



# National Security and Core Values in American History

By William O. Walker III

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There is no book quite like National Security and Core Values in American History. Drawing upon themes from the whole of the nation's past, William O. Walker III presents a new interpretation of the history of American exceptionalism, that is, of the basic values and liberties that have given the United States its very identity. He argues that a political economy of expansion and the quest for security led American leaders after 1890 to equate prosperity and safety with global engagement. In so doing, they developed and clung to what Walker calls the "security ethos." Expressed in successive grand strategies - Wilsonian internationalism, global containment, and strategic globalism - the security ethos ultimately damaged the values citizens cherish most and impaired popular participation in public affairs. Most important, it led to the abuse of executive authority after September 11, 2001, by the administration of President George W. Bush.

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#### Review

"In the tradition of William Appleman Williams, National Security and Core Values represents a broad and provocative interpretation of America's role abroad since its founding over three centuries ago. U.S. leaders, William Walker contends, abandoned the nation's core values, such as republican virtue, in the pursuit of national security, which in reality became aggressive expansion and even empire. Walker offers an intellectual tour de force that shows a deep understanding of foreign relations and the domestic causes and consequences of U.S. actions abroad." -Robert Buzzanco, University of Houston

"Drawing from his masterful big picture of U.S. global expansionism over 400 years, and especially the past century, Walker clearly explains how Americans' unexamined belief that their own supposed exceptionalism (in both their economics and politics) propelled that expansionism - which climaxed with the tragic failures in the post-1960s era, particularly those of the George W. Bush administration." - Walter LaFeber, Cornell University

"Although inspired by the critical writings of William Appleman Williams and Charles Beard, William O. Walker III offers in this ambitious book his own unique and disturbing interpretation of the full sweep of the history of American foreign relations." -David S. Patterson, Journal of American History

"...offers an outstanding interpretation, in the tradition of William Appleman Williams, of America's evolving role abroad ... Walker's work must be recognized as an outstanding piece of scholarship that traces the path of both American values and national security from colonial times to the present and that will benefit readers for decades to come." -- Abraham R. Wagner, Reviews in American History

"National Security and Core Values in American History is an important book. It tackles issues of contemporary significance within a broad historical context, which is built on an extensive secondary literature, as well as select primary documents." -Gary R. Hess, H-Policy

"..an important book. It tackles issues of contemporary significance within a broad historical context, which is built on an extensive secondary literature, as well as select primary documents. Walker covers a broader sweep of American foreign policy than his predecessors ... [his] thoughtful and thorough critique of the American quest for security ranks with the best of contemporary calls for reconsideration of the tenets of national security policy." - Gary Hess, H-Policy

#### About the Author

William O. Walker III has taught at California State University, Sacramento; Ohio Wesleyan University; Florida International University; and the University of Toronto. He is the author of Drug Control in the Americas (1981, revised edition 1989) and Opium and Foreign Policy: The Anglo-American Search for Order in Asia, 1912-1954 (1991). He has also edited or co-edited several books, including Drugs in the Western Hemisphere: An Odyssey of Cultures in Conflict (1996), and his articles have appeared in Pacific Historical Review, the Journal of American History, Diplomatic History, and NACLA Report on the Americas.

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