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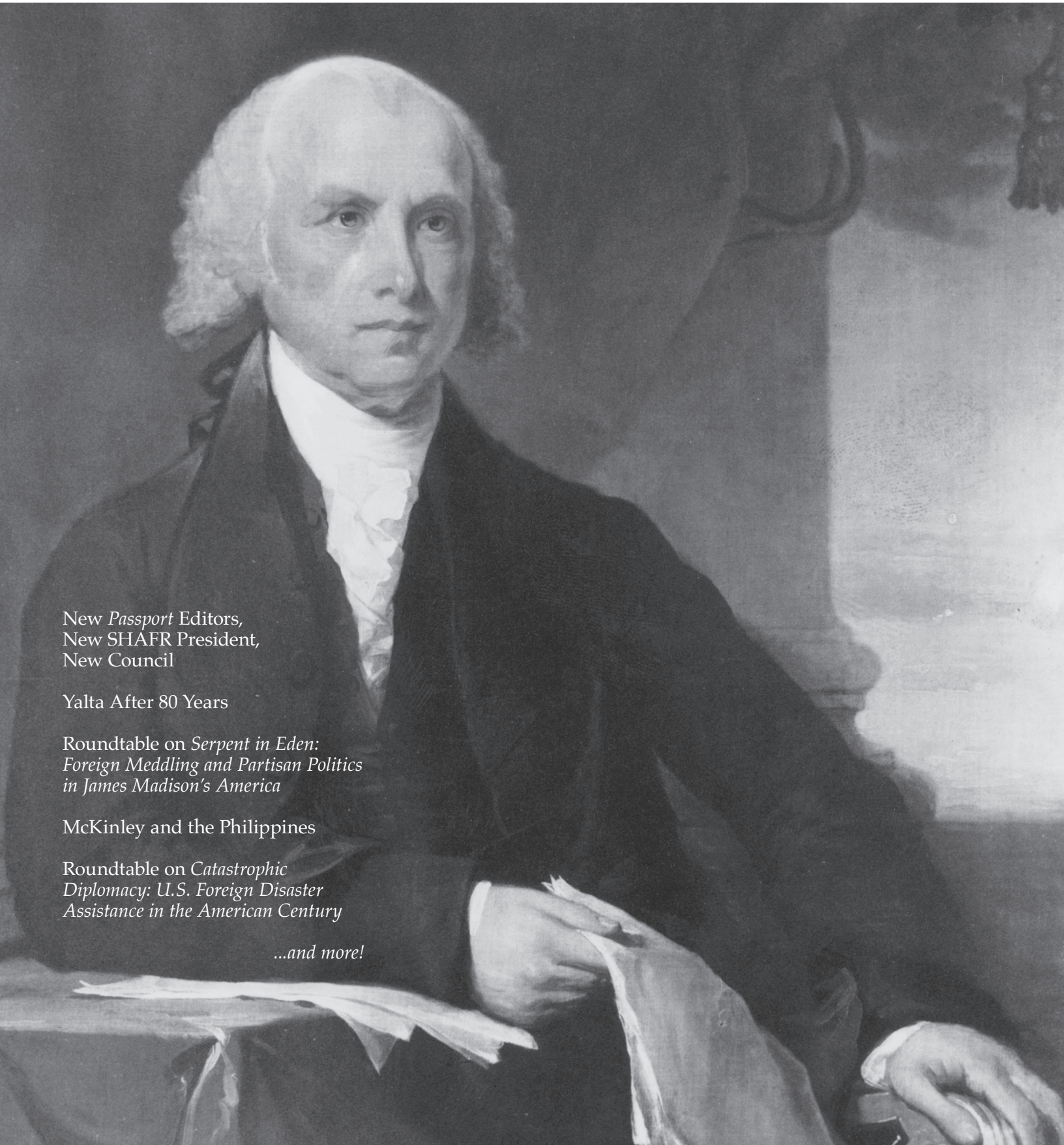

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In This Issue

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***Passport* 55/3 (January 2025)**

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From the Chancery: Meet the New Boss(es)

Brian C. Etheridge & Silke Zoller

Welcome to a new year, and with it comes a new set of *Passport* editors. Thank you to Andy Johns for his fourteen-year tenure as *Passport*'s editor! His bold leadership and careful supervision ensured that *Passport* continued to grow in its essential role as the town square for the SHAFR community. We will work hard to build upon this legacy.

We want to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves. We are both on the faculty at Kennesaw State University.

Brian Etheridge has mainly written about public diplomacy, U.S.-German relations, and teaching-related matters. He earned his Ph.D. in history from The Ohio State University and has been active in SHAFR for twenty-seven years. Brian has engaged in many areas of the organization, including roles as electronic communications co-editor, webmaster/editor of SHAFR.org, roster and research list coordinator, and assistant editor for *Diplomatic History*, as well as serving on Council (staring in 2025 as the teaching-centered member), the Nominating Committee, the Annual Meeting Program Committee, the Committee on Public Engagement, the Communications Strategy Review Committee, and the Editorial Board of *Passport*. He served for six years on SHAFR's Teaching Committee, with two as chair. Brian also has a deep well of administrative experience focused on supporting high-quality undergraduate instruction. Currently, he is Associate Dean for Academics in the Keeping Sights Upwards Journey Honors College at KSU; at previous institutions, he has been responsible for units dedicated to faculty development and academic innovation.

Silke Zoller is a specialist in the history of security and counterterrorism since the 1960s. She holds a PhD from Temple University and has been a SHAFR member since 2013. Silke was previously the graduate student representative on SHAFR's teaching committee, and she has held postdoctoral fellowships at the John Sloan Dickey Center at Dartmouth College and the Clements Center at the University of Texas at Austin. Originally from Germany, Silke has a B.A. and M.A. from Eberhard Karls University Tübingen, and deep ties to European university systems. Like most Germans, she holds strong opinions on speed limits as well as the correct way to prepare potato salad.

With this transition, we would like to spend a few lines introducing our goals for *Passport* and the values that we hope to incorporate as its editors. *Passport* has a historic and central role in connecting the members of SHAFR's community with one another and the broader world. As such, we are committed to securing *Passport's* ability to speak to all SHAFR members. We want you to see ideas and experiences relevant both to you and to SHAFR's common enterprise. We will continue features that familiarize SHAFR members with each other and that bring them together to discuss important works, concepts, and undertakings. We invite you to speak with us, especially at the annual meeting; we are eager to hear your ideas for specific contributions or ideas about how *Passport* can knit SHAFR's community closer together.

Our goal is also to support the working lives of our members. *Passport* is the ideal vehicle for discussing pedagogical and teaching-related matters relevant to the membership. We aim to offer helpful content about class design and assignments, as well as promote stimulating conversations about teaching particular subjects. We also seek to support our members employed outside the academy by providing useful professional development features. Finally, we hope to demonstrate the ongoing value of historical perspectives on American foreign relations by hosting relevant discussions that emphasize the background and context of recent events. In these ways, we aim to safeguard *Passport*'s, and SHAFR's, relevance to both its members and the outside world.

We look forward to serving you, the SHAFR community, as we advance *Passport*'s community building and impact. On to new shores!

Presidential Message

Melani McAlister

The United States is in the middle of a war. Several wars, in fact. U.S. policymakers have positioned American money and power squarely on the side of Israel in its two fronts in Gaza and in Lebanon. And they have backed Ukraine—at first fully, now with somewhat less largesse—in its fight against Russia's invasion. Both of these choices have been expensive, but only one of them, Israel's offensive in Gaza, has created a domestic battle over the right to political speech on campuses and beyond.

When I sat down to write this column—my first official act as president—I had other topics in mind. I intended to write about the importance of SHAFR's expanding commitment to the internationalization of our organization, encouraging all of us to donate to the Divine Grants for Global and Diversity Scholars, which are crucial in helping people come to SHAFR who might not otherwise be able to. (Donating is still a great idea; you can do that at SHAFR.org/donate.) I wanted to write, too, about the pressing need to bring histories of the environment and environmental activism (global, local, state, and non-state) into the center of our work. Nothing will be more central to the role of the United States in the world in the coming years than the ongoing reckoning with climate change. Its impact on humans and non-humans alike will require intensive mobilization of our resources as historians, citizens (of whatever country), donors, and activists.

But it so happened that I sat down to write this message on October 7, 2024: the one-year anniversary of the horrific Hamas attack on southern Israel. The anniversary stories were all over my newsfeeds, as people from around the world and across the political spectrum tried to grapple with the terrible transformations of the last year. A photo essay in *Inside Higher Ed* showed a number of iconic images: Israelis mourning the victims of the Hamas attack; images from Gaza of bombed buildings and dead children; of some of the nearly 2 million people who have been displaced and traumatized, many injured and now starving; pictures of hostages held by Hamas; and, of course, the protests around the world—keyfiyyahs and "defend Gaza" signs; and then university presidents who were called to Congress, and in several cases, lost their jobs. These events sparked a new round of specifically campus-based protests last spring. I won't try to grapple with all that has happened in this brief essay. I have written about the United States' and global responses to the Gaza war elsewhere, and I know that there are a range of opinions on the Israel-Palestine conflict within SHAFR.[1]

The crackdown on student activism this past spring, however, should be of deepest concern to all of us, no matter our views on the conflict itself. In the spring of 2024, students at hundreds of universities protested, often setting up tent encampments reminiscent of the anti-apartheid activities of the 1990s. But, unlike the earlier demonstrations, these protests led to mass arrests. Between April and June, more than 3000 students were arrested at 70 schools around the country. Since then, many of the charges against the students have been dropped, but punishment of students is still a reality: some students remain suspended; others are allowed to attend class but not use other university facilities; others have had their diplomas withheld.[2]

Then, in the summer of 2024, more than 50 universities changed their protest policies to make student activism more difficult. Columbia University, an epicenter of protests last year, decided to close its campus gates to all but ID holders and registered guests, transforming a university that once interfaced with the city into a cordoned space.[3] In addition, Columbia now requires that groups notify the Public Safety and University Life offices before *any* protest or demonstration. Risa Lieberwitz, who serves as the General Counsel for the American Association of University Professors, described "the chilling effect that comes from that, which comes from knowing that this is a mechanism that allows for surveillance."[4] Student leaders who have to submit their names as protest organizers might well be deterred, knowing how students in the spring were arrested and suspended.

Columbia is not alone. At Harvard, even silent, non-disruptive protests have been subject to punitive measures. In early October, a group of students gathered at the undergraduate library wearing keyfiyyahs; they quietly worked on their computers, which had taped signs that said "Imagine if it happened here." These students were banned from the library for two weeks.[5] (A short time later, a group of professors went to the library in silent protest; they read books and essays on dissent and freedom of speech beside a small sign that said "Embrace Diverse Perspectives," a quote from the Harvard Library Statement of Values. Campus police took their names and ID numbers but they have not faced further action.[6]) At Stony Brook University, students returning this fall found that they were required to get permission even for posters, while chalk messages on sidewalks are totally banned.[7]

For many people, these kinds of measures are justified by what they see as the antisemitism of the protests. Obviously, antisemitism is never acceptable on a campus, just as any other form of racism or hatred should be called out by both campus administrators and student leaders. (What is legal to say is another question, and one I won't address here, but universities can set a tone without sanctioning speech.[8]) There indeed have been incidents since the start of the war involving Jewish students who were threatened or harassed. Their experience needs to be taken with utmost seriousness, and those who threaten or intimidate students should be sanctioned.[9]

In the vast majority of cases, however, the issue is not antisemitism, but rather a strong, intense, sometimes furious criticism of Israel and its policies. For some people in the United States, including many members of the U.S. House of Representatives, such fundamental critique is tantamount to antisemitism.[10] But, as a scholar of international affairs, I am committed to the belief that states—even the state system itself—can and should be subject to even the most searching scrutiny. Not just criticism of specific policies, but fundamental questions about international order: the "imagined community" of the nation, the limits of the nation-state, and the problems of minoritization and marginalization.[11] These types of questions are crucial to our field. I think, too, of the things I say in my classroom about the United States: that it is a settler-colonial state; that its economy was built on slavery; that before 1952, U.S. law prevented the naturalization of any "non-white" persons; that the United States overthrew governments and assassinated leaders with impunity across Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East over the

course of decades. Many people do not agree with this characterization of U.S. history, but I do not risk my job in making these statements. (Of course, public school teachers face a very different situation, and the crackdown on what can be said by elementary and high school teachers who take on "divisive concepts," is its own crisis.[12]) Fundamentally, I could walk out to the street and burn an American flag without breaking the law—or maybe even making the news. That is as it should be in a free republic.

In the same way, criticism of Israel, even of Zionism itself, should not be off the table. A cohort of Israeli scholars, in fact, have been asking fundamental questions about Zionism for decades.[13] It is crucial to insist on this right of inquiry and to challenge definitions of antisemitism that in any way equate criticism of Israel with hatred of Jews. (The broadly circulated definition put forward by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) makes exactly this equation, albeit in subtle ways, and so has been disputed by a broad range of experts.[14])

We need to recognize that students who protested for a "free Palestine" were responding to the reality of what they saw in the months of Israel's war in Gaza. They were not watching Fox or CNN, but social media feeds that offered live images from the war zone, with the voices of Palestinians speaking about their own reality, their own suffering. I don't need to describe the horrors that those showed: you know, we all know, what this war has looked like for its victims. I would worry if young people remained inured to such destruction and pain. It's true that if I were the one organizing protests against the devastation of Gaza, I personally would also make sure to remember those killed by Hamas in Israel and the call for freeing the hostages.

But it's not my demonstration. My point is *not* that we need to agree with every (or any) protest or its methods. Our task as scholars and mentors, rather, is to be very clear about the right of students and faculty to protest, to make radical demands, to be noisy, to get it wrong sometimes—and to do so in ways that make some of us (perhaps many of us) uncomfortable.

