

The American Revolution and the Danger of Standing Armies

Mises Wire

06/19/2026 • Joshua Mawhorter

Among the key men involved in the American Revolution and the following periods, we find an oft-repeated concern that may seem foreign to us today—the threat of standing armies. This was a heritage of British legal thought and history, and it became an underappreciated part of American political thought and experience.

Why were peacetime standing armies viewed as such a threat?

To many Americans of this period, peacetime standing armies posed a threat not only because they could be used by the state to overthrow liberty, but because they tended to reshape society and government itself. A permanent military establishment could develop interests distinct from those of the people, become an instrument for enforcing unpopular or unconstitutional policies, and concentrate power in the hands of central authorities.

Standing armies also required permanent taxation, debt, and bureaucracy, fostering what later historians would call a fiscal-military state. This process also creates vested interests. Once careers, contracts, pensions, and bureaucracies depend upon military expenditures, peace may no longer seem desirable by many. James Madison said,

“ Of all the enemies of true liberty, war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded, because it comprises and develops the germ of every other.

War is the parent of armies; from these proceed debts and taxes; and armies, and debts, and taxes are the known instruments for bringing the many under the domination of the few. . . .

No nation can preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.

Moreover, standing armies threatened to erode the ideal of the citizen-soldier by replacing local militias defending their homes with professional soldiers whose loyalty was directed primarily toward the state (which paid them). In the minds of many revolutionaries, standing armies and expanding government power were mutually reinforcing, with war and military necessity often serving as the justification for greater centralization and political control.

It is the contention of this article that the Continental Congress's decision to appoint George Washington commander of the Continental Army and to pursue his state-centric military strategy, together with the extraordinary fiscal and political measures adopted to sustain that strategy—including inflationary finance, public debt, legal tender laws, price controls, confiscation, and other wartime expedients—demonstrated the close relationship between war, standing armies, and the centralization of political power. We can observe a recurring historical pattern: war strengthens standing armies, standing armies require expanded state capacity, and expanded state capacity tends toward political centralization.

British-American Opposition to Standing Armies

Opposition to permanent, peacetime standing armies is a noble British-American tradition, largely based on historical experience, not just abstract political philosophy.

In William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*—the most influential summary of English common law available to the American founding generation—Blackstone acknowledged, "In a land of liberty it is extremely dangerous to make a distinct order of the profession of arms."

Samuel Adams—radical leader of the Sons of Liberty and Massachusetts delegate to the Continental Congress—wrote (January 7, 1776), "A standing Army, however necessary it may be at some times, is always dangerous to the Liberties of the People." Contextually, the Massachusetts delegation reluctantly accepted the state-centric approach to the war—with its inevitable buildup of a central state apparatus—when the Congress created the Continental Army on June 14, 1775 and appointed George Washington selected on June 15, 1775.

In *Renegade Revolutionary: The Life of Charles Lee*, Phillip Papas writes (p. 9)—after including the above quote from Samuel Adams—about Charles Lee's suspicion regarding standing armies and concerns with a state-centric approach to the war, "If he was out of step with Washington, Lee was not alone among the revolutionaries in his belief that professional standing armies posed a major threat to liberty."

The Virginia Declaration of Rights (section 13), which George Mason drafted in 1776, declared "that standing armies, in time of peace, should be avoided as dangerous to liberty; and that in all cases the military should be under strict subordination to, and governed by, the civil power."

The Declaration of Independence also mentioned standing armies as a central grievance against the British government and the king:

“ He [George III] has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass [*sic*] our People, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislature.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us: . . . (*emphasis added*)

The Declaration of Independence reveals that the American objection was not merely to the existence of a standing army, but to the use of military power during peacetime as an instrument of political rule. The grievances concerning standing armies, the military being made "independent of and superior to the Civil Power," and the quartering of troops are presented together because they were understood as parts of the same problem.

Americans feared that a peacetime army detached from local control could be used to enforce unpopular laws, override civil authority, and compel obedience through force. Quartered troops represented the physical presence of government power among the people, while standing armies provided the means by which objectionable policies could ultimately be enforced. Thus, the Declaration reflects a broader Whig and republican concern that liberty could be gradually undermined when military power became a permanent feature of government and was employed in domestic affairs rather than solely for defense against foreign enemies.

The broader British historical-legal context also provides further insight. According to Constitution Annotated: Analysis and Interpretation of the US Constitution, in a useful article entitled "The Early American Experience with Standing Armies,"

“ Great Britain traditionally allowed its monarchs both to initiate wars and to raise and support armies; however, in the 17th century, Britain experienced three-quarters of a century of struggle over whether its army would be controlled by the Crown or the Parliament. In the 1628 Petition of Right, the English Parliament called on King Charles I to end the practice of dispersing great companies of soldiers and mariners throughout England. Charles I was eventually ousted from the throne, tried, and convicted of treason following the English Civil War, but the Crown again maintained a standing army after the monarchy was restored. In the Glorious Revolution of 1689, William and Mary agreed to the English Bill of Rights of 1689, which prohibited the Crown from raising or keeping a standing army in peacetime without Parliament’s consent.

