’s first line of defense in the Atlantic. There is a large measure of truth in this proposition. But it is easily subject to misinterpretation. England has not maintained a navy for the purpose of defending the United States. The Royal Navy exists for the defense of the British Isles and the oceanic supply lines of the British Empire. In performing those functions, however, British sea power has incidentally, and in varying degrees from time to time, strengthened the defenses of the United States. Without the British navy we would have needed a stronger navy of our own.

‘This was the case even back in the nineteenth century when Americans still regarded England with distrust, and still contemplated the possibility of a third war with that country. Even in those days, British sea power was in many respects an asset to the United States. This was so because British statecraft, for purely British reasons, generally stood in the way of other European powers extending their sway into the Western Hemisphere. Thus, while we still viewed England as a source of potential danger, we simultaneously and incidentally derived benefit from Britain’s long indisputable command of the seas.

‘American reliance upon British sea power took on a more formal character after the First World War. During the period between wars we entrusted our defense in the Atlantic almost exclusively to Great Britain. The Royal Navy’s command of European waters permitted the concentration of American naval strength in the Pacific, to the mutual advantage of both nations.

‘It is easy to forget the unique position once held by Great Britain. During the nineteenth century, Britain was not merely one of the Great Powers. Victorian England was the first and only World Power.’

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<<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article7121843.ece>>

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