It is clear that, in the vast majority of cases, U.S. universities' responses to various campus protests have not been "content neutral." Administrators may claim that they are only sanctioning students because of the "time, place, and manner" of their demonstrations, but those of us who have worked on campuses for many years have seen too many noisy protests to believe that. Clearly, the sanctions the students have faced were not (just) because they camped overnight, or made noise during exams, or occupied buildings. In reality, the reaction was specific to the topic: the fierce demand for Palestinian rights and a refusal to countenance Israel's astounding destruction of the very capacity to sustain life in Gaza. What we are seeing is the systematic attempt to silence and punish this political position.

We need to stand up for our colleagues as well: those who have been dismissed for their social media activity, or suspended for unspecified charges of "unprofessional" behavior, or who have had their syllabi screened (in Florida and at the University of Pennsylvania).[15] We need to be aware of the esteemed scholar of Holocaust and genocide studies who had his job offer revoked after he described what was happening in Gaza as a "genocide."[16] And, of course, there is Professor Steve Tamari of Washington University of St. Louis, who was attacked by police at a peaceful demonstration, resulting in six broken ribs and a broken hand. Six other professors were suspended.[17]

This is a moment of reckoning for the kind of university that so many of us cherish: places of debate, of discomfort, the chance to hear things you might not hear otherwise. A place for students to have Marxist professors and Trumpian ones, to have classes in which students from very different backgrounds and with a range of opinions can speak to each other. Where faculty can teach things that seem outlandish to many people, and students are free to challenge and critique what they read and learn. Right now, we are living in a moment of profound silencing of speech, and we cannot sit by while the university itself, as an institution for free and controversial ideas, is at risk of destruction.

I am an optimist by nature, and I believe that faculty, students, and administrators can and will rally to protect the university, to preserve the kind of intellectual and political freedom it makes possible—where people can argue and imagine bravely. To do that, we will need all of our courage, as well as a commitment to unflinchingly support free speech in a moment of danger. Because the dismantlement of the spaces where we have learned and taught is not around the corner; it has already begun.

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8. Mary Anne Franks, *Fearless Speech: Breaking Free from the First Amendment* (Bold Type Books, 2024).
9. Rebecca Massel, "'I Am a Target': Dozens of Jewish Students Report Feeling Unsafe on Campus," *Columbia Daily Spectator*, November 2, 2023, https://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2023/11/02/i-am-a-target-dozens-of-jewish-students-report-feeling-unsafe-on-campus/. For a more nuanced discussion, see also Peter Beinart, "Opinion | The Great Rupture in American Jewish Life," *New York Times*, March 22, 2024, sec. Opinion, https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/22/opinion/israel-american-jews-zionism.html.
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2006). See also Brad Simpson, "The Many Meanings of National Self-Determination," *Current History* 113, no. 766 (November 1, 2014): 312–17, https://doi.org/10.1525/curh.2014.113.766.312; Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism: Introduction by Samantha Power, 2004 ed. (Schocken, 1951).
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2024 SHAFR Election Results

President	**Melani McAlister,** George Washington University
Vice President	**Jay Sexton,** Institute on Constitutional Democracy, University of Missouri
Council *(at-large)*	**Elisabeth Leake,** The Fletcher School, Tufts University
Council *(at-large)*	**Kaeten Mistry,** University of East Anglia
Council *(teaching-centered)*	**Brian C. Etheridge**, Kennesaw State University
Council *(graduate student)*	**Alex Southgate,** Temple University
Nominating Committee	**Karine Walther,** Georgetown University–Qatar

In addition, both amendments to the SHAFR By-Laws passed.

Thank you to the 32% of SHAFR members who voted in the election this year.

A Roundtable on Julia F. Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy: U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance in the American Century*

Kenneth Osgood, Jana K. Lipman, Jacob Darwin Hamblin, Margot Tudor, Fabian Klose, Brian Dorhan and Julia F. Irwin

Roundtable Introduction: Julia Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy: U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance in the American Century*

Kenneth Osgood

I saw no cause for alarm when the bullet train I was riding to Tokyo's Narita airport slowed to a stop unexpectedly in March 2011. It swayed rhythmically from side to side as it decelerated, but I thought nothing of it since the Japanese passengers remained calm. I also was excited. The train deposited us beside a postcard-perfect view of Mt. Fuji, so I leapt up to snap photos of the famed snow-capped volcano. Smiling widely and clicking away, I was wholly unaware that I had just experienced the most powerful earthquake in Japan's history – and the world's fourth most powerful ever recorded. Strangely, and perhaps due to the movement of the train, I didn't perceive the tremor. But people as far away as Beijing did, some 1,300 miles away.

The 9.0 magnitude quake hit just off the coast of Japan, unleashing a tsunami that pounded forward at speeds of up to 435 miles per hour, with waves reaching as high as 133 feet. The tsunami pummeled the Tōhoku region of Japan's east coast, sucking whole communities out to sea, instantly drowning more than 10,000 people, and rendering several hundred thousand more homeless. It also flooded three reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, triggering a nuclear meltdown that discharged radioactive water and particles into the air, land, and sea. While I was stranded on the train, my parents, who were caring for my kids back home, spent hours trying desperately to reach me through jammed phone lines. When we finally connected, my dad calmly told me about Fukushima, reporting that Fox News had just announced the release of a "tiny bit" of radiation from the plant. Just that morning, I had visited Hiroshima. Over my career, I had spent years researching how governments lie and misrepresent nuclear dangers. In the PR-speak of all things nuclear, a "tiny bit" translates to "an awful lot." My adrenaline spiked. For the next 24 hours, I would be seriously, deeply, and uncontrollably afraid.

Eventually my train restarted and moved slowly to Tokyo. It was dark when it rolled into the station, but the streets were crowded. Millions of people were stranded like me, wandering about searching for loved ones or a safe place to hunker down. I ended up in a hotel lounge where I struggled to sleep as dozens of serious aftershocks rocked the city. Major earthquakes in their own right, they made buildings sway and people stumble. My heart raced as I tormented myself with a single dreadful thought: my son and daughter, ages five and two, might grow up without parents. That terrifying possibility consumed me. Even more so, it affected their mother, who shivered with fear all night in that lounge, internalizing the trauma so deeply that to this day she suffers from PTSD.

Memories of this experience kept resurfacing as I read Julia Irwin's *Catastrophic Diplomacy*. It's an ambitious history of American foreign disaster relief efforts, tracing the U.S. response to other destructive earthquakes, as well as floods, fires, and tsunamis across time and space. Well-conceived and rightly praised by all the reviewers in this roundtable, *Catastrophic Diplomacy* is a solid monograph. Readers of this roundtable will learn of its many strengths in the universally positive reviews that follow. "Timely and important," notes Fabian Klose. Irwin's book is "illuminating" to Jacob Darwin Hamblin, "magnificent" to Brian Drohan, and "invaluable" to Margot Tudor. According to Jana Lipman, *Catastrophic Diplomacy* will become "the go-to text in the field." These are fine judgments by esteemed experts from across subdisciplines, so I won't devote this introduction to echoing them further. I also won't summarize the book, which Jana Lipman and Fabian Klose do exceptionally well. Instead, I'd like to offer some critical reflections in the spirit of provoking a more spirited discussion -- which is, after all, the point of putting books up for review in a roundtable format.

I wonder if I read the book differently for having experienced the confusion, anxiety, and helplessness of a major natural disaster. As I made my way through Irwin's accounts of other earthquakes and floods, my mind conjured not just my experience but those of the numerous victims of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake: the families of some 20,000 people dead, the other thousands who suffered injuries, the uncountable ones who await the onset of radiation-induced illness to come, the farmers who lost land and livelihoods, the technicians who bravely returned to the Fukushima Daiichi site to contain its damage, the nurses who cleaned the wounds, the workers who retrieved mangled corpses from beneath rubble, the officials who tried to account for the missing, the 174,000 people who continued to be displaced five years after the earthquake, and the 30,000 who remain so today.[1] The financial costs of this disaster have been tallied, but the human suffering cannot be quantified. Even today, it endures in the mothers and fathers who still cry for children lost, and in the lives of children who grew into adulthood without parents at all.

I share all this because, while there's much to admire in Irwin's history, it conveys little of these human costs. It's almost a story without victims. Readers experience natural disasters of biblical proportions primarily through the eyes of Americans who appeared in the aftermath. Irwin categorizes them into three pillars of U.S. aid: members of the armed services, the diplomatic corps, and non-governmental organizations, especially the American Red Cross (ARC). Focusing on assessing their worldview, she

catalogs in vivid detail the racism, neocolonialism, and paternalism that characterized the American approach to disaster relief. It's an understandable choice on the surface, but it yields an account that disregards the most important humans in the story: the victims and survivors. Each of Irwin's well-chosen case studies begins with a sentence or two summarizing the disaster and quantifying the death toll. Then it moves on. It's a history of natural disasters that doesn't seem to take the disasters themselves all that seriously.

Some might respond that I'm chiding Irwin for not producing the book I would have written -- the kind of lazy critique one often finds in book reviews. My concern, though, is that by not engaging with the lives of the victims and the on-the-ground impact of the calamities, Irwin distorts the human experience of these events.

Consider one representative example from the book's midpoint. In 1917, the Hai River flooded catastrophically, instantly rendering 500,000 people homeless in the area surrounding Tianjin, China's second-largest port city. As with the Tōhoku disaster, homes were washed away, parents and children killed. Survivors lacked food, shelter, and basic services in health, education, sanitation, and security. American relief organizations and service personnel constructed camps to house some of the displaced, launched a highway construction program to create work for the men, sent children to school and required them to exercise, deployed a force to police the camps, and enforced strict medical and hygienic practices. Irwin describes all this, but her analysis stresses the racism, coercion, and chauvinism that suffused these efforts, casting them as a neocolonial attempt to remake China in America's image. Margot Tudor is especially praiseworthy of this argument, underscoring "the colonial stereotypes, imaginaries, and anxieties that occur (and reoccur) to destabilize relief efforts." American efforts amounted to "authoritarianism-through-humanitarianism," she writes, "underpinned by supremacist logic." How malevolent all of this sounds!

The picture that emerges is of a selfish, neocolonial, racist country pretending to do good while deploying its power to coerce and dominate. It's a perspective that diminishes the human impact of U.S. relief efforts, as if the provision of food, shelter, medical care, and clean water under harrowing conditions were inherently less important than the cultural prejudices of the Americans who provided them.

It's a perspective that seems disconnected from the reality on the ground. It bears repeating that half a million people were displaced by the floods. That was about the population of Los Angeles at the time, then the tenth largest city in the United States. Moreover, Irwin tells us, twice that many were adversely affected by the floods. That's one million people. Feeding, sheltering, protecting, educating, and employing so many was an enormous logistical accomplishment, achieved by Chinese, American, and other international governments cooperating under disastrous (literally) conditions. It must have been daunting to address just the health and sanitation dangers posed by throngs of traumatized and homeless people vacating their bowels in crowded camps and makeshift shelters. Disease and starvation were not just abstract risks; they were enormous threats that claimed many lives.

Yet Irwin and Tudor neither acknowledge nor explore this discomfiting reality, choosing instead to implicitly criticize Americans for compelling survivors to work, exercise, and follow hygiene protocols. They frame such actions as coercion, pure and simple. Irwin describes the soldiers of the Fifteenth Infantry, who administered American camps and maintained order, as "keeping tabs on … activities, behaviors, and bodies." U.S. troops, she repeats, "surveilled and tightly regulated the bodies and behaviors of thousands of Chinese flood survivors" (95). This language dehumanizes soldiers and survivors alike. Real people amid extraordinary suffering are reduced to regulated "bodies." Yet what would those crowded camps of thousands of traumatized, desperate people look like without such systems in place, or with hundreds of unemployed, unoccupied men wandering about? Without strict hygiene protocols, what scourge would sweep through the overcrowded, primitive shelters? To be sure, as Irwin thoroughly documents, class and race prejudice shaped how Americans responded to these challenges, but reflecting seriously on the magnitude of the crisis might yield a more nuanced and grounded perspective.

In *Catastrophic Diplomacy* two narrative threads stand out. One is the author's central argument that U.S. humanitarian relief projects were always pursued with self-interested motives of advancing American power and influence. The other is that in carrying out disaster relief, American activities reflected racist, colonial, patriarchal, and paternalistic prejudices. There's no disputing either argument, neither of which is particularly surprising. It would be more remarkable to find a great power expending great resources without regard for politics than the other way around. Likewise, since American relief workers came from a country steeped in the history of Jim Crow, Chinese exclusion, and Japanese internment, it would be notable to discover that they did not carry racial prejudices abroad. Irwin's contribution is not so much to unearth these findings, but to document in vivid and extensive detail how perceived interests and prejudices impacted relief efforts across the globe over more than a century. Her research establishes these throughlines convincingly.

My concern, then, is not that these arguments are wrong; it's that their emphasis to the exclusion of other factors distorts lived experience. To oversimplify slightly, Irwin's treatment of each disaster follows a consistent pattern. She notes in half a sentence that Americans may have expressed sympathy and compassion, or that they might have done some good, but then devotes pages to demonstrating the opposite. The picture that emerges is of a selfish, neocolonial, racist country pretending to do good while deploying its power to coerce and dominate. It's a perspective that diminishes the human impact of U.S. relief efforts, as if the provision of food, shelter, medical care, and clean water under harrowing conditions were inherently less important than the cultural prejudices of the Americans who provided them. It also self-consciously downplays the altruism, empathy, and care that existed beside all those ugly prejudices and self-centered motivations. For example, following the Great Kanto earthquake and subsequent fires that ravaged Japan in 1923 (a disaster far deadlier than the one in 2011), American donors sent the American Red Cross a record-setting $11 million (roughly equivalent to $200 million in 2024). In other cases, we likewise encounter Americans pouring money to the ARC, lobbying Congress to provide assistance, and donating foodstuffs and supplies. What were these if not manifestations of genuine empathy and compassion? Surely Americans did not open their wallets out of racism or a desire to advance foreign policy goals far, far away.