Given that context, we can see why Charles Lee and several others had concerns regarding standing armies, especially during peacetime. Phillip Papas explains Charles Lee’s issues with pursuing a state-centric model of warfare complete with a professional army (pp. 8-9),

“ For Lee, then, the movement to create a professional army in America smacked dangerously of a European-style military establishment—one that was tied to absolute authority, monarchy, and European corruption and was at odds with the national character, liberties, and military traditions of the Americans. Lee warned that an army of professional soldiers who were paid by the state was invariably dangerous to liberty and civic virtue because it had the potential to become an instrument of tyranny should it come under the control of morally corrupt leaders concerned only with the protection of personal interests. He argued that the creation of a professional soldiery threatened the very essence of the American Revolution—that is, free citizens fighting for their natural rights and liberties and in defense of their families and their property. Professional armies were obedient to the interests of the state alone, not to the interests of the citizenry of a free society. He feared that a professional regular army could be turned against the Revolution and used for the suppression of the same natural rights and liberties that the war aimed to protect. (pp. 8-9)

While obviously not agreeing with the conclusion, Washington himself gave a nod to the potential downside of standing armies,

“ Altho’ a large standing Army in time of Peace hath ever been considered dangerous to the liberties of a Country, yet a few Troops, under certain circumstances, are not only safe, but indispensably necessary. Fortunately for us our relative situation requires but few. (emphasis in original)

While ultimately a step toward greater centralization, the Constitution too showed a concern regarding standing armies, especially in peacetime, “The Congress shall have Power. . . *To raise and support Armies*, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years; . . .” (*emphasis added*). Later, during the ratification debates, Edmund Randolph argued, “With respect to a standing army, I believe there was not a member in the federal Convention, who did not feel indignation at such an institution.” Ultimately, the Congress was authorized by the Constitution to both raise and support a national army and to organize the militia.

The overlooked Third Amendment declared, “No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.” While this was clearly a response to the British practice of quartering soldiers among the Americans in time of peace, it also subtly implies that—during peacetime—there might be allowances for a standing army.

The Newburgh Conspiracy (March 1783)

The Newburgh Conspiracy of 1783 revealed how statist aspects of the Revolution, especially how it was fought, had already fostered pressures toward greater nationalization and centralized power. Understandably frustrated by unpaid wages and pensions, officers in the Continental Army—encouraged by nationalist allies such as Robert Morris—considered using military pressure to secure stronger federal authority and reliable national revenues under threat of military force. The episode vindicated long-standing fears that standing armies could become political instruments threatening liberty and state sovereignty.

Although Washington ultimately defused the crisis and Congress rejected proposals for a peacetime standing army, the affair demonstrated how national military institutions could generate demands for greater consolidation of political power at the center.

Under the Articles of Confederation, the central government did not have the ability to tax the states directly. Largely due to the state-centric approach, a policy of inflation pursued by the Continental Congress and the states, legal tender laws, wage and price controls, and other statist interventions, the situation was the worst of both worlds—the Revolution incurred many of the costs normally associated with centralized warfare without possessing the stable revenue necessary to sustain it. The resulting fiscal crisis not only contributed to the unrest at Newburgh but also furnished nationalists with powerful arguments for expanding the powers of the central government, especially the power to tax. Intervention begets intervention.

Papas sees the Newburgh event a vindication of the concerns of Charles Lee regarding the danger of standing armies and centralized military establishments (p. 9),

“ [Lee] feared that a professional regular army could be turned against the Revolution and used for the suppression of the same natural rights and liberties that the war aimed to protect. The plot by several Continental Army officers at Newburgh, New York, in 1783 to challenge the

Congress of the Confederation and wrest power away from the civilian authorities because of the government's alleged indifference to their financial problems proved that this was not the wild fantasy of an eccentric soldier.

Likewise, historian Jeffrey Rogers Hummel writes,

“ The radicals' suspicion of standing armies stood fully vindicated, for never has the United States been closer to succumbing to an American Caesar. At this point, however, Washington, although firmly endorsing nationalist goals, balked. His personal intervention caused the Newburgh conspiracy to disband.

In his Newburgh Address (March 15, 1783), George Washington heroically pleaded with his men not to pursue this action, and he was ultimately successful, but we should appreciate how significant the risk was and how close America was to this fate. Thomas Jefferson said that the “virtue of a single character [Washington] has prevented this revolution from being closed as most others have been closed by a subversion of that liberty it was intended to establish.” In the address itself, Washington said,

“ ...this dreadful alternative, of either deserting our Country in the extremest hour of her distress, or turning our Army against it, (which is the apparent object, unless Congress can be compelled into an instant compliance) has something so shocking in it, that humanity revolts at the idea.

Washington's Interpretation (May 1783)

What lessons did Washington draw from the Newburgh event?

Even though Washington recognized the common concerns about standing armies and centralized military establishments in the letter quoted above (May 1, 1783), Washington also concluded not that the army was too powerful, but that the national government was too weak. That interpretation would help propel him toward support for constitutional consolidation.

Unlike Charles Lee, Washington seemed to believe the problem was not the state-centric approach and existence of a standing army, but rather its size, its unpaid condition, the weakness of civilian institutions, and failures of political leadership. Washington's interpretation of the Newburgh conspiracy led Washington to become a proponent of nationalization and consolidation rather than decentralization.

Washington's war strategy required a large Continental Army; large armies require enormous funding; the Continental Congress and the states funded the army largely through inflation and debt (with severe consequences and additional interventions); officers and soldiers went unpaid and the Newburgh conspiracy emerged; nationalists agitated for the conspiracy and used the conspiracy to agitate further for stronger national powers to collect revenue; and those arguments, along with George Washington's influence, led to the movement for the Constitution.

Nationalist reformers seized upon both the fiscal crisis and the military unrest as evidence that the Confederation government lacked sufficient authority to govern effectively. The result was a growing movement for stronger national powers of taxation and finance that ultimately contributed to the drive for constitutional reform. Out of the fifty-five men present at the Philadelphia Convention, twenty-one delegates belonged to the militarist Society of the Cincinnati and the convention was dominated by the nationalist factions that the prior war had forged together: land speculators, ex-army officers, public creditors, and privileged merchants.

13-18 DAYS: The PRACTICAL DIESEL BUFFER... Does It Preclude Bombing Iran?

