

Empire Day

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Synopsis

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New York - July 1976 - in a world in which New England remains the sparkling jewel in the crown of the British Empire.

It is the day before Empire Day - July 4 - the day each year when the British Empire marks the brutal crushing of the rebellion dignified by the treachery of the 56 delegates to the Continental Congress who were so foolhardy as to sign the infamous Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia on that day of infamy in 1776.

It is nearly 200 years since George Washington was killed and his Continental Army was destroyed in the Battle of Long Island, and now New England, that most quintessentially loyal and "English" imperial fiefdom - at least in the original, or "First 13" colonies - is about to celebrate its devotion to the Crown and the Old Country, of which it still views, in the main, as the "mother country".

Yet all is not roses. Since 1776, in a world of empires, the British Empire has grown and prospered until now, it stands alone as the ultimate arbiter of global war and peace. The Royal Navy has enforced the global Pax Britannia for more than a century since the World War of the 1860s established a lasting but increasingly tenuous "peace" between the great powers.

Nonetheless, while elsewhere the empire may be creaking at the seams, struggling to come to terms with a growing desire for self-determination, thus far, the Pax Britannica has survived - buttressed by the commercial and industrial powerhouse of New England stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific Northwest - intact for all that barely a year goes by without the outbreak of another small, colonial war somewhere....

This said, the British "Imperial System" remains the envy of its friends and enemies alike, and nowhere has it been so successful as in North America, where peace and prosperity has ruled in the vast Canadian dominions and the 29 old and recent colonies of the Commonwealth of New England for the best part of two centuries.

Empire Day might not have originally been conceived as a celebration of the saving of the first British Empire, but as time has gone

by, it has come to symbolize the one ineluctable truth about the empire: that New England is the rock upon which all else stands, an empire within an empire that is greater than the sum of all the other parts of the great imperium ruled from London.

In past times, a troubling question has been whispered in the corridors of power in London: What would happen to the empire - and the Pax Britannica - if the British hold on New England was ever to be loosened?

Generations of British politicians have always known that if the question was ever to be asked again in earnest, it has but one answer.

If the New World ever discovers again a single voice supporting any kind of meaningful estrangement from the Old Country, it would surely be the end of the empire....

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