I belabor and exaggerate the point to make another commentary. The field of diplomatic history has its own ingrained prejudices that drives us (I'm as guilty as any) to decide that malevolence and hypocrisy are always the most important things to dissect and document. This disposition makes sense in, say, an account of the Philippine War or the CIA's intervention in Guatemala, but it seems a bit

out of place and overwrought in a study of humanitarian relief that contains instances of optimism, generosity, and kindness. There are accomplishments to be proud of: the United States rebuilt schools, inoculated against disease, constructed hospitals and clinics, delivered thousands of tons of food and medical supplies under impossible conditions, provided clean water and, in most cases, kept people safe from violence and looting. In doing so, American soldiers and aid administrators saved or extended the lives of thousands. Without exploring the interplay between conflicting impulses – the selfish and the altruistic, the prejudiced and the humanitarian – we are denied a complete picture of what the experience meant to Americans or to the recipients of U.S. aid.

Reading Irwin's study against the background of my own lived experience provoked a larger question. I wonder if diplomatic historians, more so than others in our profession, devote insufficient attention to empathizing with the people we study. Possibly this is more challenging in our field because many actions of top policymakers clash so starkly and obviously with basic human values. Even so, empathy is one of the most valuable skills of historical thinking. It helps us understand and make sense of cultural spaces and moments that differ from our own. Irwin's study, which is emblematic of trends within our field generally, might have looked very different if she had intentionally empathized with the day-to-day experiences of all the different people affected by these disasters. How might our subfield evolve if we more explicitly recognized the value of empathetic thinking?

It is worth pondering these issues because, as the reviewers in this roundtable suggest, *Catastrophic Diplomacy* is an important book that will undoubtedly inspire further investigation into America's disaster diplomacy. In that spirit, the reviewers here suggest other fruitful lines of inquiry. Brian Drohan suggests deeper analysis of the military's crucial role as the main provider of emergency disaster relief. "The military's centrality to a task that is so peripheral to its identity is a paradox in need of further study," he concludes. Hamblin encourages a more critical assessment of the "self-serving dimensions of doing good" as well as why Americans prioritized "emergency response over prevention." He also recommends exploring how disaster diplomacy contributed to national security, such as by easing access to strategic commodities. Tudor points to comparisons between disaster relief and reconstruction and other forms of colonial governance, and Lipman calls attention to additional labor and gender implications of the study. The opportunities for building on Irwin's research are many.

With climate change magnifying weather events across the globe, humanity will endure more extreme natural disasters, some of which will dwarf the one that upended my life in 2011. Historians like Julia Irwin can help people make sense of this reality. Inspired by her work and troubled by their future, other scholars will surely look to the past and uncover more ways to take up where she left off, ideally remaining mindful of the diversity and full spectrum of human experiences. That, as much as anything, will be a fitting testament to the dialogue she sparked with *Catastrophic Diplomacy*.

Note:
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A Review of Julia Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy: U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance in the American Century*

Jana K. Lipman

In 2005, in response to Hurricane Katrina, Fidel Castro proposed sending a medical brigade of close to 1600 doctors and medical supplies to the United States.[1] Cuba's offer highlighted its own expertise and commitment to international emergency relief. As one doctor said, "We're ready. There's a disaster in the United States, medical coverage is not sufficient, but ideology stands in the way… We lament that politics takes precedence while lives are being lost."[2] Not surprisingly, the U.S. government did not respond, or even acknowledge, Cuba's offer.[3] In this high-profile exchange, the symbolic "catastrophic diplomacy" was easy enough to read. Cuba saw an opportunity to showcase its internationalist medical vision and arguably shame the U.S. government's dismal response to Hurricane Katrina. And despite the platitudes of the offer being apolitical, Cuba and the United States both knew politics were at play. In 2004, Cuba had rejected U.S. hurricane relief aid, and it would do so again in 2008, after Hurricane Gustav.[4] "Catastrophic diplomacy" could cut both ways.

Julia Irwin's new book, *Catastrophic Diplomacy: US Foreign Disaster Assistance in the American Century*, provides the history we need to understand how disaster relief became a powerful political tool in the twentieth century. She recounts a long history of how and why the United States provided foreign assistance in response to floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, and "meteorological phenomena" from the late 19th century through the late 20th century. She argues that U.S.-directed disaster relief increased the scope of the U.S. state, and despite protestations to the contrary, was always political. Its argument is clear: U.S. disaster relief became a central feature of U.S. foreign policy, and increasingly it became intertwined with the ideology and implementation of long-term development projects. Her book deftly moves through more than a century of overseas disaster relief initiatives in almost every continent, illustrated through evocative and well-placed maps. To that end, this book successfully engages with scholars in U.S. foreign relations and the emerging field of disaster studies, and it provides renewed attention on the growth of the state.

Irwin's treatment of "catastrophic diplomacy" relies on a three-legged stool: the U.S. military, the State Department and its consular branches, and what we would today call non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or voluntary agencies. She explains how these various entities complemented each other and collectively created an infrastructure that could set off across multiple regions and respond to floods and earthquakes from Italy to Chile to Pakistan. Irwin was faced with seemingly endless decisions regarding the definitions, scope, and geography of this project. Yet at its core, this is the history of the growth of the U.S. state. Irwin weighs the role of consuls, often lower-level State Department officials, and analyzes their ability to muster resources, call on the U.S. military when needed, and leverage the support of non-government entities, most notably the Red Cross. Irwin's analysis harks back to the foundational scholarship of Emily Rosenberg and the associational state, and she deftly shows how the "state" worked on the ground.[5]

Irwin argues that there was no such thing as apolitical humanitarianism, for all the positive benefits some of these aid programs might have had. This was true in the early twentieth century where she adds "catastrophic diplomacy" to "dollar diplomacy" and "gunboat diplomacy" operating in the Caribbean and Central America, and it was true when

the United States refused aid to China after the Communist revolution. In another compelling example, she highlights how the United States provided aid to flood victims in Cold War Central Europe, but prominently branded the food aid as American. As she writes, "policy makers may have insisted on the apolitical character of their aid…but they wanted aid recipients to know who buttered their bread" (205).

Irwin is able to build this argument because of the book's capacious and ambitious scope. Irwin embraces a long chronology, stretching back into the early 19th century and the U.S. decision to assist Venezuela, and moves all the way into the 1970s and the institutionalization of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. This is a tall order, and Irwin analyzes the U.S. diplomatic and disaster infrastructure from the early 20th century through World War I, the interwar years, World War II, and the Cold War.

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Irwin's book also traverses a global geography. This must have been a challenge that kept her up at night – how to write a story of disaster relief, and multiple disasters, without losing the reader and her larger analytical argument? Irwin threads this needle skillfully. She examines numerous events, most memorably the U.S. involvement in China during the 1917 Tientsin floods, its significant investment in Chile after the Concepción and Valdivia earthquakes, its responses to earthquakes in Japan and Yugoslavia, and its overtures to Cuba and Haiti after Hurricane Flora. Multiple chapters pair two or three case studies, allowing her to flesh out her arguments about U.S. disaster relief, while staying focused on her broader arguments about the growth of U.S. foreign policy infrastructure and its increasing emphasis on more intensive development initiatives and goals.

Throughout *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, Irwin engages with the growing subfields in development and disaster studies and the Venn diagram that brings the two together. For example, in Chapter Five, "Floods, Earthquakes, and the Great War," Irwin homes in on U.S. flood relief in Tientsin, China, and how what began as a "relief" effort quickly morphed into a longer-term early development project. The United States turned to labor initiatives, and compelled (or coerced) local residents to participate in rebuilding efforts, a step beyond simple "relief." She writes, "With their oversight, U.S. officials hoped to shape Chinese behaviors in the longer term, leaving a lasting appreciation for hygiene, discipline, and hard work. They sought, in effect, to rebuild the people of Teintsin along with their city" (96). This relatively early World War I-era example would set in motion a more long-term pattern of U.S. disaster efforts in the post-war era, and long-term expectations about U.S. norms, expectations for work, compensation, and gratitude.

Irwin also builds her case that the United States increasingly paired development work with disaster aid. For example, she documents the "extraordinary" sums invested in Chile after major earthquakes in 1960 (231). The United States hoped its approximately $100 million efforts would reflect well on the United States and U.S. capitalism. The timing is to be noted too, as this would be the first U.S. disaster effort in Latin America in the years following the Cuban revolution. Irwin also emphasizes the professionalization of development aid under John F. Kennedy's presidency and the origins of USAID. During these years, the Red Cross declined in importance and development professionals rose in prominence. While Irwin's overall argument that the U.S. state grew and became more bureaucratic and more ambitious over time may not be unique to "catastrophic diplomacy," it is a compelling and well-documented arc.

Irwin's book is broad in scope and chronology, so unsurprisingly, there are a few places I wish it had "pushed" more and gone deeper. One of these areas is her analysis of the U.S. military. Irwin convincingly argues that the U.S. military played a key role in disaster relief and later development-like programs. She writes in the introduction that these events "compel us to think more critically about both the militarization of humanitarian aid and the entangled relationship between humanitarian and human rights" (12). I wish she had taken up this charge more fully. The military plays a more prominent role in the first part of her book, particularly in her examples in Chile, the Dominican Republic, and Japan; however, as the book moves forward in time, the State Department and the voluntary agencies take up more "air" than the military. Does the U.S. military become more or less involved in disaster responses in the post-war years and Cold War? Does the United States want to minimize or showcase the U.S. military's logistical prowess during these years? Does USAID want to supersede the U.S. military or work with it? In other words, can Irwin do more to engage with the idea that humanitarian aid was militarized, and interrogate the consequences of the military being one of the go-to tools for disaster relief. In the conclusion, Irwin notes that U.S. military bases were key staging grounds and that "militarized character of that assistance sometimes breeds animosity and resentment" (274). Irwin's assessment here seems worthy of more attention and investigation.

I was particularly intrigued by Irwin's analysis of labor. She notes multiple times when the United States provided aid, but only if the recipients agreed to work. For example, in its response to the 1909 Italian earthquake, the U.S. government wanted to "set the refugees to work" (58). The United States feared that the Italians would become accustomed to U.S. charity. This pattern would continue in the aftermath of the Chinese floods in 1917, as the United States funneled its relief dollars into paying Chinese workers for roadbuilding projects. However, these programs came with considerable strings; the U.S. government subtracted their food and energy costs and paid the workers' wives, not the workers themselves (97). Irwin explains that U.S. officials feared "Chinese men would otherwise fritter their earnings away on alcohol, prostitution, and other vices," and they, therefore, used U.S. dollars to keep control over Chinese workers, whose communities had been displaced by the floods (97). I wanted to know even more. Under what conditions did people take these jobs? To what extent was "work" the obvious complement to aid? Irwin explains U.S. resistance to creating a cycle of "relief," and this seems telling in the Progressive era. I was interested in how Irwin might connect Progressive era and missionary urban social welfare programs to these disaster relief efforts abroad. And would the U.S. insistence on work, as a hedge against "relief," stymie their goal to garner gratitude and international prestige?

Finally, I believe this book would have benefited from an even closer gender analysis. Irwin notes that catastrophic diplomacy and disaster relief could also be categorized as "care work" (13). Most of Irwin's main actors, in the State Department, in the military, and the high-level Red Cross officials, were all men; however, they were engaging in food relief and care activities, work that is generally

feminized. This was an opportunity for Irwin to explore how international disaster assistance arguably blurred gender lines, forcing men to take on 'caretaker' roles and allowing women to be international actors.

Going back to Cuba's overtures to the United States, and New Orleans, in particular, we can see the long arm of "catastrophic diplomacy." Offering aid allowed states to demonstrate their benevolence and their power. For the United States, "catastrophic diplomacy" served both ends and allowed the U.S. to project its power throughout the globe and increasingly with long-term consequences for development and U.S. Cold War objectives. Her book opens the door for even more studies on "catastrophic diplomacy," and I imagine it will become the go-to text in the field. And surely the story is not over – as she states somewhat ominously in the introduction, as the "American Century" ends, the "Climate Century" seems to only be beginning.

Notes:

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2. "Venezuela and Cuba Offer Aid," Al Jazeera.com, September 5, 2005, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2005/9/5/venezuela-and-cuba-offer-us-aid (accessed April 25, 2024).
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5. Emily Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982).

A Review of Julia Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy: U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance in the American Century*

Jacob Darwin Hamblin

Did you hear my covert narcissism/
I disguise as altruism/
like some kind of congressman?/
(Tale as old as time)[1]

Music superstar Taylor Swift sent many fans scrambling for their dictionaries to decipher these lines in her 2022 hit song "Anti-Hero," and sparked debates about whether the larger-than-life personality, known for her generous charitable donations, was doing it to make herself look like a hero. The lively conversation ensured that a new generation of young people are primed to think about the self-serving dimensions of doing good. What better way to explore how the United States operates in times of disaster—floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, and other "acts of God"—intervening with programs of humanitarian aid? The U.S. government is in a unique position to provide relief, leveraging the logistical capabilities of the military, with its existing supply networks, widely scattered overseas bases, and extraordinary numbers of ships, planes, and personnel. For U.S. presidents and diplomats, the act of giving is a tool of improving relations, enhancing prestige, and even shaping other societies in the U.S.'s image. Is that altruism or narcissism—or perhaps something else altogether?