LARRY C. JOHNSON • JUNE 26, 2026 • 1,600 WORDS • 6 COMMENTS

CALCULATION BASIS		
Metric	Value	Operational meaning
Total U.S. distillate stocks	106.1 million bbl	Headline national inventory, not all immediately deliverable
15 ppm sulfur and under stocks	95.7 million bbl	Core ULSD-quality pool, still includes non-rack/non-deliverable positions
Distillate product supplied	3.631 million b/d	Four-week average demand proxy
Headline days of supply	29.2 days	National paper measure
Stress-case deliverable pool	48-64 million bbl	45%-60% of reported stocks after logistics/operating haircuts
Practical deliverable days	13-18 days	Allocation-relevant buffer for hubs, racks, airports, defense and priority users

I am indebted to my new friend who is an energy expert, and currently working in the Persian Gulf, for explaining why the US is facing a very serious risk of a domestic energy crisis. If ignorance is bliss then I've spent my last 71 years happily believing that the conversion of oil to fuel for cars, trucks and planes was a simple process. Boy, was I wrong. The United States is facing a potential crisis surrounding the production of diesel and aviation fuel. According to this person, who has 35 years experience in the oil industry:

The U.S. does not have a month of freely deliverable diesel in a stress event. The headline EIA number shows 106.1 million barrels of total distillate fuel oil stocks and 3.631 million b/d of four-week average distillate product supplied, implying 29.2 days on paper. But that national inventory includes barrels in pipelines, refineries, terminals, regional storage, and operational positions that cannot all be allocated immediately to critical distribution hubs.

Operational estimate: applying a 45%-60% practical deliverability factor to total distillate stocks leaves roughly 48-64 million barrels of usable, allocable diesel-equivalent supply. At 3.631 million b/d, that is approximately 13.1-17.5 days, rounded to 13-18 days.

So let me explain how he reached this conclusion. Think of the diesel buffer as the gap between when supply stops flowing and when the economy starts breaking. Thirteen days is not a comfortable cushion — it's essentially no cushion at all, because the economy runs on diesel in ways that cannot be deferred.

Diesel is not a lifestyle fuel. It moves every truck on every highway, powers every locomotive, runs every tractor during planting and harvest, and drives every piece of heavy construction equipment. When a family decides gas prices are too high, they drive less. When a freight company decides diesel is too expensive or too scarce, it cannot defer the shipment — the grocery store shelves just go empty. Diesel demand is largely inelastic. The economy cannot negotiate with it the way it can with gasoline.

Let's use the worst case: 13 days. Thirteen days means that if anything disrupts the supply chain — a refinery outage, a pipeline failure, a crude supply disruption — the effects reach the real economy within two weeks. There is no meaningful time to arrange alternatives. A tanker from a replacement crude source takes longer than 13 days to arrive. A refinery turnaround takes longer than 13 days to complete. The buffer is shorter than the lead time for almost every possible remedy.

The geography makes it worse. The 13-day figure is a national average, which means some regions have more and some have less. The Southeast is particularly exposed, being heavily dependent on the Colonial Pipeline, which is itself a single point of failure that demonstrated its criticality when it was shut down for six days in 2021. Six days is nearly half the total national buffer.

What about aviation fuel? Here is where the two problems collide mechanically, and why it creates a genuine bind rather than just a theoretical tradeoff.

Diesel and jet fuel are not different products from different parts of the refinery. They are competing claims on the same physical fraction of crude oil — the middle distillate cut that comes off the atmospheric distillation column in the same boiling range. Every refinery scheduling decision is, at its core, a daily argument about how to divide that fraction between the two products.

With a 13-day diesel buffer, the refinery cannot let diesel output fall. The economic and political consequences of a diesel shortage materialize too quickly and too severely. Diesel production becomes, in practical terms, the floor that cannot be breached.

Now layer in a wartime demand for military jet fuel. JP-8 is pulled from the same middle distillate fraction. The military's operational requirements are also non-negotiable — aircraft do not fly on goodwill. So you now have two inelastic demands competing for one fixed supply of middle distillate from each barrel of crude processed.

The refinery's response to this bind is constrained in every direction:

It cannot simply run more crude. Crude supply itself may be disrupted — this is precisely the scenario the Persian Gulf blockade creates. And even if crude is available, refinery throughput is limited by physical capacity. You cannot run 110% of nameplate capacity.

It cannot shift to lighter crude to get more barrels. Light crude produces proportionally more gasoline and less middle distillate. Running lighter crude when you need diesel and jet fuel makes the allocation problem worse, not better, because you are shrinking the pool of middle distillate that both are fighting over.

It cannot get more middle distillate out of sour crude than the chemistry allows. A barrel of sour crude from the Persian Gulf typically yields around 20–25% middle distillates by volume. That fraction is fixed by the molecular composition of the oil. You can optimize within a range, but you cannot double the yield through operational choices.

Hydrogen becomes a choke point. Making JP-8 from sour crude to military specification requires substantial hydrogen — for sulfur removal, for aromatic ring saturation to meet smoke point requirements, and for freeze point management. Making ULSD from the same sour crude also requires substantial hydrogen — even more, to reach the ≤ 15 ppm sulfur specification. A refinery's hydrogen generation capacity is finite. Every cubic foot of hydrogen diverted to jet fuel processing is a cubic foot unavailable for diesel desulfurization. At the margin, maximizing JP-8 production makes the diesel quality problem worse, not just the diesel volume problem.

The certification delay adds time pressure. Switching refinery configuration between maximizing diesel and maximizing jet fuel is not instant. It takes days to a week to restabilize the unit operations and certify the product meets specification. In a 13-day buffer environment, a week of transition time is not a casual cost — it represents a material fraction of the entire safety margin consumed by the act of reconfiguring production.

Under normal peacetime conditions, refineries optimise their middle distillate split based on market prices — jet fuel commands a premium, so they lean toward jet. The diesel buffer stays comfortable and the system works.

The Iran war changes all of that simultaneously in three directions at once:

First, the diesel buffer starts shrinking. Persian Gulf sour crude — even though only 8% of US imports — supplied roughly 17% of the medium-sour grades that US complex refiners prefer for middle distillate production. That quality gap is not easily filled by Canadian heavy or domestic light sweet crude without refinery adjustment. Diesel output drops or becomes more expensive per barrel just as the buffer needs defending.

