



Written by [Denise Behreandt](#) on June 25, 2009

## The Standards of Our Standard

If you re-read the beginning phrase of the Pledge of Allegiance, however, you notice that the first vow of loyalty made is to the flag and secondarily to the republic for which it stands. The Pledge of Allegiance is our most basic and fundamental oath of fidelity, and accordingly the order of the words reveal much of the priority and reverence we ascribe to our national banner.



The flag of the United States of America is known by a few nicknames: Old Glory, the Stars and Stripes, and the Star-Spangled Banner. The history of our flag will not be set forth herein, as the story, what is reliably known of it, is described skillfully by John White in his article written for THE NEW AMERICAN entitled, [The American Flag](#). In that engaging article, White lists “the national standard” as one of the sobriquets by which our flag is known. There is much to be learned from that moniker, perhaps more than any of the others, in fact.

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### Our National Ideals

The word “standard” has many meanings. In the Oxford Dictionary, the first definition given is “object or quality or measure serving as a basis or example or principle by which others are judged.” The third definition is “a distinctive flag.” The marriage of these two definitions reveals much of the truer, more profound significance to be found not only in the flag of the United States of America, but in every national flag and the various supranational and organizational flags around which we rally.

According to the Center for Immigration Studies, approximately 2.5 million people immigrate to the United States each year. One is hopeful that every one of these people comes hoping to make themselves better and make America better at the same time. We also hope that everyone coming to the United States recognizes the standards our ancestors have set for being worthy to stand under our noble colors. As the old saying goes, “If you don’t stand for something, you’ll fall for anything.” The flag of America is a standard by which all who live under her chose to gather beneath, as far-flung soldiers once looked around the battlefield to know where they could recur for succor, support, kinship, and protection. The pertinent inquiry is, therefore, what does the flag stand for? What are the standards of our standard? And, consequently, what are the standards associated with the other flags under which we live?

### Colors, Connotations, and Commitments



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As set forth in the above-referenced article by John White, each of the three colors of our national banner has specific symbolism: the red stands for hardiness and valor; the white stands for purity and innocence; and the blue stands for vigilance, perseverance, and justice. These are noble, virtuous, and timeless principles that merit the admiration and emulation of everyone living under the flag.

Regardless of where one is born (and, inarguably, there is a rightfully powerful affinity for the land of one's nativity), many if not most men and women in the Western world choose the place where they live. If America is to remain the "shining city on a hill," then it is imperative that we retain our unique national character and demonstrably revere and actively promote the standards as embodied in the waving symbol of our nation.

Apart from the meaning listed above, the color blue in the flag of the United States and other countries has been said to represent unity. There is much of value in that interpretation, as well. We as a nation will live and die by the strength of the tie that binds us together. In 1768, John Dickinson, one of the most worthy patriots enshrined in the pantheon of American Founding Fathers, wrote the following timeless words in his poem, "The Liberty Song": "Then join hand in hand, brave Americans all! By uniting we stand, by dividing we fall!" These words are as true and pertinent today as they were when written. We must unite as "Americans all" regardless of ancestry and personal prejudices. If we are to overcome the challenges of an increasingly despotic government and a systematic and steady surrender of sovereignty, then we must set aside all methods and monikers of division. We must drop the hyphens and address ourselves as Americans: first, last, and always. If we do not heed the call of Dickinson and others who have similarly warned us, then we will fall victim to the counter-maxim of "divide and conquer." We must wisely and warily beware of and shun all those who would for whatever purpose and of whatever party seek to separate, segregate, or alienate those blessed enough to be called Americans. There is to be one nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all.

Despite the freedom of movement enjoyed by most Americans and other Westerners, there are some flags we are obliged to live under, even though we did not or would not personally choose to do so. These supranational organizations always adopt flags, which is another testament of the power and primacy given to the concept of an identifying banner. Just as the history of the design and adoption of the flag of the United States illuminates the ideals of "the republic for which it stands," the back-story of the flag of one of these multi-national groups should be similarly enlightening and revelatory. The predominant supranational institution is the United Nations.

The flag of the United Nations was designed by a committee in 1945. According to an article in the *New York Times* on the history of the UN seal, the logo consisted of a world map surrounded by two olive branches and was designed by Donal McLaughlin. The color blue was meant to represent "the opposite of red — the war color." The olive branch is the nearly universally recognized symbol for peace since the glory days of the ancient Greek and Roman republics. While the inclusion of an olive branch on the flag of the United Nations is commendable, there has been little of peace and much of war since its founding in 1945. The purported standards of this standard have been ignored routinely and ruthlessly from the first until the present day. Indeed, it is shocking to think of the hundreds of thousands of soldiers and civilians who have died as a result of the mindless meddling and mismanaged martial atrocities perpetrated under the blue (peaceful?) banner of the United Nations.

Incidentally, as for blue being the opposite of red, that is chromatologically incorrect. In most color wheels, green is the opposite of red. Not that this is very significant, but it does represent the brand of baseless misrepresentation that is typical of many of the more important decisions of the United



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Nations. Red is, it must be admitted, traditionally associated with Mars, the Roman god of war. However, as noted above with regard to the flag of the United States, the color red has other, more peaceful and admirable connotations, as well. Moreover, in the famous tricolore of France, the red color is said to symbolize the nobility, one of the three traditional estates of the Ancient Regime. And in the flag of the United Kingdom (the Union Jack), the color red represents the blood of Christ as the central element of the cross of St. George, the patron saint of England and an early Christian martyr. Even a cursory study of the history and legacy of the United Nations would reveal why such sacred connotations would never be considered.

### **The Legacy of Loyalty**

Finally, there is much to admire and to inspire in the flag of the United States. It has been the symbol of our country for over 250 years, and it is the ensign of hope and beacon of liberty for millions of immigrants past, present, and future. While many of those who live within its protective shadow are not Americans by birth, they have come here seeking the peace and well-being that are symbolized by its distinctive design. Accordingly, there are rights and responsibilities associated with living in the United States and the proper exercise and acceptance of the same will ennoble and exalt all those blessed to live and work beneath those glorious and steadfast stars and stripes. From the moment of its adoption in 1777, the red, white, and blue of the American flag stood for very particular and praiseworthy traits, and if those estimable qualities of valor, purity, and justice are to persist and hold sway from sea to shining sea, then all who dwell between those shores, if they wish to prosper, must recognize, respect, and demand adherence to, the lofty and exemplary standards of our standard.



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