In *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, historian Julia F. Irwin provides an illuminating tour of twentieth century disasters, showing us how genuine humanitarian motivations were matched by calculations of national interest—typically to boost the image of the United States as a great power. The normalization of foreign disaster assistance coincided with the expanding role of the United States in the Western hemisphere and in Asia, on the heels of a war with Spain that left the United States with influence or control in Cuba, the Philippines, and more. President Theodore Roosevelt is famously linked to his eponymous corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, asserting the right and responsibility of the United States to interfere in its neighbors' affairs. Foreign aid allowed the United States to play the game of empire, wielding its paternal influence in selective ways that enhanced its prestige and influence. Irwin notes that U.S. decisions to participate in humanitarian affairs was a logical outgrowth of interventionist political culture, and that the United States claimed foreign aid as one of its international duties. Its imperial moves—acquiring territories, negotiating bases, and creating the country of Panama—extended its reach and made timely disaster assistance possible in even more parts of the world.

In subsequent decades, disaster relief became a standard device for improving the U.S.'s standing. During the Great Depression, faced with enormous grain surpluses purchased from American farmers, the Hoover administration experimented with selling some of its wheat to China to relieve widespread hunger there. Dumping such a large amount of surplus wheat proved no less complicated for China's economy than it had in the United States. Still, the practice continued in aid programs in the 1930s in the service of Franklin Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy, and only increased after the Second World War. Public Law 480, passed in 1954, explicitly gave President Dwight Eisenhower the ability to dispose of large amounts of agricultural surplus without having to ask Congress each time. Officially, this made the United States nimble in response to disaster, but unofficially it gave a powerful piece of diplomatic leverage to the president, to deploy virtually at will. Subsequent presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson capitalized on such power, making foreign aid an explicit component of U.S. foreign policy. Mirroring Eisenhower's famous "Atoms for Peace" program, Kennedy adopted the phrase "Food for Peace," and counted on the power to dole out food at will under PL-480. The United States embraced aid in the 1960s as crucial to its global standing, founding new government instruments such as the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Irwin's insightful book reveals the evolving uses of disaster aid as soft power—with prestige and influence as major goals—through two world wars and beyond. One key instrument was the humanitarian relief organization, American Red Cross (ARC). Its governing board was partly populated by U.S. government appointees, and it had a cozy relationship with the political establishment in Washington, D.C. Before Herbert Hoover became president in 1929, he led several foreign relief programs and had served on the ARC's board. Irwin describes such voluntary organizations as one of three "pillars" of the U.S.'s catastrophic diplomacy. Another pillar consisted of formal diplomats and officials in consulates, embassies, and the State Department, all of whom had their own priorities. The third of Irwin's pillars were the armed services, with boots on the ground providing material and logistical support for clearing away the remnants of disaster, feeding people, and rebuilding infrastructure. These three pillars are Irwin's means of tracking the logic and structure of humanitarian efforts across numerous changes in more than a century of aid.

One of the leading themes in *Catastrophic Diplomacy* is the frequent appearance of an "ugly specter of racial, class, and cultural prejudices," as revealed in the condescending

attitudes of Americans implementing foreign aid (36). The United States often managed the relief efforts, bringing in military personnel to do so. Irwin deftly takes the reader on a tour of cultural clashes marked by intensely chauvinist attitudes. U.S. officials expressed disdain for locals that they viewed as inefficient, lazy, and opportunistic. Theodore Roosevelt's ambassador to Italy, Lloyd Griscom, who managed a post-earthquake relief effort, was one example. Despite his compassion for the Italians, he and his colleagues noted how idle and corrupt they seemed to be, and they tried to separate the deserving, industrious citizens from those who seemed to resemble undesirable immigrants to the United States. They built a camp for refugees and put them to work on construction projects, attempting to instill values of cleanliness and order. Irwin observes that such camps, which were not limited to Italy, became a means of putting American benevolence on display while also ensuring the work was done according to U.S. standards.

The Americans typically tried to control their relief projects, to the point of micro-managing the lives of disaster victims. Irwin notes that during the First World War, aid projects in Guatemala (post-earthquake) and China (post-flood) did not simply aim to rebuild from ruins. Instead, "they aspired to reform Chinese and Guatemalan people and society in the process" (88). U.S. officials lamented the leisurely and opportunistic ways of the Guatemalans, and they created a highly regimented approach to work and ration distribution. In China, work camp residents had to adhere to strict sanitary and hygienic protocols related to cleaning their homes and bodies, risking a loss of rations for infractions. They spent their time in ways dictated by the American camp managers, making clothing, shoes, and other items, or attending school. Young men had to participate in calisthenics and marching. These are some examples of how the U.S. Army, collaborating with the American Red Cross, "surveilled and tightly regulated the bodies and behaviors of thousands of Chinese flood survivors" (95). For Irwin, the implementation of such programs reflected a deep disdain and mistrust of the people being helped.

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These were not isolated incidents, and many of the relief projects of the twentieth century had similar dynamics. After a 1931 earthquake in Nicaragua, officials complained about the evils of distributing free food, fearing the people would become dependent and lazy rather than help themselves. Here, the attitudes of relief officials were sometimes consistent with the attitude of politicians in host countries. Nicaraguan president José María Moncada agreed that providing free food for too long would do more harm than the earthquake itself, promoting bad habits among the poor and ignorant. Irwin points out U.S. efforts to combat laziness and to encourage a strong work ethic, "providing lessons in morality and a dose of paternalistic tutelage along with their aid" (147).

In the case of Japan, Irwin draws a contrast, suggesting that disaster relief after the 1923 Great Kantō earthquake went relatively well because the Americans meddled much less in implementation. They complied with Japanese government requests, departing when asked but also staying when invited, as when U.S. Army personnel remained to help restore hospital services. And yet, in Irwin's telling, the good relations achieved through such efforts did not prove deep or lasting. The lofty rhetoric of the American Red Cross and U.S. government was a mask covering deep-seated chauvinistic feelings that were only too apparent to the Japanese. The passage of the so-called Japanese Exclusion Act, barring further Japanese immigration to the United States, wiped away most of the goodwill.

Much of the time, the Americans were quick to interpret local control as mismanagement. In 1929, for example, ARC sent a commission to China to report on the use of funds. "Rehashing a litany of deep-rooted racial prejudices and cultural chauvinisms," Irwin tells us, the committee "excoriated Chinese authorities for misgovernment, corruption, and abuse of American aid" (156). Irwin tends to see prejudice in such skepticism, though I wondered if there was room in her analysis to address genuine problems of corruption. In this particular case, the American Red Cross ended up extending aid after the commission's report, despite the perception of corruption, because the humanitarian and political benefits appeared to outweigh the concerns.

Several questions struck me as I read this fascinating book. One of them has to do with tit-for-tat deals. Irwin tends to focus on broad goals of U.S. strategy, such as the Good Neighbor Policy, supporting non-communist regimes, and enhancing U.S. prestige, generally. But in reading, I often wondered about more specific material aims. If the United States dispensed a big aid package, and then separately also managed to secure the rights to important commodities—these may not be officially linked. For example, in the early 1950s, the United States was interested in access to beryl and monazite, important rare minerals for the nuclear arsenal. Emergency food aid to India—one of the world's main sources of monazite—was not a trade deal. That would have undermined its political value as humanitarian food aid. And yet the United States also was attempting to secure mineral rights, behind the scenes. I wonder if Irwin could comment on the relationship between humanitarian aid and other specific kinds of U.S. interests beyond prestige and good relations, such as building bases, military access, or strategic resources.

Irwin's illuminating discussion of Guatemalan disaster relief in 1918 stimulated another question about the role of nonstate actors within recipient countries. U.S. officials were surprised that their xenophobic attitudes met with little resistance in Guatemala, where President Manuel Estrada Cabrera was content to let the United States control the entire relief operation. This probably should not have surprised them, given the dominant role of the United Fruit Company (UFC), which already controlled much of the infrastructure of Guatemala. That company's influence upon the U.S. government is well-known, particularly the banana grower's role in encouraging the U.S.-backed coup against President Jacobo Árbenz decades later (1954). Irwin mentions that the U.S. relief aid party went to Guatemala aboard a United Fruit Company ship, but we do not learn much more about the company's role in soliciting the aid in the first place. I invite Irwin to comment on the role of U.S.-linked companies in creating a sense of "national interest," encouraging intervention in the form of disaster relief, either in Guatemala or elsewhere.

Lastly, I was curious about Irwin's views on prevention aid. In discussing the parameters of the book, she agrees with scholars who suggest that the idea of "natural disaster" ignores structural issues in human society that make some people far more vulnerable than others. She states that one of the flaws of U.S. foreign assistance was the tendency to prioritize emergency response over prevention, saying that U.S. officials "did little to mitigate the myriad factors that created vulnerability to natural hazards in the first place"

(5). In other words, they did not address or acknowledge the root causes of catastrophe. This makes me return to my earlier invocation of Taylor Swift on the narcissistic dimensions of altruism. If U.S. assistance is tied to the perceived diplomatic advantages of being a savior, are there situations in which prevention aid rather than disaster aid would prove more advantageous? The cynic in me thinks that saving will always trump prevention, especially if the goal is to be seen helping.

Note:
1. Taylor Swift, "Anti-Hero," *Midnights* (Republic Records, 2022).

A Review of Julia Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy: U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance in the American Century*

Margot Tudor

Julia Irwin's new book *Catastrophic Diplomacy* is a much-needed intervention in the expanding historiography of humanitarianism and foreign aid. It is invaluable for demonstrating the politics and practices of aid delivery, addressing both the United States' weaponization of relief in emergency contexts, as well as for uncovering the fascinating internal disputes between field-based U.S. personnel as they debated what was the 'right' way to intervene in global crises. Across thirteen short chapters, and a useful introduction, *Catastrophic Diplomacy* is a masterfully written insight into the global span of U.S. humanitarian operations amid a transformative period of war, ideological conflict, and a rapidly expanding military and civil bureaucracy. Irwin sheds light on the myriad of political purposes that drove the U.S. government and associated agencies, such as ARC (the American National Red Cross), to deploy officials (and withdraw them) and donate funding to disaster relief efforts in countries across the globe during the long twentieth century. She considers these motives, including religious convictions and diplomatic gestures, alongside lesser explored factors such as reputation management and dependency theory.

Tracing the expansion of the United States from its formative interventions in Venezuela and Martinique (among others) in the early 19th century, throughout the two world wars, and concluding during the height of the Cold War in the 1970s, Irwin demonstrates the centrality of disaster relief to U.S. foreign policy. However, the book does not seek to produce an exhaustive history of U.S. disaster aid. Instead, it uses case studies from around the globe to uncover how states recovering from catastrophes became caught in the crosshairs of U.S. geopolitical ambitions and imperialist aspirations. In lockstep with the formalization of a U.S. federal disaster relief program during this century, the United States was rapidly expanding into a global superpower, as well as a leading humanitarian power. Far from a fixed power dynamic, however, Irwin's history importantly examines how recipient states were not simply passive victims for U.S. geopolitical benefit. In interrogating how the United States sought to control the delivery of aid in the aftermath of disasters, she highlights the rhetoric and methods used by recipient states to extract help from the nascent superpower in a moment of crisis.

A core contribution of Irwin's history is her balanced examination of how field-based staff struggled with a capricious state interest in global disasters. She explores how they navigated the pressures of such an unpredictable source of funding and used the lack of oversight to their benefit: "On some occasions, U.S. officials ended up with far more money and supplies than they anticipated, prompting them to experiment with novel aid projects in an effort to dispense with the surplus. In other cases, they found themselves with much less funding than they hoped, leading them to test alternative, workaround solutions for assisting survivors" (13-14). Thus, when both over- and under-resourced, the U.S. officials used disaster contexts as laboratories—echoing the trope of colony as laboratory—and empowered themselves with the same paternalistic logic that guided the civilizing mission in the 19th century. This improvised approach was not uncommon in other humanitarian operations during this period as aid agencies were in the process of professionalizing and communications were poor. The officials' reflexive motivations were concealed beneath the impartial veneer of relief work. By focusing on field-based practices, Irwin's book joins a wave of recent scholarship on international development and aid to uncover how the distribution of aid was "shaped by the whims of donors, by chance timing, and by the environment itself," rather than guided by technocratic calculation or expert advice (14).

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Building on this, another prominent thread throughout Irwin's case studies of U.S. disaster policy is the recurring issue of field-based officials' racism shaping relief efforts and limiting humanitarian options, as well as undermining the United States supposed attempts at forging a diplomatic relationship with the recipient nations. In the case of the 1923 earthquake in Japan, for instance, the U.S. consul first prioritized the evacuation of U.S. citizens from the affected area, before turning to the issue of recompense for the U.S. business owners whose property or business interests had been materially impacted by the earthquake. He believed that the U.S. government's choice to fund relief for "an alien people," rather than repay its own citizens for their capital loss was "bitterly" disappointing (127). This case highlights the consul's false equation between the delivery of relief for basic human necessities and the remuneration for U.S. business interests lost in the earthquake. Once the consul was rejected by the ARC and U.S. State Department, Irwin shows how his own prejudices against the Japanese obstructed him from seeking alternative solutions: "Taking aid from Japan, he lectured the State Department, 'would greatly weaken the prestige of the white man in the Orient." Instead, the consul proposed racial solidarity towards the US businesspeople in Japan – "a small community of white people, set down amidst hordes of people of an alien race…" – could be the only sensible answer to their plight (127).