Second, military JP-8 demand spikes. A naval campaign in the Persian Gulf, sustained air operations, and a mobilised logistics tail consume enormous quantities of aviation fuel. The military doesn't queue behind civilian demand – it has priority. So the refinery is simultaneously being squeezed from both ends of the middle distillate barrel: the military is claiming more jet fuel from the top, and the diesel buffer is bleeding out from the bottom.

Third, the refinery cannot easily solve this by running harder. As explained earlier, maximising JP-8 from sour crude requires pulling a lighter, narrower distillate cut. This is precisely the action that *reduces* diesel yield – the heavier tail of the middle distillate that would have become diesel is either lost to the vacuum unit or downcycled to fuel oil. The more aggressively refineries respond to military jet fuel demand, the faster the diesel buffer erodes.

This creates a three-way constraint with no clean solution:

- **Protect the diesel buffer** → limit JP-8 output → constrain military operations
- **Maximise JP-8 for military** → draw down diesel buffer → trigger civilian supply cascade before the war ends
- **Try to do both** → run refineries at maximum utilisation → lose the ability to flex for any further shock, with no margin for equipment failures, maintenance, or a second disruption

The 13-day buffer is what makes this bind acute rather than manageable. With sixty days of diesel inventory, a refinery operator can tolerate shifting the middle distillate split toward jet fuel for several weeks without civilian consequences. With thirteen days, the same shift starts a visible countdown almost immediately. Now do you understand why Donald Trump signed the MoU with Iran?

If the United States decides to renew its bombing campaign of Iran, that would likely trigger the stress event outlined above. Based on that fact I believe that Donald Trump, notwithstanding his threats, will not run the risk of crashing the US economy by bombing Iran again.

Nima and I discussed the latest developments on the Iran/US front:

Back with Pyotr Kurzin to discuss why Donald Trump signed the MoU with Iran:

Danny Haiphong and I discuss Iran's latest move to close the Strait of Hormuz:

Mario and I discussed a rumor started by the Pahlavi forces that Mojtaba Khamenei is dead:

I rebutted the claim that Mojtaba Khamenei is dead with Sulaiman and examined the story that the US may sell F-35s to Turkiye:

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War and Constitutional Indifference

by Andrew P. Napolitano | Jun 26, 2026 | 1 Comment

Since its inception, the government of the United States has inexorably exceeded its powers under the Constitution. All three branches have been complicit in a consistent pattern of constitutional indifference.

Congress has regulated in areas of governance nowhere articulated in the Constitution. Its general regulatory powers were granted to address interstate commerce, but during the FDR years, the Supreme Court ruled that Congress can regulate events that affect interstate commerce. This has resulted in federal regulation of matters too infinitesimal to measure, that are not commercial and devoid of movement across interstate lines.

The most extreme of these is the regulation of a farmer's small field of wheat, all of which was ground into flour and consumed as baked goods by the farmer's family. Though this had no measurable effect on interstate commerce, the court ruled that if you add up all the similarly situated farmers who may do the same, the aggregate will affect interstate commerce. And, by growing their own wheat and baking their own bread, the farmer's family was buying less bread from their local grocer and that — though truly infinitesimal — affected interstate commerce.

Once unleashed by this judicial frivolity, Congress recognized no real limits on its regulatory powers. When hosting a show on the Fox Business Network, I once invited nearly all my Fox Business colleagues on set and asked all on air if they could find anything in the studio that was not regulated by the feds.

The chairs on which we were seated? No, the feds regulate their leg length and the rollers on which the legs sit. The color of the walls? No, the feds regulate the pigment in the paint. The cameras used to video us? No, the feds regulate the lenses and the electricity used to power them.

To James Madison, who was the scrivener at the Constitutional Convention and who drafted the Commerce Clause, the word "regulate" in "to regulate Commerce... among the several States" meant "to keep regular." Indeed, one of the main reasons for the elites' displeasure with the old Articles of Confederation, and a significant impetus for the Constitution itself, was the effect on commerce of state tariffs and monopolies and their use to impede businesses from out of state.

This was the reason for granting Congress the power to keep commerce regular. But power corrupts, and keeping it regular led to regulating everything that affects it — the speed with which commercial goods moved, the ages and wages of those who worked to produce them, even the prices that could be charged. And the courts permitted all this, in defiance of the Constitution, which prohibits the feds from interfering with contracts without due process.

But all of this, as deleterious as it has been to personal liberty and limited government, takes a back seat to presidential extraconstitutional behavior. And that behavior is nowhere as manifest and harmful as war.

War is the health of the state because it induces fear among the people and thus their compliance, produces jingoistic patriotism and abject hatred of the persons in the country that is the object of war, facilitates vast borrowings in order to pay for the war,

enriches elites, slaughters innocents and curtails the civil liberties — the natural rights — of those opposed to the war.

The object of war is, of course, to kill people in a foreign land. Hence the mandate of the Framers that this should not take place without a substantial nation-wide consensus in support of the killing. The Framers of the Constitution so feared wars on presidential whim that they made it clear that only Congress can declare war.

Yet, within months of taking office in 1797, President John Adams fought a war against France without a congressional declaration of war. This was unthinkable at the time, and in order to stifle domestic political dissent, he commenced a regrettable American tradition of silencing domestic opposition to foreign wars.

He asked Congress to enact the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798, which, among other things, criminalized words used to disparage the government. This is perhaps the most remarkable and abominable piece of legislation in American history. It not only legislatively interferes with a natural right — the freedom of speech, essential in a liberal democracy — but it was enacted and enforced by the same generation, in some cases the same human beings, that had just offered and ratified the First Amendment, which states in part that “Congress shall make no law ... abridging the freedom of speech.”

