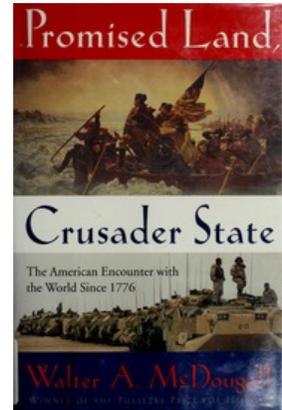
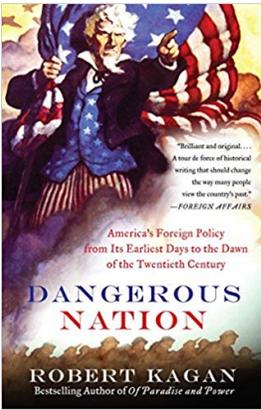


US Foreign Policy – Summer Reading Assignment



1.) **Read the 3-hyperlinked articles below:** The first, by Robert Kagan, is an essay based on his larger acclaimed work of historical revisionism, titled *Dangerous Nation*. The other two are book reviews of *Dangerous Nation*, one summative and the other more interactive and critical. The book itself is well written and provocative, but a bit dense. I *would* recommend checking out the Google Books Preview (through at least the section called [“A Policy of Savages” - Link](#)) to get a sense of the writing style.

- a. [Cowboy Nation](#) – Robert Kagan, essay published in *The New Republic Online*
- b. [Review of Dangerous Nation](#) – by Dr. Mackubin T. Jones, Professor of National Security Affairs at the Naval War College
- c. [Review of Dangerous Nation](#) – by Dr. Patrick Garrity, Professor of International Affairs at UVA and the Claremont Graduate School

2.) **Read [Promised Land, Crusader State](#)** by Walter A. McDougall.

Professor McDougall is a Pulitzer Prize winning historian and Professor of International Relations at the University of Pennsylvania. His book, published in 1998, represents one of many that look into America’s past to better understand the historical roots of US Foreign Policy and how they impact the present.

3.) In their respective books, Robert Kagan and Walter A. McDougall make original cases for understanding the key historical and philosophical elements of the American foreign policy strain, challenging the mainstream view they each label a “myth”.

- a. **Try to identify the Thesis and Main Idea of each author:** what are they trying to convey to the public? Compared to their respective theses, what do both authors identify as the ‘standard myth’ version of US foreign policy history?
→ **[Please briefly respond to these in writing, as we’ll discuss your responses in class]**
- b. Does Kagan’s understanding of the historical roots of US Foreign Policy align with the vision outlined by McDougall? To what extent are the authors’ visions and evidence compatible with each other? **[Jot down your thoughts in writing]**
- c. Did anything you read surprise you or frustrate you? Did you find either author persuasive? What made one interpretation more compelling than the other for you? Does it seem like either authors account of the past, distant or recent, offers guidance for understanding, conducting, or predicting American foreign policy in the present or future? **[Food for thought, no need to write]**