Throughout the book, she is attentive to the colonial stereotypes, imaginaries, and anxieties that occur (and reoccur) to destabilize relief efforts, drawing attention to the co-constitutive forces of U.S. supremacy and a fear of being taken advantage of that seemed endemic to U.S. officials' operations – and Western humanitarianism, more broadly. Racism and orientalism provided the perfect justifications for supposedly slow or ineffective relief efforts, shifting responsibility from the U.S. personnel to the host population. For example, Irwin discusses how a group of US officials in the aftermath of the 1918 earthquake in Guatemala rushed to exit the country as a response to their incremental impact on the country. "They were growing increasingly frustrated with the slow pace of recovery," Irwin writes, "a problem they attributed largely to Guatemalan indolence and competence" (106-7). Noting the "leisurely ways" and "inadequate methods" of "these people," the U.S. officials leading the disaster relief response communicated their frustration – as well as their superiority – to their colleagues back home. Similarly,

tracing the U.S. intervention in Japan, Irwin reveals the superficiality of U.S. officials' relief efforts and rhetorical empathy by examining the racism concealed within internal reports and personal correspondence: "Authors of several Navy intelligence reports, for instance, identified a litany of 'weaknesses' inherent in the 'Japanese character' – traits, they claimed, that hindered the effectiveness of the Japanese government's relief efforts. In one such report, the US embassy's naval attaché disparaged Japanese officials for their 'harmful secretiveness' and their 'distrust of all foreign help,' arguing that these qualities led to 'maddening slowness and ineffectiveness' in the Japanese government's disaster response. The only explanation for such behaviours, he concluded, 'must be based on their psychology'" (127).

Paradoxically building upon these examples of racialized generalizations of incompetence, Irwin also explores how the U.S. officials were also anxious to extract themselves, as well as U.S. funding, from foreign contexts due to a belief in the "abuse" of their aid. For example, despite lamenting the indolence of the Guatemalan government and population, U.S. officials were simultaneously convinced of the state's complicity in a sophisticated system of aid racketeering, syphoning off U.S. dollars intended for relief or rebuilding projects and "making gain" or profiting from the "generous help that has been sent from the United States" (107). This paradox – of a large-scale aid racketeering ring existing in tandem with complaints of incompetence – was a common source of anxiety among Western humanitarian personnel during the twentieth century, playing into colonial tropes of "othered" populations as inherently criminal *and* lazy. Despite the position of power and the U.S. government's receipt of humanitarian currency for its intervention, this anxiety revealed a pervasive concern within U.S. relief efforts: to not be taken for a fool (*especially* by a population they deemed as inferior). As part of this desired power dynamic between donor and recipient, the U.S. officials expected a grateful, struggling population and were thin-skinned about perceived disrespect once on the ground. While critiquing the Japanese government for its "distrust of all foreign help," the U.S. officials themselves struggled to trust recipient states and populations, ironically serving to hamstring their own relief efforts.

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In examining the officials' anxieties and reactions, Irwin uncovers the authoritarian logic of U.S. officials in seeking to control not only the distribution of aid to recipient nations but also the emotional and developmental response of recipient populations. By expecting gratitude and prioritizing vanity projects over funding state welfare programs or sharing resources with local relief organizations, the U.S. government exposed its own interests in donating aid. Fearful of an aid racket in Guatemala, the ARC officials decided to sell the leftover food stuffs for $22,000, a profit that went toward purchasing equipment for the hospital, enabling the ARC staff to applaud themselves for leaving "a permanent mark" upon the country. However, the famine continued. As Irwin adroitly notes, "Although both projects served an undeniable need for Guatemalan earthquake survivors, the desire to make a diplomatic impact – to leave a lasting testament to American aid and benevolence – was never far from US officials' minds" (107).

Playing with the fluidity of relief and development work, the U.S. officials sought to use the disaster contexts to intervene in longer-term projects which were underpinned with supremacist logic and driven in the field by U.S. (predominantly elite, white, male) assumptions—rather than knowledge—about what recipient states and populations needed most. Nowhere else was this authoritarianism-through-humanitarianism more evident than in U.S. relief operations in China following the flooding of the Hai River in late 1917. As beliefs in biological racism waned at the turn of the century, cultural racism—and the idea that racialized populations could be "advanced" or "progressed" through assimilation into a universal European standard—took to the fore in Western circles. This new framework encouraged humanitarians to promote re-education projects which would enable populations to "help them help themselves," rather than become dependent on international aid. Following the flooding in China, camps were created to house some of the 500,000 people who had been displaced by the flooding. As Irwin argues, "From the start, US officials conceived of this camp as a model for China" (94). The U.S. design of the camps quickly revealed the U.S. officials' authoritarian approach to development and the disciplinary requirements necessary to govern and re-educate the Chinese population. Creating systems of policing, surveillance, as well as a "strict regime of medical and hygienic discipline," they reproduced the methods of control used by the British in colonial India, thus revealing "a deep-seated classist and racialized mistrust of the very individuals they assisted" (95-6). It was not long before U.S. officials scaled up this approach into a large-scale employment and public works program for Chihli province. In a semi-feudal system, roadbuilding workers were not directly given their wages. Instead, "All workers were first required to cover the costs of the monthly grain and coal rations allotted to them" and the remainder was distributed to their wives and families, "presuming that Chinese men would otherwise fritter their earnings away on alcohol, prostitution, and other vices." With "manual labour as a form of disaster aid," U.S. officials were able to exert "tight control over the flow of wages and, by extension, over the Chinese workers who earned them." This was paternalism in practice. As Irwin argues, "In their minds, administering the highway-building program presented a unique opportunity to promote – and if necessary, to compel by military authority – desired behaviours among Chinese civilians" (97). Taking advantage of the field-based access provided by disaster relief operations, U.S. officials could experiment with colonial administration and economic extraction without burdening the U.S. government with the responsibilities or limitations of a sovereign state.

In conclusion, Irwin has demonstrated her wonderful skill of showing not telling, avoiding the temptation of drowning her audience in sources or an endless list of individual biographies. Instead, reading *Catastrophic Diplomacy* feels like watching an author in total control of scale across a variety of geographies (from the "in the field" operations to Washington DC, and to the other side of the globe). She expertly delineates different humanitarian professionals and types of disaster throughout the decades of the so-called American Century. Her clear-eyed assessments of the U.S. officials' harmful ideologies, cultures, and practices help us to better understand the granular manifestations of the unequal power dynamic between humanitarians and civilians. I highly recommend adding this book to the canon of must-read humanitarian histories.

A Review of Julia Irwin, *Catastrophic Diplomacy: U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance in the American Century*

Fabian Klose

As Julia Irwin trenchantly remarks at the end of her new book *Catastrophic Diplomacy: US Foreign Disaster Assistance in the American Century*: "In a world beleaguered by rising seas, scorched and desiccated lands, and overheated cities, the disasters precipitated by climate change and other hazards will almost certainly become more numerous, more destructive, and more devastating" (276). Accordingly, individual states will need to react to natural disasters around the world and learn how to provide humanitarian aid for the affected population, an issue that will no doubt rank high on the agenda of international politics in the years to come. Against this background, Julia Irwin, the T. Harry Williams Professor of History at Louisiana State University, has written a most timely and important book. In *Catastrophic Diplomacy* she tells the compelling history of US foreign disaster assistance over a period of seventy years. Focusing on the time from 1900 to the mid-1970s, she convincingly demonstrates that the United States' responses to natural catastrophes caused by earthquakes, volcano eruptions, tropical cyclones, floods, and other natural hazards expanded steadily and became a fixture of U.S. foreign relations over the course of the twentieth century. By tracing the development of U.S. foreign disaster assistance, she does not simply uncover the origins and development of this humanitarian practice, but vividly explains the complex motivations behind it. Throughout the twentieth century, she argues, disaster aid became a consistent tool of U.S. foreign policy: "It functioned as a means of projecting American power and influence globally and as vehicle for preserving order and control abroad. By assisting survivors of international calamities, U.S. officials sought not only to ameliorate distant suffering but also to promote the diplomatic and strategic interest of the United States" (2).

In her analyses of official humanitarian operations, Irwin concentrates on the three main pillars of the U.S. humanitarian aid system, namely the State Department and the staff of U.S. diplomatic missions, the Department of War, the Navy and Defense Department, and the personnel of the Armed Forces as well as partners in the American voluntary sector such as the American Red Cross. In her elaborate introduction, she discusses terminologies and makes clear that she deliberately avoids using the term "humanitarian intervention" in her study as this term denotes a very distinct type of action (11). Furthermore, she explains that instead of dealing with different types of disasters she explicitly focuses on catastrophes categorized as rapid-onset natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, floods, and hurricanes that require an immediate, comprehensive response. Even though U.S. foreign disaster assistance overlapped with other kinds of international aid, it developed along a very specific trajectory and has "a history all its own" (5). Out of hundreds of U.S. disaster assistance operations, Irwin carefully selects case studies, which were significant regarding the character of the U.S. response to that catastrophe. As she explains: "Rather than focusing only on the world's most destructive disasters, in other words, *Catastrophic Diplomacy* examines the U.S. humanitarian aid operations – major and minor – that followed a wide spectrum of global calamities" (8). The main goal of this approach is to demonstrate that U.S. officials regarded their aid operations not solely as a way to ameliorate distress, but more importantly as a crucial instrument to promote global U.S. diplomatic and strategic interests. Irwin touches upon a very central aspect in recent debates about the nature and history of humanitarianism, namely the complex connection of humanitarian, paternalistic, strategic, and geopolitical motivations for delivering aid to suffering foreigners. She shows in an illuminating way that U.S. decisions about when, where, and how to send aid were heavily influenced – far from being altruistic – by considerations concerning public diplomacy and foreign relations. Thus, the book sheds new light on the entangled histories of natural disasters, peacetime humanitarianism, and U.S. diplomacy, clearly showing that humanitarian considerations and activities played a central role in twentieth-century American foreign policy. Although it is mainly a history of U.S. bilateral disaster assistance, the book goes far beyond the U.S. context by situating American catastrophic diplomacy against the aid efforts of other states and within the international humanitarian system.

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In her analyses, Irwin draws on an impressive array of sources from archives in four different countries, though her focus is on U.S. archival materials in various presidential libraries, the Library of Congress, the Marine Corps and Navy Archives as well as the National Archives and Records Administration. Furthermore, she conducted research in the U.N. Archives of the Food and Agricultural Organization in Rome, the Archives of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the Archives of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, both in Geneva, as well as the British National Archives in Kew/London. The author elegantly operates at the intersection of national and international perspectives, offering a very inspiring and multifaceted picture of disaster relief operations in the twentieth century.

Catastrophic Diplomacy is structured chronologically and divided into three well-balanced main parts. It narrates the story of the steady transformation of U.S. foreign disaster assistance from a rather ad hoc practice in the nineteenth century into an increasingly formal instrument of foreign relations by the mid-1970s, which finally laid the foundations for the contemporary U.S. system of disaster assistance. After a concise introduction (1-17), Irwin focuses on the establishment of what she calls the "three pillars of U.S. foreign disaster assistance," the close interaction of actors in the State Department, the Department of War/Defense, and the Navy, as well as American voluntary organizations such as the American Red Cross. As a kind of prologue, she starts by briefly looking at U.S. practices of disaster assistance in the nineteenth century, in which the role of U.S. government in international disaster relief was very limited and rare. She identifies a fundamental change at the beginning of the twentieth century, when the United States, because of its increasing involvement in international affairs, took on an active role in international disaster assistance. The U.S. response to the 1902 volcanic catastrophe in Martinique, for example, is presented as a landmark event, which predicated U.S. relief operations to come. From this point onward, the United States became involved in a series of disaster relief operations in Chile, Hong Kong, Jamaica, and Italy, so that by 1907, foreign disaster relief was firmly in place and had global reach. Irwin very convincingly demonstrates that during this era, which is commonly described in terms of dollar diplomacy and gunboat diplomacy, catastrophic diplomacy became an important instrument of U.S. foreign policy to exercise

its political influence abroad and to foster its international reputation. In other words, on the eve of U.S. entry into the First World War, humanitarian actions had become an expedient means of Washington's foreign policy, aiming to play a greater role in affecting global affairs.

In Part Two, "Routines of Relief and the 'Development' of Disaster Aid" – the biggest section of the book – Irwin covers the period from 1917 to 1947. Irwin sharply analyzes the further development of U.S. disaster assistance against the background of two World Wars and the turmoil of the interwar period. By showing that operations continued and even multiplied in war time and during the Great Depression, she challenges conventional narratives of U.S. retrenchment from world affairs in the 1920s and 1930s (132). Instead, for these decades, she traces many continuities within U.S. foreign disaster aid, highlighting how methods and practices introduced in the early 1900s became more routinized and systematic. In short, foreign disaster assistance occupied a central place in U.S. foreign policy planning throughout the twentieth century. While shedding light on the possibilities of U.S. catastrophic diplomacy, Irwin is also aware of the limits of aid, as clearly shown in the case study of the 1923 Great Kantō earthquake in Japan (110-130). At the same time, she details the geopolitical, technological, economic, and cultural shifts that significantly transformed the conduct of U.S. disaster aid during this period. In this way, she presents a fascinating entwined history of humanitarian relief, reconstruction, and development assistance.

The third and last part, entitled "Drifting toward Centralization and Coordination," covers the period from the 1940s to the mid-1970s. As early as the 1940s, collective developments that began to significantly alter the way the U.S. government and its partners reacted to all humanitarian crises around the world were factors of foreign policy decision making. The author describes a kind of revolution of American catastrophic diplomacy over three decades (184), and most importantly, Irwin puts it in the context of the Global Cold War and decolonization: "With concerns about the global Cold War and decolonization foremost on their minds, U.S. government officials treated these disaster assistance operations as auspicious political opportunities, a chance to demonstrate their allegiances and buttress their alliances with countries affected by natural hazards" (209). In this period, the frequency and reach of U.S. foreign disaster assistance expanded enormously and, as consequence, government officials asserted more control over its planning and execution. U.S. foreign disaster assistance became increasingly centralized under the aegis of the federal government and institutionalized with its legal as well as bureaucratic architecture, making it more than ever before an official instrument of U.S. foreign policy: "As scale and scope of this humanitarian operations increased, approaches piloted during the interwar years – military airlifts, donations and sales of surplus commodities, expert advisory missions, and far-reaching reconstruction and development projects – became a customary part of the nation's foreign disaster assistance efforts" (185). Furthermore, Irwin indicates that, in this context, disaster assistance got increasingly intertwined with approaches to international development, which meant that the conceptual boundaries of these different categories of foreign aid became less clear and rather blurred. The significant changes set in motion from the late 1940s to the mid-1970s, the author finally argues, created the system of U.S. foreign disaster assistance as it operates today.