Yet the enforcement of this statute was deemed a wartime necessity, as were many of its progeny. Following Adams, American presidents have arrested journalists without charge or trial during the Civil War; prosecuted opponents of the draft during World War I by arguing that their words of dissent in the U.S. impeded the American military in Europe; incarcerated Japanese-Americans in camps they could not leave during World War II for fear that their words would encourage the government of their ancestors to invade the U.S., and during the war on terror asked for and enforced the Patriot Act, as odious as the Alien and Sedition Acts, which permits searches and seizures without warrants.

All of this terror follows the pattern of interpreting the Constitution so as to curtail personal liberty in wartime, contrary to the plain meaning and common understanding of the founding documents of America. The root of this terror is war. And the application of this terror came about by indifference to constitutional restraints on war.

As we approach America’s 250th anniversary, we see that constitutional indifference leads to leviathan and war by whim. Speech that opposes war should be praised because it exposes unconstitutional behavior, challenges authoritarianism, forces the government to explain its killings and is a hallmark to tolerance in a liberal democracy.

Without free speech and constitutional fidelity, what are we celebrating next month?

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A NEW AND NECESSARY

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
In New York, July 4, 2026

The unanimous Declaration of the Fifty States and Incorporated Territories of United States of America from the Talmudic Knesset of Israel-Rothschild International Tyranny

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from God, transferred to as the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. No positive law can contradict the Universal Moral law.

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

Such has been the patient sufferance of these 50 States and incorporated territories; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the prior administrations, Congresses and Supreme Courts of at least the last 81 years is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

It (The Federal Government) has legislated laws approved and executed as policy that either fail to align with, or directly contradict the Universal Moral Law, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good. Most of them are designed to keep citizens perpetually in conflict with each other and turn us, citizens, into slaves.

GRIEVANCE 1945-1968: The United States Military, in cooperation with International Jewish Congresses, and specifically the Rothschild octopus, have committed war crimes that equal or are comparable to those assigned to our enemies. Examples of such are carpet bombing civilians in Germany and dropping two atomic bombs in Japan. These were not even of military importance. At the end of the so-called World War Two conflict, The Federal Government, in conjunction with World Zionism, and the military industrial complex, engaged in a "cold war" in which soft coercion and social engineering was preferred over brute force used by International Bolshevism. The creation of the Zionist modern state of Israel, along with the Holocaust Narrative and the United Nations and NATO cemented the Talmudic American Empire, which has seen us get ubiquitously involved in subversive schemes, both abroad and domestically. Expanding labor created wealth in all kinds of schemes, manufacturing the conditions for social, political and economic distress. Unfruitful wars in Korea and Vietnam, as well as social wasteful programs were used to squander national wealth built during the reconstruction of Europe and Asia.

GRIEVANCE 1968-1991: The Federal Government and its agencies continued to squander national wealth on foreign incursions that had higher costs than benefits, and outspent International Jewry (Bolshevik communism). In the process of doing so, the captured oligarchy under Zionism transferred a robust labor-manufacturing wealth generating paradigm to one of alchemistic financialization, creating the illusion of wealth and making it more attractive than coercive communism. The oligarchy failed to dismantle NATO, once Communism dissolved, continuing to suck up much needed funds that could have been used for productive and vital investments. NATO has been used to consolidate a unipolar power under the aegis of the USA and Israel, and their lackeys.

GRIEVANCE 1991-2026: The oligarchy has used NATO and international finance to consolidate power, creating chaos, genocide and other works of inhuman and irrational destruction to continue consolidating whatever property, we the people still cling on to for the very wealthy few. The Federal Government, in conjunction with the international financial oligarchy, manufactured a new abstract enemy, called "terrorism" upon the fall of communism. Ever since 9/11, Zionist messianism has taken over our foreign and domestic policy at almost all levels of government. A coordinated attack in New York, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania commenced the "war on radical Islam" which not only has corroded our civil liberties and rights, but given the green light for a resurrection of the greater Israel and Judea. This has been paralleled with an exponential increase of dependency of technology and artificial intelligence. Manufactured recessions, like the one of 2008, and pandemics like the one in 2020, serve as accelerators to transform our way of living to a de facto technofeudalism.

FOR PRIORITIZING USURY AND SEXUAL DEVIANCE AT THE EXPENSE OF LABOR AND THE NUCLEAR NATURAL FAMILY: They

have plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, wasted and razed our towns and cities, and destroyed the lives of our people with narcotics, pornography, sodomy, abortion, euthanasia, and usury. They are at this time transporting large amounts of money, weapons and soldiers to complete the works of death, desolation, tyranny and genocide, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy representatives of a civilized representative democratic nation.

WE, THEREFORE, THE CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in State Assemblies and

Congresses, Assembled, appealing to the Universal Moral Law (God), do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these States and incorporated Territories, solemnly publish and declare, That these United States are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the Israeli and international Rothchild-Epstein AIPAC occupation and theocratic tyranny. That all political connection between us and them, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, we have full Power to stop all illegitimate and intrusive Wars, conclude Peace,

contract Alliances, establish humane and fair Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do according to the Universal Moral Law. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of God, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred identity (body and soul) as creatures of God, to live wholesomely and with dignity as rational people who follow Logos.

Jose Bernier
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From Shireen Abu Akleh to Amal Khalil, the Killer Is the Same

BY SHATHA HANAYSHA

I am still under the tree. Beside me are Shireen and hundreds of journalists from Gaza and Lebanon, holding each other's hands, trying to survive the monster of occupation.

On the day Amal Khalil was killed in southern Lebanon—following appeals she made to the Lebanese army and the Red Cross to evacuate her and her colleague, Zeinab Faraj, after being trapped in a building while reporting on Israel's attacks on Bint Jbeil—I saw myself back under that tree with Shireen, the bullets surrounding us.

Four years ago today, a bullet fired by an Israeli soldier struck Shireen Abu Akleh in the head and killed her. On that day, the Israeli occupation's war against journalists became visible to the whole world.

But since then, life for journalists in

this region has only become harder with each passing day. The occupation's crimes have not stopped. The killers were never held accountable. And international law did not prevent the occupation from killing again.