Catastrophic Diplomacy is an extensively researched, timely, and highly insightful study, which brilliantly weaves together threads of environmental, diplomatic, military, and humanitarian histories. Julia Irwin presents a beautifully written, intriguing history of U.S. foreign disaster assistance that offers multiple new and thought-provoking perspectives on U.S. foreign policy over the course of the twentieth century. However, she does not only enrich our understanding of the role of the United States in the world, but significantly contributes to the vivid discussion about the complex nature and history of international humanitarianism. In short, this is an excellent book, which will attract a broad readership, especially those who are interested in the question of how states have reacted and will react to the humanitarian challenges of the Climate Century.

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A Tale of Two Metaphors: "Three Pillars" and the "Double-Edged Sword" of U.S. Military Humanitarianism

Brian Drohan

For a book on the diplomacy of U.S. disaster assistance, the actions of the U.S. military are never far from center stage. This much is readily apparent from a quick glance at the cover of Julia Irwin's magnificent new book, *Catastrophic Diplomacy: US Foreign Disaster Assistance in the American Century*, which depicts U.S. Air Force personnel standing amidst rubble caused by the 1960 earthquake in Agadir, Morocco. The juxtaposition of the military cover photo alongside the "diplomacy" title is merely the first manifestation of a deep military-diplomatic symbiosis that pervades every chapter of Irwin's fascinating study.

Although it is no surprise to historians of American foreign relations that the United States government provided extensive humanitarian relief on a global scale during the Cold War, Irwin reminds us that the use of foreign disaster assistance as an instrument of U.S. foreign relations has a long history. "Grasping the strategic, diplomatic, economic, and moral potential of American humanitarian assistance," she writes, officials saw the practical advantages of providing aid but were also moved by the desire to alleviate the suffering of others (2). These desires were not mutually exclusive. Rather, they were seen as complementary activities that allowed officials to "do good" while also advancing American interests.

Limiting her study to aid provided in response to "sudden natural hazards" such as typhoons, floods, or earthquakes, Irwin traces the gradual process of formalization and bureaucratization through which U.S. disaster assistance became an institutionalized instrument of foreign policy within the federal government. Irwin builds her investigation of this process around what she metaphorically terms the "three pillars" of disaster assistance: 1) the State Department and other diplomatic staff; 2) the armed forces; and 3) the voluntary sector, including the American Red Cross, missionary societies, and philanthropic organizations (3). In telling the story of how the three pillars grew increasingly intertwined, while also changing internally, Irwin has written a fascinating, multi-faceted history in which disaster assistance serves "as both a reflection and a manifestation of US global power" (6).

Divided into three parts, *Catastrophic Diplomacy*

chronologically covers a narrative from the early nineteenth century to the 1970s. Part One examines the consolidation of the three pillars from 1812-1916. Irwin pays close attention to the ways in which military capabilities enabled disaster assistance as well as the unintended consequences of military involvement. For instance, military power extended the United States' "humanitarian reach." Proximity to disasters mattered, as naval or army personnel stationed nearby were often the first to respond. Naval vessels were also vitally important for carrying relief supplies, while the army and Marine Corps often provided manpower, organizational structures, as well as medical and sanitation capabilities. Consequently, the United States' humanitarian geography often overlapped with its military geography.

While military capabilities proved essential for the provision of aid on the ground, the presence of U.S. forces did not always engender positive responses from foreign governments and citizens. After a 1907 earthquake in the British colony of Jamaica, the involvement of over 200 U.S. Navy sailors clearing rubble and distributing supplies was initially well-received by the island's British governor, but after the sailors put down a prison mutiny and initiated armed patrols through the streets, the governor began to see the U.S. presence as a threat and asked the Americans to leave. From Italy to China, this pattern was repeated elsewhere over the next decade and beyond.

The book informs our understanding of the U.S. military's organizational culture and preferences throughout the twentieth century. Irwin reveals how military personnel saw themselves, what they valued, and how they perceived their role in society.

In Part Two, Irwin articulates how the world wars and the Great Depression stimulated "a momentous transformation" within each pillar (87). The armed forces grew exponentially, both in sheer size and range of capabilities, including a basing network that came to encompass nearly the entire globe. Legislation such as the 1947 National Security Act had the "incidental effect" of extending "the government's humanitarian geography" and "its command of humanitarian logistics," all of which occurred at a time when the U.S. government was beginning relief and recovery projects on an unparalleled scale (178). Although the purpose behind this expansion was to support war-related recovery efforts, "the inexorable result was to transform how the U.S. government conducted all forms of international assistance," including disaster relief (180).

Part Three explains how the federal government increasingly centralized disaster relief efforts through new foreign assistance agencies and legislation. The voluntary sector remained important, but the role of the state was magnified. The Cold War shaped calculations about the role of aid in U.S. strategy, resulting in the government "responding to foreign disasters more frequently, more swiftly, more liberally, and more globally than ever before" (185). The vastly expanded frequency and scale of relief operations generated frustrations and challenges that led to new legislation and bureaucratic reforms to improve interagency coordination, with the military remaining a key facilitator of disaster assistance.

By examining the three pillars' entwined histories, Irwin identifies a key tension – a double-edged sword, to use another metaphor – in the military-humanitarian relationship: humanitarian and military power reinforced each other to the point where, in many circumstances, aid and coercion went hand-in-hand. Two particularly egregious examples of this pattern include American relief efforts in the Dominican Republic in 1930 and Nicaragua in 1931. These disaster assistance missions occurred against the backdrop of longer legacies of American military, political, and economic intervention in both countries. In both cases, disaster relief efforts morphed into U.S. Marines and local Guardia Nacional forces operating under martial law. In Nicaragua, for instance, US forces served as "emergency police" who were "assigned to restore order" and were authorized "to shoot any looter on sight" (143). In both cases, aid brought violence with it.

A double-edged sword, however, cuts both ways, and reversing the direction of Irwin's analysis raises an interesting question: the U.S. military has indeed played a vital role in shaping and enabling American disaster relief operations, but have disaster relief operations played a similarly vital role in shaping the U.S. military? The short answer, it would seem, is "no." Humanitarian operations have been, from a military institutional perspective, always a secondary concern. When making the "big decisions" that matter most to the armed services – budget trade-offs, procurement decisions, training priorities, and the organizational structure of military units – humanitarian motivations have rarely factored high on the priority list. For example, political decisions to expand the size of the armed forces have never been motivated by disaster assistance, but disaster assistance certainly benefited from them as the armed forces had more resources that they could bring to bear to relieve people in crisis.

The same has been true with the procurement of military supplies and equipment. The U.S. government did not buy B-17 "Flying Fortress" aircraft for delivering medicine and blankets to earthquake survivors in Chile – it bought B-17s to drop bombs on distant enemies. Likewise, the military geography of the U.S. base network has so often overlapped with American humanitarian geography because the military provides transportation, logistics, communications, and organizational support to humanitarian operations. But that base network was not created for humanitarian reasons. There were other factors that prompted its development, such as protecting American economic investments, controlling strategically valuable territory, or preventing the spread of communism. Humanitarian considerations were incidental in all these cases.

So, what are we to make of this? If disaster relief operations are so peripheral to how the U.S. military sees itself, what does this lack of reciprocity tell us about U.S. global power and the history of the U.S. military? Irwin's book offers several entry points for understanding this dynamic. I'll focus on two.

For one, the book informs our understanding of the U.S. military's organizational culture and preferences throughout the twentieth century. Irwin reveals how military personnel saw themselves, what they valued, and how they perceived their role in society. One illustrative example is the U.S. Army's response to the 1917 floods near Tientsin (now Tianjin), China that left 500,000 people homeless. Authority for the distribution of all American relief was delegated by the State Department to the commander of the 15th Infantry Regiment, which had been stationed in Tientsin since 1912. The Chinese government organized its own relief program, but U.S. officials thought that the Chinese efforts lacked a "system and efficiency" and were "ill-applied" (93). U.S. officials were particularly concerned about what they saw as the poor state of Chinese-run refugee camps. In response, the U.S. Army built and ran a camp for flood survivors, which U.S. officials viewed as a "model" for the Chinese to replicate and learn from.

The 15th Infantry ran the camp for four and a half months, during which they "closely governed the nearly 4,000 Chinese residents who inhabited it." Camp residents were subjected to "a strict regime of medical and hygienic discipline," had to receive "regular health check-ups and

additional inoculations," and had to follow "a long list of sanitary and hygienic rules." Adult residents were also required to engage in "productive labor" to earn their rations. Children, meanwhile, were encouraged – but not required – to attend school. They were, however, required to attend exercise classes. All boys participated in a "drill routine" involving "ninety minutes of calisthenics and marching each day." American soldiers "thus surveilled and tightly regulated the bodies and behaviors of thousands of Chinese flood survivors" (95).

This sort of physical disciplining was a hallmark of the army's overall physical culture at the time. Education, productivity, vigor, and making the most of leisure time were all seen as desirable traits. Indeed, as historian Garrett Gatzemeyer argues, many officers were inculcated to believe that the nation's strength and happiness "rested on the health and vigor of its citizens."[1] The way in which the 15th Infantry ran the Tientsin camp reflected these values, although their approach was tinged with "a deep-seated classist and racialized mistrust of the very individuals they assisted" (95). Officers saw the army not only as a defender of the nation's security, but also as a proselytizer for national strength seen through cultural, racialized, and gendered lenses. As the Tientsin example demonstrates, the army's internal organizational culture was often imposed on others who fell under the army's control.

Secondly, the military's ambivalence toward humanitarian missions during the twentieth century reveals a struggle within the armed services over institutional preferences. This struggle was particularly acute during times of peace, when the cultural preference for warfighting stood in tension with the imperative of fulfilling the roles that the armed services were assigned in the here-and-now – missions that were often far more bureaucratic and far less glamorous than romanticized visions of combat.[2] Some senior military leaders who lacked combat experience harbored deep insecurities about their inexperience in war. [3] Periods of peace, particularly in the absence of a clear adversary, also bred anxieties within the armed services about combat readiness. This trend is evident in how the post-Cold War growth of humanitarian operations, among other challenges, unsettled American military leaders and led to a redoubled effort to emphasize an organizational culture built around a "warrior ethos."[4]

For all the emphasis on war, however, disaster relief was not entirely ignored at the institutional level. In the early twentieth century, the Marine Corps engaged in "small wars" that involved occupation, governance, and policing roles that were often intertwined with the delivery of humanitarian aid. Yet rather than fully embracing a specific military role, the Marine Corps fostered an institutional identity in which they cast themselves as the United States' preeminent soldiers.[5] Consequently, in the 1990s, when the army's anxieties about combat readiness were particularly acute, the Marine Corps' institutional leaders combined "small wars" legacies with an elite soldier image to sell the Corps as the armed service best suited to humanitarian and peacekeeping missions. Yet the Marines' acceptance of what one officer called "tree hugging work" did not wholly set aside combat operations. Rather, the doctrine that Marine Corps leaders advocated was built around the concept of the "three-block war" – simultaneously providing humanitarian aid, conducting peacekeeping missions, and fighting small-scale high-intensity battles.[6] In short, for pragmatic reasons, the Marine Corps of the 1990s embraced the very elements of the double-edged sword that Irwin identifies in *Catastrophic Diplomacy*.

The desire to control populations receiving disaster aid combined with a tendency to approach those operations with a heavy dose of institutional ambivalence are just two of many ways in which military identities shaped the form and function of U.S. global power. Irwin shows how multifaceted military power can be, at times serving as an element of statecraft, a structuring feature of society, a norm- and behavior-shaping aspect of culture, and a tool of coercion, among other roles. These manifestations of military power reflect a process of militarization that ran parallel to the gradual formalization and bureaucratization of the U.S. foreign disaster assistance enterprise that Irwin reconstructs in the book. The military's centrality to a task that is so peripheral to its identity is a paradox in need of further study. With *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, Irwin has thrown the door wide open for a promising future research agenda into the intersections between military and humanitarian history.

Notes:
1. Garrett Gatzemeyer, *Bodies for Battle: U.S. Army Physical Culture and Systematic Training, 1885-1957* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2021), 112-14.
2. On the U.S. Army's peacetime struggles, see Beth Bailey, *An Army Afire: How the U.S. Army Confronted Its Racial Crisis in the Vietnam Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2023) and Brian McAllister Linn, *Real Soldiering: The U.S. Army in the Aftermath of War, 1815-1980* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2023).
3. For one example of this insecurity, see Rory McGovern, *George W. Goethals and the Army: Change and Continuity in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2019), 79.
4. David Fitzgerald, *Uncertain Warriors: The United States Army between the Cold War and the War on Terror* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024).
5. See Aaron B. O'Connell, *Underdogs: The Making of the Modern Marine Corps* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012) and Heather Venable, *How the Few Became the Proud: Crafting the Marine Corps Mystique, 1874-1918* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2019).
6. Mary Elizabeth Walters, "'Tree Hugging Work': The Shifting Attitudes and Practices of the U.S. Marine Corps Toward Peace Operations in the 1990s," *Marine Corps History* 5, no. 2 (2019): 54-70.