People ask me how I am doing after these four years. I tell them that more than 275 journalists have been killed in Gaza and Lebanon since Shireen's assassination. If the world had held Israel accountable for that first crime, would we have reached this number?

That lack of accountability is what makes Israel's current conduct possible, which has grown so brazen that it proudly and openly announces when it kills journalists, doctors and paramedics. It did it with Anas Al-Sharif, Hasan Eslayeh and Ismail al-Ghoul in Gaza, and with Ali Shuaib, Fatima Ftouni and her brother Muhammad in southern Lebanon. In each of those cases, and in many others, the Israeli army issued official statements confirming they had been targeted, after previously threatening to kill them, sometimes openly on social media.

The entire world, its institutions, its human rights bodies, its international forums, bears responsibility for the

bloodshed in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon. Including the blood of journalists sitting in Israeli prisons right now: more than 44 held under administrative detention, living in isolation, hunger, illness and thirst, with no clear date of release. Their only crime is being journalists.

Days ago, journalist Ali al-Samoudi was released after a full year of administrative detention. Ali had accompanied Shireen on the day she was killed and was wounded on the same morning by a bullet to the shoulder. He came out emaciated, with sunken eyes and stories that would make anyone weep. He said they told him during interrogation, "You bothered us, Ali."

His colleague Mujahid Al-Saadi, who was also with us that day, remains in Israeli detention. There is no news of his health or any date for his release.

Then there is Raneen Sawafta, a Reuters photographer and my friend, who miraculously survived after settlers attacked her while she was covering the olive harvest in the mountains of Nablus. They threw stones at her and beat her with clubs. She is still receiving treatment in hospitals.

If a nation values anything more than freedom, it will lose its freedom; and the irony of it is that, if it is comfort or money it values more, it will lose that too.

— William Somerset Maugham, *Strictly Personal* [1941]

On Little Bighorn Anniversary, Remember Custer's Crimes

Mises Wire

06/25/2026 • Mises Wire • James Bovard

June 25th was the 150th anniversary of the 1876 Battle of Little Bighorn. Col. George S. Custer and 267 US soldiers were massacred by thousands of outraged Indian warriors on the plains of eastern Montana.

In 1969, as a twelve-year-old traveling to a Boy Scout Jamboree in Idaho, I visited the Custer Battlefield National Monument. I was riveted by the scene of the best-known showdown between the US Army and savages who were resisting the spread of civilization. I jotted a note from one of the plaques that the Seventh Cavalry's "heroic defense made the nation yearn for details that no white man lived to tell." My view of the battle was heavily shaped by *They Died with Their Boots On*, the 1941 Hollywood movie that featured Erroll Flynn as the heroic Custer who met a tragic fate.

Decades later, I recognized that Custer was tied to a long series of atrocities. In 1864, as a Union cavalry commander fighting under Gen. Phil Sheridan, Custer sent his troops on burning sprees that utterly desolated the barns, farms, homes and towns in the Shenandoah Valley where I was raised a century later. Stephen Starr, author of *Union Cavalry in the Civil War*, wrote, "The deliberate planned devastation of the Shenandoah Valley has deservedly ranked as one of the grimmest episodes of a sufficiently grim war. Unlike the haphazard destruction caused by Sherman's bummers in Georgia, it was committed systematically, and by order." A newspaper correspondent embedded with the Union army reported, "Hundreds of nearly starving people are going North, not half the inhabitants of the valley can subsist on it in its present condition."

When Confederates fiercely resisted the Union's 100-mile arson spree, Custer responded by publicly hanging six captured Confederate soldiers in my old hometown, Front Royal, Virginia, in September 1864. After Confederate Col. John S. Mosby hanged captured Union troops in retaliation, Custer relented from killing captured Confederates. But Mosby's men continued denouncing Custer as "Attila the Hun."

Two years after the Civil War ended, Custer was court-martialed for ordering the summary execution of his own soldiers who had allegedly deserted when Custer was commanding a fight against Indians in Kansas. Custer was convicted on that charge and other abuses of his authority and suspended from the army for a year. Custer's brutality against his own soldiers helped explain why he was hated by many troops under his command.

Custer was summoned back to active duty even before his suspension ended by Sheridan, who was supreme commander in the US Army fight against the Plains Indians. Sheridan is best known for telling an Indian chief in 1869: "The only good Indian is a dead Indian." Sheridan wanted a commander like Custer who would not hesitate to scourge the enemy without mercy.

On November 27, 1868, Custer launched a surprise dawn attack on a peaceful Indian village that was flying a white flag and was at peace with the US government. Custer's troops slaughtered more than a hundred Indians, including scores of women and children. No one was permitted to surrender and many Indians were killed as they sought to escape. Custer denied that his unprovoked attack on the village was a "massacre" because not every Indian was killed. Many women and children were instead taken as hostages after the battle.

In 1875, President Ulysses S. Grant approved a plan to trample US treaties with Indian tribes in order to

seize the Black Hills territory after gold had been discovered there. Six years earlier, Grant publicly admitted: "Our dealings with the Indians properly lay us open to charges of cruelty and swindling." But Custer was sent out as one of a series of military assaults that were the greatest swindle of them all. Grant's attacks on the Indians were not supported by the top Army commander, Gen. William Sherman, who complained about "whites looking for gold [who] kill Indians just as they would kill bears and pay no regard for treaties."

Custer's arrogance and recklessness got all his troops killed. Assuming he could easily vanquish his Indian opponents, Custer divided his command shortly before the battle. He charged forward after doing little or no reconnaissance. Custer's soldiers had single shot rifles because the Army Quartermaster believed that repeating rifles wasted ammo. The Indians didn't have a quartermaster, so they had repeating rifles, which wreaked havoc on the US troops. Custer rejected an offer to take Gatling guns with him that could have helped balance the odds against thousands of opponents.

In 1991, Congress voted to change the name from the Custer Battlefield National Monument to the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. That signaled a belated recognition that the Indians had legitimate grievances that spurred their resistance to the US Army.

The Trump administration, as part of its campaign to purportedly restore "truth and sanity to American history," is targeting "signage describing broken promises to Native American tribes" at the Little Bighorn Battlefield, according to Montana television station KTVQ. Sitting Bull, one of the Indian commanders at Little Bighorn, said that white people had only kept one promise they ever made: "They promised to take our land, and they took it."

The anniversary of the Battle of Little Bighorn is a reminder of the perils of official history that sweeps all government crimes and abuses under the rug. We can appreciate the heroism of both the US cavalymen and the Indian warriors who died at Little Bighorn without putting George S. Custer on a pedestal.



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Medieval Europeans Paved the Way for Freedom in the West

June 25, 2026

By Ryan McMaken

[*The Medieval Constitution of Liberty: Political Foundations of Liberalism in the West*, by Alexander Salter and Andrew T. Young, University of Michigan Press, 2023.]

The usual narrative about the political situation in the Middle Ages is so well known that it is hardly necessary to restate it. Thanks to years of public schooling and mass media, most people “know” that the political institutions of the Middle Ages were chiefly characterized by kings and princes who exercised untrammelled power. There was no rule of law, and the will of the monarch was absolute.

According to this narrative, something happened that then changed all this. Europe then became “modern” and “enlightened” and discovered the idea of freedom and limited government. Europe put medieval thinking behind it and instead embraced the rule of law, representative government, and limitations on government power.

But that’s not how it happened at all. The West’s traditions of political freedom and restrained state power do not come from a break with Europe’s medieval past. Rather, the best parts of the West’s political institutions are very much in continuity with the medieval past. It is in the Middle Ages where we find the root of today’s classical liberal concepts of natural rights, freedom, decentralized government, and limits on the rulers’ powers.

For example, in his [history of political thought](#), historian Ralph Raico describes how extreme political decentralization, characterized in part by a relentless competition between the monarchs and the Church, made Europe unique in its historical, institutional, and ideological opposition to despotism. Murray Rothbard has [also noted](#) how absolutism of the early modern period represented a step in the wrong direction, compared to the more restrained civil governance of the centuries that came before. In the Middle Ages, the reality faced by most monarchs was hardly one of unrestrained power. Contrary to the myth that kings routinely ruled over cowed subordinates by “divine right” in the Middle Ages, civil governments of the period faced countless institutional obstacles to the exercise of power.

Although public school teachers and mass-media creators still cling to an eighteenth-century view of medieval politics, scholarship of the past sixty has revealed a more nuanced and accurate picture. Much of this work has been well summarized and synthesized by economists Alexander Salter and Andrew Young in their new book *The Medieval Constitution of Liberty: Political Foundations of Liberalism in the West*. As economists, Salter and Young examine the

decentralized political institutions of the Middle Ages while seeking to explain how economic incentives worked to limit the powers of civil authorities. In the process, they also present a compelling retelling of the ways that medieval Europe developed institutions and a political environment that clearly contributed to classical liberal ideals of freedom.

Political Property Rights

Key to Salter's and Young's analysis is the concept of political property rights. These are not property rights in the true sense, but are employed here as a sort of economic model to connect political rulers to the effects of their governance. That is, the nature of political property rights within a polity tell us how much agents of the civil government are directly impacted by their own policies. The authors write:

Political property rights create feedback loops between the exercise of political power and the value of resources within the jurisdiction of power wielders. To the extent that a holder of political property rights internalizes the costs and benefits arising from their exercise, that holder has residual claimancy. Residual claimancy implies that a governance provider shares in any costs or benefits that his governance imposes on or creates for the governed. Costs and benefits arise because political property rights specify the economic resources that the holder can govern and types of governance that are permissible.

Now, in some cases, the wielders of political power are the literal owners within some of their lands. (These were the "crown lands," and these are the areas where the prince or king directly owns the lands and other resources.) Naturally, in these cases, property rights of all varieties provide a monarch with an incentive to enhance the value of his own resources. In some other areas, however, the ruler does not directly own the lands but has some partial claim through feudal contractual arrangements. The degree to which the king has "residual claimancy" in those cases suggests to us the incentives that the prince or king faces in determining how to use those resources. In the Middle Ages, there was no sense of "public service" and no concept of the "public" in a political sense. Rather society consisted of many private individuals, families, and other associations that owned lands and other resources through private arrangements. "Political" power became a function of how much coercive power could be deployed, either as a means of enforcing legal decisions, or as a means of providing military defense. Or, as Salter and Young put it, "feudal lords were essentially private individuals who wielded de facto political power by virtue of their capabilities for violence."

These private organizations were not states in the modern sense. Although they did possess some coercive power, they certainly did not have a recognized *monopoly* on the use of that power within their own territories. That arrangement appeared only later, with the rise of states. Rather, the use of coercive force in the Middle Ages rested on the exercise of

contractual duties and rights, and on bargaining among many stakeholders, many of whom possessed their own potential for employing coercive power.

Salter and Young contend that the political and legal institutions of the Middle Ages—i.e., the medieval “constitution”—generally imposed many obstacles on the wielding of political power. This medieval constitution required many different types of bargaining that incentivized monarchs and other feudal lords to enhance the wealth and stability of their subjects. In other words, within the medieval political milieu, it became relatively costly for a wielder of political power to simply exploit the taxpayers. Salter and Young show how these incentives were institutionalized and sustained through a variety of institutions and phenomena.

Polycentric Political Institutions

Perhaps at the center of the medieval constitution was the inexorable fact of extensive political decentralization. This was manifested in a wide variety of polycentric political institutions which for centuries defied efforts to centralize political power within large states. Salter and Young put it this way:

During the high Middle Ages, Western European kings did not rule absolutely and the modern nation-state, with its centralization and consolidation of violence and governance, did not exist. ...The provision of defense, justice, and other forms of governance was decentralized and diffused throughout these hierarchies, with royal and noble lords having their own jurisdictions. These jurisdictions often overlapped and placed governance providers in competition with one another. However, to the extent that they were distinct, governance providers mutually constrained one another.