Author's Response to *Passport* Roundtable on *Catastrophic Diplomacy*

Julia F. Irwin

It was both an honor and a distinct pleasure to read these insightful, detailed, and generous reviews of *Catastrophic Diplomacy*. Over the years, I have learned so much from all five of the reviewers and have benefited greatly from reading their respective books. Thus, it was a privilege and a delight to engage with their comments and questions about mine. I appreciate the time and thought that obviously went into each of these reviews, and I am touched by the kind compliments and words of praise. I am also grateful to Andy Johns and *Passport* for curating the roundtable and creating this forum for discussion. My sincere thanks to all of you.

What stood out to me most in reading these reviews was the incredible diversity of themes and subject matter they contained. This diversity reflects the expertise and interests of five scholars whose research spans many different areas, including the histories of humanitarian intervention, science and the environment, labor and working-class politics, the military, human rights, and colonial and postcolonial humanitarian governance. It is heartening to know that *Catastrophic Diplomacy's* ideas and arguments resonated across these different subfields. Each of these reviews invited me to think about my book in different ways and with fresh perspectives.

When I began work on *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, I had certain ideas and expectations about where the research would lead me. While many of them came to fruition, one

thing I did not anticipate was the prominent role the U.S. military was to play in my narrative. As I waded through the archives, however, U.S. sailors, soldiers, ships, and supplies kept popping up everywhere. Ultimately, they became a central element of my analysis (as I've joked to friends and colleagues, writing this book made me an accidental military historian). Given this rather circuitous pathway, I was gratified to read that Brian Drohan found my discussion of the military's humanitarian operations persuasive, and that he recognized the "deep military-diplomatic symbiosis" that lies at the heart of this study. The United States' ability to provide foreign disaster assistance and other humanitarian aid during the 20th century, as I argue, was a direct function of the U.S. military's expanding capabilities. I appreciated Drohan's many observations about the fraught relationship between U.S. militarism and U.S. humanitarianism, and the many instances in which "aid and coercion went hand-in-hand."

What intrigued me most, though, were Drohan's observations about a seeming paradox: although U.S. military power was essential to the projection of U.S. humanitarian power, the inverse was not at all the case. Humanitarian operations were, at best, a secondary concern for U.S. military leaders, rarely if ever at the top of their priority list. Bringing his own expertise to bear, Drohan offers a thoughtful discussion of "the military's ambivalence toward humanitarian missions" and provides some convincing explanations for how we might make sense of this ambivalence. "The military's centrality to a task that is so peripheral to its identity," he concludes, "is a paradox in need of further study." I could not agree more. Like Drohan, I hope that *Catastrophic Diplomacy* might serve as a foundation for future research on the relationships between humanitarian and military history. I eagerly await the work that he and other scholars are doing to explore these intersections more deeply and in other national, international, and imperial contexts.

In the early 20th century, especially, the U.S. State Department received a lot of its on-the-ground information about disasters from U.S. businessmen (they were almost always men) who were living in other countries when disasters occurred. In many cases, these individuals also went on to serve on local American relief committees, making direct decisions about how to distribute aid and which survivors "deserved" relief. Companies like United Fruit and Standard Oil had a vested interest in disaster recovery so that they could get their plantations, refineries, and other business operations up and running again.

In her review, Jana Lipman offers some additional avenues for considering the relationship between militarism and humanitarianism. I appreciated the multiple questions she raises about this issue and her encouragement to say more on this topic. What were the consequences, Lipman asks, of humanitarian aid being so militarized, and of "the military being one of the go-to tools for disaster relief"? One way to respond to these queries is by raising an intriguing counterfactual question: what might U.S. foreign disaster aid (and international humanitarianism, more broadly) have looked like *without* the U.S. military's deep involvement in it? What sort of disaster relief operations would have been possible without military airlifts, rations and tents, communications equipment, construction and engineering machinery, or boots on the ground – all of which the U.S. military routinely provided? Obviously, this is impossible to know, but such a thought exercise can help us imagine alternative humanitarianisms that do not depend so centrally on military strength, resources, and logistical capabilities.

Lipman also asks helpful questions about whether the U.S. military became more or less involved in disaster response later as the 20th century progressed, and how diplomats and the State Department perceived the military's role. The answer to the first question is decidedly *more*, and I regret if that did not come across as clearly as I'd hoped. After the Second World War, the U.S. military's extensive basing infrastructure and vast fleets of aircraft and ships positioned it to respond far more frequently to disasters than it had earlier in the 20th century. Military airlifts of aid supplies (from both state and non-state donors) became commonplace – and indeed, almost ubiquitous – from the 1950s on. United States diplomats and U.S. Information Agency (USIA) agents regularly used the arrival of these planes for the purposes of public diplomacy, organizing staged photo ops to publicize the arrival of U.S. aid while actively showcasing the military's role in providing it. The relationship between military and diplomatic actors, then, was often quite cooperative. This is not to say there was no interagency competition. In some cases, the State Department also requested aid that the Defense Department was unwilling to deliver. By and large, though, I see their relationship as more reciprocal than not, with both groups using humanitarian aid to promote shared U.S. national interests and objectives.

In addition to these points about the military, Lipman asks me to push my analysis further in several other areas. In particular, she raises valuable questions about labor and the agency of workers themselves. I, too, would have loved to know more about the perspectives of disaster survivors involved in roadbuilding, housebuilding, and other work relief projects. Unfortunately, I found very few traces of these voices in the archives I relied on. Fortunately, I do know that other scholars are currently looking at the grassroots, social histories of disaster relief, and I suspect that their work will add more of the detail and nuance than I was able to provide. Relatedly, scholars such as Elisabeth Piller are currently working on the concept of gratitude in humanitarian history, and I believe this cultural angle will be a very fruitful one for future historians of disaster assistance to explore. Lipman's points about the gendered nature of care work were equally astute and deserving of further consideration. This is particularly true given the U.S. military's centrality to these operations, and I think this points to the need for more work on the gendered nature of military humanitarianism and humanitarian masculinities. Finally, I greatly appreciated Lipman's reminder that catastrophic diplomacy goes both ways: it has never been the sole purview of the United States. This is absolutely correct, and I hope to see future studies analyzing the catastrophic diplomacy of other nations and empires.

I can honestly say that I never expected that *Catastrophic Diplomacy* would invite a close reading of Taylor Swift lyrics, but Jacob Darwin Hamblin makes a very convincing case for it. One of the things that has long fascinated me about humanitarianism are the inherent tensions between altruism and narcissism that Hamblin observes, or what he calls the "self-serving dimensions of doing good." My sense is that humanitarianism assistance stems from multiple motives at once. Individual aid workers are often motivated by genuine feelings of compassion for others and internationalist aspirations; yet they also operate in a system structured around diplomatic and strategic needs and objectives, in which aid is intended to serve national and imperial interests. I appreciate that Hamblin calls attention to this messiness and complexity, which I consider a central challenge in writing humanitarian histories.

I also appreciated the many interesting questions that Hamblin raises. One of those questions concerns the "tit-for-tat deals" associated with U.S. aid, in the form of

access to commodities, strategic minerals, or other material resources. Admittedly, this is not a thread I traced in my research, and I don't recall seeing direct evidence of it in the archival materials I consulted. That said, it would not surprise me in the slightest if these sorts of deals and tradeoffs were part of the conversation – if not always explicitly, then at least implicitly. As Hamblin rightly notes, many of the countries that were recipients of U.S. disaster aid during the 20th century were also key trading partners, sources of important rare minerals, or sites for U.S. military bases. Ensuring continued access to these strategic assets would have been one of the primary considerations U.S. officials made when calculating whether an offer of disaster aid was in the United States' national interests.

On a related note, Hamblin asks about the role of U.S. companies like United Fruit in shaping humanitarian decision-making. Here, I found more evidence. In the early 20th century, especially, the U.S. State Department received a lot of its on-the-ground information about disasters from U.S. businessmen (they were almost always men) who were living in other countries when disasters occurred. In many cases, these individuals also went on to serve on local American relief committees, making direct decisions about how to distribute aid and which survivors "deserved" relief. Companies like United Fruit and Standard Oil had a vested interest in disaster recovery so that they could get their plantations, refineries, and other business operations up and running again. In addition to these two companies, Pan-Am Airways popped up regularly in the archives. Its long-time president, Juan Trippe, often cooperated closely with the U.S. government and American Red Cross, lending his company planes for free so that they could deliver assistance. For Trippe, I think, these contributions to disaster relief offered a way to promote his airline and demonstrate its value to both the U.S. government and recipient countries. I would love to see future work on the role of corporate stewardship in humanitarian response, providing historical context for the influence that IKEA, Amazon, and other corporations now exercise in the international humanitarian system.

Drawing from her wealth of expertise in colonial and postcolonial humanitarian governance and peacekeeping, Margot Tudor offers an insightful reading of *Catastrophic Diplomacy*, which helps to situate the U.S. actions I describe among those of other global empires. I appreciated the thoughtful comparisons she draws between U.S. disaster aid operations and other forms of colonial governance. For instance, she draws convincing parallels between the U.S. Army Fifteenth Infantry's policing and surveillance efforts in China to similar British policies in colonial India. She also picks up on the many "colonial stereotypes, imaginaries, and anxieties" as well as the "racism and orientalism" that influenced the character of so many of the relief operations I discuss. Though I did not use this

A Resolution of Thanks to Andy Johns

SHAFR Council offers its sincere thanks and appreciation to Andy Johns for his years of service as *Passport* editor. Over the course of 14 years and 42 issues––which included, amongst other things, 78 roundtables, 14 teaching columns and 12 pieces about *FRUS*––Andy has worked tirelessly to provide SHAFR members with invaluable information about the profession. He has made *Passport* what it is today: a critical part of the diplomatic history field. His commitment to the publication and to SHAFR has been extraordinary, and the entire organization owes him a debt of gratitude. SHAFR Council thanks him for his many years of service.

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term myself, I welcomed Tudor's invocation of the "colonial laboratory" as a metaphor for many of the longer-term assistance efforts I examine. As all of these points suggest, U.S. actors shared much in common with their British, French, and other imperial counterparts, and I thank Tudor for drawing readers' attention to these similarities.

Tudor is also highly attuned to the individuals who populate this book's pages. I found her discussion of the field-based staff very helpful, as I think it underscores the somewhat random nature of disaster diplomacy. That is, so much of it depended on the whims, beliefs, and actions of a few people on the ground in any given disaster scenario. Plans and strategies made in Washington, whether at the State Department or at the American Red Cross's headquarters, did not always translate into action on the ground. Finally, I appreciated Tudor's discussion of the agency of recipient states and populations. As she rightly notes, they were "not simply passive victims for US geopolitical benefit." Rather, they played an active role in securing aid from the United States in times of crisis, often resisting or adapting U.S. plans for how the aid should be used.

Last but most certainly not least, Fabian Klose's generous and thoughtful review helpfully connects the history I trace to the contemporary and future politics of humanitarian governance. Klose's groundbreaking scholarship has been foundational to my own thinking about international humanitarianism and its entangled relationship with human rights and (especially) humanitarian intervention. It was thus gratifying to read his comments on the conceptual distinctions and parallels I try to draw between so-called "humanitarian interventions" and U.S. foreign disaster relief operations. As I try to show in the book, the vast majority of U.S. disaster responses were consensual in nature and not outward violations of state sovereignty – in disaster relief, the United States tended to act as a humanitarian "empire by invitation," to borrow Geir Lundestad's memorable phrase. Yet at the same time, the relationship between U.S. actors and the individuals they assisted tended to be grounded in a deeply asymmetrical power relationship. As a result, the actual dynamics of many U.S. relief operations often bore a close resemblance to other forms of invasion or occupation. This was especially true in the many instances that involved U.S. troops on the ground in disaster-affected countries, particularly when they remained for protracted periods. For many relief recipients, the control and coercion that U.S. officials exercised bred considerable frustrations and antagonism, often undermining the diplomatic potential of disaster relief.

Klose also highlights the contributions my book makes to "much bigger and intensively discussed history of international humanitarianism," a point I greatly appreciate. Although this book foregrounds the United States and U.S. actors, I see the history I tell as just one small piece of a much broader conversation about the modern origins of international disaster management and international humanitarianism writ large. I certainly do not intend my book to be the last word on the topic, and sincerely hope that it will eventually form part of a much broader historiography of global disaster aid.

Finally, Klose begins and ends his review with a nod to the present and the future, commenting on the relevance of my book for thinking through climate-related disasters, humanitarian emergencies, international politics, and global governance in the twenty-first century. These issues are indeed both urgent and timely. It is humbling – yet heartening – to imagine that history might help us to make sense of the enormous challenges we collectively face. At the very least, I do hope that the book might provide some fodder for conversations about contemporary humanitarianism and its relationship with development, human rights, and emerging ideas of human security (which Klose himself is currently working on). There is much more I could say on these topics – but I suppose that will have to wait for my next book.

In closing, I would like to extend my sincere thanks once again to all five reviewers for their insights, praise, trenchant observations, and deep engagement with my book. I'll look forward to continuing the conversation.

A Roundtable on Tyson Reeder, *Serpent in Eden: Foreign Meddling and Partisan Politics in James Madison's America*

Eric Hinderaker, Brian J. Rouleau, Brian Schoen, Catherine O'Donnell, Katlyn Marie Carter, and Tyson Reeder

Entanglements With All: Introduction toRoundtable on Tyson Reeder, *Serpent in Eden: Foreign Meddling in James Madison's America*

Eric Hinderaker

Readers of *Passport* may be forgiven for thinking that they have little left to learn about James Madison. Virginia slaveholder, ardent revolutionary, architect of the Constitution, author of some of the most penetrating Federalist essays, moving force behind the Bill of Rights, arch-nemesis of Hamilton's system of public finance, and, as fourth president, the chief executive arguably responsible for both inciting and prevailing in the War of 1812, Madison's career has been exhaustively documented by generations of excellent scholarship. And indeed, Tyson Reeder's new book, which gives us an account of foreign influence in US politics across a span of nearly three decades, traverses some familiar ground. Nevertheless, it gives us a portrait of Madison and his times that is strikingly and refreshingly new.