In the modern world, state power can be so easily expanded and abused largely because it is monopolistic in nature. Although there is some degree of competition between modern states—fortunately, there is no single world government—this competition is quite muted compared to what existed within the medieval constitution. The sheer number of independent polities, coupled with overlapping jurisdictions within many complex feudal arrangements, greatly reduced the monopoly power that could be exercised by any single monarch or any other wielder of political power. Put in more concrete terms, a subject of a monarch who felt himself aggrieved by the local prince could, with relative ease, appeal to other local peers or near-peers for legal relief. This type of competition incentivized monarchs to avoid widespread abuse of subjects. Under these conditions, Salter and Young write: “We should expect rulers constrained by competition to be more sensitive to the needs of those whom they govern than rulers who do not face that constraint.”

Even today, the residue of the medieval embrace of polycentric governance continues in political arrangements found in confederations and federal states. As Salter and Young note, this style of governance is truly ancient: “Polycentric sovereignty in Western Europe did not appear magically out of thin air; rather it

was a legacy of both the disintegration of the Western Roman Empire and the settlement of Germanic groups within its frontiers."

These arrangements were often quite complex, providing different legal frameworks and contracts which distributed political power (to use Raico's words) "among estates, orders, chartered towns, religious communities, corps, universities, etc., each with its own guaranteed liberties." Or, as Salter and Young put it: "Polycentric sovereignty characterized Western Europe generally, but the balances of power between different estates and monarchs varied across regions and polities. This variation determined the bargaining positions of particular cities and the alliances that they sought."

Among these various polycentric powers, Salter and Young chose to focus largely on the medieval towns, which formed an important component of what we now call the "estate monarchies" of the Middle Ages. The estate monarchies recognized a distribution of power between the monarch, the nobility, the clergy, and—later on—the towns. As the authors show, the towns added to the intensity of the political competition fostered by polycentric political power. As centers of wealth, and as the home of the rising bourgeoisie, the towns offered an escape from the agrarian feudal power centers, further intensifying competition and, at times, creating more constraints on those who wielded political power.

Representative Assemblies

The towns also came to be important components of the representative assemblies that developed in the Middle Ages. These are the organizations that later developed into what we now call legislatures and parliaments. To some extent, these assemblies imposed limitations on how monarchs could impose their own political agenda. As Raico puts it, these representative assemblies were a sort of "democracy of the taxpayers." Naturally, the taxpayers sought some means to limit the extent to which the monarchs could exploit the towns, the nobility, and others.

Moreover, in the earliest days of these assemblies, the members were assumed to be armed—reflecting earlier Germanic tribal forms of governance—which emphasized the two-way relationship between the monarch and those assembled. Those arms could be used to either support the king, or to oppose him.

As Salter and Young point out, however, the representative assemblies could also be manipulated to manufacture support for the monarch. While the assemblies formally existed to limit the monarch's power, in many cases, the assemblies also could be used to simply provide an imprimatur or rubber stamp for the monarchs who, as time passed, learned to use the assemblies to enhance the monarch's power. That is, Salter and Young describe how eventually "representative powers

were ... a requirement from above, not a demand from below." The assemblies could be used to send the message that the king's desires enjoyed the approval of the people overall.

Even if the king could, at times, use the assemblies for his own ends, the fact that there remained a perceived need to organize approval and "representation" through various institutions showed that the monarchs often felt they must engage in costly bargaining and negotiation. To fail to do so risked upsetting the political property rights that sustained both ruler and ruled in a state of relatively beneficial co-existence.

Continuity, not Rupture

The "received" narrative on the Middle Ages tells us that modern ideals of natural rights and limited state power were an invention of post-medieval thought—developing perhaps even as late as the so-called Enlightenment. Salter and Young are among the most recent scholars to show that this is certainly not the case, and that, when it comes to understanding modern ideals of political freedom, "[T]he High Middle Ages mattered. It was no mere residual. ...[T]he right narrative is one emphasizing continuity and development with the medieval constitution, rather than a rupture."

Unfortunately, these notions did not develop free from competing ideologies that sought to justify the consolidation and centralization of state power. With the rise of "renaissance" and "enlightenment," also came larger and stronger states, coupled with larger standing armies, and the beginnings of the bureaucratic state. In turn, state power overwhelmed the old medieval constitution of competition and a "political property rights" regime that made monarchs and other rulers more sensitive to the costs of governance. In other words, the modern state broke free of the old constitution, and as Salter and Young conclude, "Because the size and scope of states has increased so much, the de facto constraints upon them may bind less tightly."

In recent decades, scholarship on medieval decentralization, taxation, property rights, and political restraint has grown increasingly vast. Thanks to the work of Salter and Young, *The Medieval Constitution of Liberty* can serve as both a helpful introduction to this literature, and as a useful reappraisal for those seeking the historical roots of the liberal ideology of freedom and free markets.

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Analysis

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Ukraine Not Interested in Truth About Kiev-Pechersk Monastery Incident – Expert

16:45 GMT 16.06.2026



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Ukraine "intentionally turned off surveillance cameras to remove inconvenient evidence" of a malfunctioning Patriot missile (<https://t.me/SputnikInt/105643>) fired by Ukrainian air defenses hitting the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra monastery, Alexander Mikhailov, head of the Military and Political Analysis Bureau, tells Sputnik.

The only reason Ukraine prevented video of the impact was to conceal the type of missile and its flight path – to point the finger at Russia

Now that the missile is confirmed as US-made, Kiev will use it to demand newer and better Patriot missiles to replace the old ones it has

The timing is handy for the coming G7 summit, where Ukraine will ask for another \$30 billion in aid

”

Whatever happens, Ukraine will never take responsibility for the incident, Mikhailov says.