While dozens of scholars have treated Madison primarily in intellectual terms, as if his disembodied brain spun out essays, tracts, and constitutional drafts like an eighteenth-century forerunner to ChatGPT, Reeder gives us a very human Madison: he is insightful but also blinkered and fallible, sometimes insecure to the point of paranoia, at other times distracted and not at his best. Reeder's mastery of detail and circumstance shines through in clear and uncluttered prose, with verbs that often sparkle. This highly readable book is very much worth reading, as the four reviews that follow clearly attest. It is indeed, as Catherine O'Donnell says, a birthday book: a book that non-scholarly readers can enjoy and devour. Yet as this roundtable clearly demonstrates, it is also a book for scholars to grapple with. It engages serious interpretive and historiographical questions and deserves our careful attention.

On the most elemental level, *Serpent in Eden* makes an eloquent case for narrative exposition as an especially subtle and careful form of argumentation. Not only does a storytelling approach allow Reeder to humanize his cast of characters and introduce elements of contingency that a more thesis-driven analysis would miss, it also allows him to highlight the ways in which these episodes unfolded in real time, with attitudes and opinions taking shape in response to unforeseen circumstances. In Reeder's intricately narrated account of the Jay Treaty, for example, we get a more detailed and nuanced understanding of the way Washington and his cabinet jockeyed for position in the fraught summer of 1795 than anyone has given us before. All four reviewers note the book's expansive cast of characters, many of European origin, including diplomats like George Hammond, Pierre-Auguste Adet, and the Marquis de Casa Yrujo, and also opportunistic grifters like John Henry and Paul-Emile Soubiran. Throughout the book, Reeder's mastery of detail shines a powerful light on the actions of these "meddlers" and allows us to understand the thought processes of historical actors in ways that are not purely matters of abstract reasoning, but are instead the result of complex interactions and very human emotions.

The book's central argument can be stated straightforwardly, as Brian Schoen notes in quoting from Reeder: "Foreign meddling bred political distrust, political distrust reinforced partisanship, and partisanship encouraged foreign meddling" (266). Reeder carefully unwinds numerous instances of this dynamic. In some cases the meddling was small-scale, as agents of foreign powers or rogue actors tried to exploit personal rivalry or mistrust to inflect policy choices. In other cases, it amounted to conspiracy against US independence. In this respect, the episodes of meddling that Reeder describes often bleed into other forms of entanglement, as the Burr and Blount conspiracies and the Louisiana exploits of Georges-Henri-Victor Collot illustrate. With geopolitical questions at stake that related to the future of both North America and the north Atlantic, small-scale meddling was only one part of a larger field of foreign relations, in which US political leaders discovered what it meant to play the eighteenth-century version of the "great game" of European empires. Though the opportunism and intrigue of these episodes sometimes takes on a comic cast, much was at stake.

Katlyn Carter and O'Donnell highlight three interrelated themes in Reeder's account. First was the lack of clarity in this era about where US sovereignty lay: was it with the elected representatives of the people, or with the people themselves? Second, the idea that a republic's sovereignty lay with the people helps to explain the rise of an especially vitriolic partisan press, which foreigners were often inclined to exploit. These first two circumstances gave rise to a third: a spirit of partisan division that was easily inflamed and therefore repeatedly exploited, both by US leaders and by the foreign agents who sought to influence them. As both Brian Rouleau and Schoen remind us, these themes retain power and relevance in our own day.

Each of these reviews engages thoughtfully with *Serpent in Eden*, and Reeder's response is especially useful in making explicit some of his most important historiographical interventions. Just as there is much of value in the book, so there is much of value in the scholarly exchange that follows. I want to conclude my introductory remarks by expanding upon Rouleau's contention that Reeder does not engage with the challenges posed by the institution of slavery as fully as he might have. Rouleau notes that the fears inspired, especially among slaveholders, by the revolution in Saint Domingue are little remarked

upon in Reeder's account. Given his meticulous attention to contextual detail, it is surprising that Reeder does not take account of the growing population of refugees from that colony—both free and enslaved—who were filling the streets and neighborhoods of the capital city during the 1790s. Saint Domingue does come into his story, but Reeder is primarily concerned to assess the extent to which its revolution affected US interests in Louisiana. His attention, in other words, is focused on continental North America rather than the Caribbean basin.

This is not altogether surprising, and no author can take account of everything. Yet North America and the Caribbean are not so easily disentangled. In 1806, as Reeder tells us, Congress secretly allocated two million dollars to enable President Jefferson to bargain, through French intermediaries, for the purchase of the Spanish Floridas. In the same session, apparently to mollify France, Jefferson asked Congress to cut off trade with the newly independent nation of Haiti. Congress complied, reversing a secret trade pact signed during the Adams administration, when Britain and the US concluded that it was in their interests to support Louverture's rebellion against France. Once cut off, Haiti remained an outcast in US foreign relations until 1862, when the Lincoln administration finally granted it diplomatic recognition. The case of Haiti reminds us that the US was not the only new nation of the era vulnerable to foreign intervention, nor were American leaders above playing their own version of the "great game" when it suited their interests.

This example pales, of course, in comparison with US meddling in the affairs of other countries during the 20th and 21st centuries. It is to be hoped that, even as we engage with Reeder's illuminating account of the ways in which foreign meddling inflected early American politics, we also reflect on the ways in which the US has been drawn to meddle in the affairs of so many other nations. Even in the present, when the US still clings precariously to superpower status, the urgent question of foreign meddling runs in both directions.

Large parts of the book serve to elucidate mostly unknown characters in the history of early American foreign relations. Familiar tales are nuanced, and narratives we thought we knew help to generate novel insight. People standing at the margins (if at all) in earlier accounts take center stage here.

A Review of Tyson Reeder, *Serpent in Eden: Foreign Meddling and Partisan Politics in James Madison's America*

Brian J. Rouleau

Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they aren't after you." Joseph Heller wrote those words, but one gets the sense, after reading *Serpent in Eden*, that the quote could just as easily be attributed to James Madison. For as historian Tyson Reeder chronicles in his latest book, the early republic's foreign relations were often rattled by the meddling—both real and imagined—of other powers. Across twelve fascinating and well-written chapters, the author explores the ways in which US diplomacy intertwined with increasingly rabid partisanship to create an opening that foreign governments could exploit. The resulting narrative is captivating. Most histories will briefly pause to note America's comparative weakness during the Age of Revolution and observe its position as a pawn of more powerful empires. Reeder, on the other hand, is careful to sketch out the details. Episodes we thought we knew well, ranging from Jay's Treaty to the War of 1812, take on fresh significance when we understand them as at least partly the product of foreign diplomats' active conniving. The storytelling about spies, rogues, and intrigue is lively and fun. The lessons for the present regarding the real danger of bad faith actors on the international stage, however, are sobering.

Large parts of the book serve to elucidate mostly unknown characters in the history of early American foreign relations. Familiar tales are nuanced, and narratives we thought we knew help to generate novel insight. People standing at the margins (if at all) in earlier accounts take center stage here. We meet, for example, Diego de Gardoqui and learn of his efforts to play America's sectional rivals against one another as a means to preserve Spain's control over the Mississippi River. We are introduced to Joseph Fauchet and George Hammond, a French and a British diplomat respectively, who sought to mobilize the country's nascent party machinery to their own advantage. We watch as Pierre Adet and Georges-Henri-Victor Collot, more French envoys, scheme to detach the West from the United States and engineer the election of Thomas Jefferson. Meanwhile, the Marquis de Casa Yrujo, another Spanish dignitary, assumed the guise of a humble farmer and took to the press to smear Democratic Republican policies and advocate for Madrid's rights in Florida. And in some of the book's more exciting sections, we learn about the exploits of John Henry and Paul-Émile Soubiran, the former an Irish spy working for Canada's British governor and the latter a con-artist impersonating a French count. The men joined forces to swindle the Madison administration before a double-cross resulted in detection and a major political scandal. These and other sordid tales form the book's narrative stream.

Even if that was all the monograph managed to do, it would be enough to warrant a positive review. Reeder is to be commended for the depth of his research, rooting out the clandestine activities of individuals who sought to keep a low profile. There is, however, more to the story. Part of the author's task is to create a new synthesis for the otherwise well-worn sequence of events that takes us from the Constitution's ratification through the Louisiana Purchase and the Indian wars west of the Appalachians toward America's second conflict with Britain. Reeder succeeds on this front too, to the extent that it becomes hard to deny the very real ways that foreign agents propelled events forward and altered how Americans at the time understood their republic's relationship to the wider world.

The mechanisms by which these meddlers managed their machinations were twofold. The first was the press. Over and again, external agents used America's robust print culture to promote the agendas of various governments and monarchs. Representatives from anti-democratic regimes, ironically, were some of the fiercest advocates for press freedoms protected by the Bill of Rights. Their posturing was almost always self-interested and cynical. But it is nevertheless fascinating to see the ways these autocratically minded men were able to sniff out and exploit legal protection for the dissemination of information inimical to the national interest of the United States. Moreover, particularly irksome intriguers would then resist American efforts to expel them by appealing to the sanctity of civil liberties. Attempting to claim such safeguards at home, of course, would have earned them imprisonment (or worse).

The second mechanism by which international actors insinuated themselves into American debates about diplomacy followed the first: political parties. As Reeder observes, "the free press provided foreign governments a tool to exacerbate partisan tension and influence policy" (189). Depending upon their aspirations, envoys would

strategically place damaging disclosures or incendiary information in Federalist or Jeffersonian news outlets. Sometimes the goal seemed to be nothing more than the sowing of chaos; to divide Americans further along party lines was to weaken the country. At other times, stoking the fires of partisanship was meant to produce a particular electoral outcome. Foreign agents quickly discerned that the United States' true "sovereigns" were the people. If one wished to encourage particular foreign policy outcomes, he would have to take his case before them and hope they voted accordingly. The result, however, was further feuding between rival factions. All this party vitriol became so pronounced that one had a hard time distinguishing between real and fictional dangers. "Partisan politics muddied foreign meddling and foreign collusion to the point where Americans could hardly tell—sometimes didn't care to tell—legitimate from exaggerated threats" (192).

Federalists and Republicans, in other words, were often too busy accusing one another of traitorous collusion with European powers to see the very real threats in their midst. All of this came to a head in the run up to the War of 1812. The Madison administration was so intoxicated by partisan spirits that it hallucinated disloyal Anglo-Federalist cabals and juntos everywhere. When two very shady characters—the aforementioned Henry and Soubiran—showed up at the doorstep of the executive mansion to sell intelligence connecting prominent New Englanders with British officials, Secretary of State James Monroe let wishful thinking override his better judgment. An attempt to discredit political opponents instead landed President Madison in hot water once it was revealed that he'd spent roughly the cost of a new warship on bogus documents. Only a few months later, the second war for American independence erupted. An unprepared and disunited United States soon found itself fighting for survival. A timely end to the conflict saved the young republic, but not before the nation's capital was reduced to ashes.

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Set among the charred ruins of the first District of Columbia, Reeder's epilogue blurs the lines between past and present. One thinks of both America in 1815 and 2024 when he describes a country where partisans were "unable to distinguish political opponents from foreign foes" and opposing organizations were so incapable of "agree[ing] on a common enemy [that] they branded each other apostates and possible traitors." A free press and fair elections, the author reminds us, represent signal achievements. But they are easily exploited by malicious foreign actors and must be jealously guarded as a result. The danger is only heightened, *Serpent in Eden* shows us, during periods of intense political polarization. It is a sobering reminder of lessons largely unlearned in the past and still relevant today.

Of course, as with any monograph, one can quibble with what gets included and what remains excluded. Reeder's research resulted in the depiction of an captivating cast of characters who are not often mentioned in the master narrative. But there are also moments where forms of foreign intrigue that haunted the era go mostly unmentioned. This is particularly true when it comes to the issue of slavery. The idea that enslaved people acted as a kind fifth column under the direction of external enemies was common within the early republic. Fears of their capacity to topple the temple of liberty from the inside sprang from southern experience during the War for Independence, when royal governors recruited "Ethiopian regiments" to combat patriot militias. Anxiety about the uncertain loyalties of slave populations was only heightened, however, by events in Haiti during the 1790s. As British, French, and Spanish armies on the island of Hispaniola enlisted enslaved people and turned them against their enemies, Americans discerned one possible (and terrifying) future for themselves.

Some of Reeder's own evidence points in this direction. In the midst of a war scare provoked by the Royal Navy's deadly cannonading of the USS *Chesapeake*, Republicans recited the many threats posed to the United States by Britain. Among them was the likelihood that George III would incite "Insurrections of Slaves in the Southern States" (219). The belief was not uncommon at the time, as several recent histories of slavery and American foreign relations have observed. The omission of slavery in a book about foreign meddling in the early United States therefore seems somewhat strange. Reeder is exceptionally attentive to Indian grievances against the federal government. He chronicles their repeated diplomatic flirtation with British officials in Canada and the ways in which Republicans denounced Federalist "Tories" as complicit in the murder of white settlers throughout the Ohio River Valley. Why not pay similar attention to factionally-charged conspiracy theorizing about slave insurrections? Given Reeder's use of the life of an enslaver like James Madison as his framing device, the question becomes even more pressing. One hates to give an accomplished historian more homework, but perhaps a segment covering an event like Gabriel's Rebellion would have worked well next to other chapters that deal with similarly overheated and "unknowable" plots like the Burr conspiracy. At the very least, it would have allowed the author to air out connections between slavery, partisanship, and fears of foreign involvement in American affairs.[1]

None of this, however, is meant to detract from the signal achievement that is *Serpent in Eden*. Tyson Reeder set himself an enormously difficult task: tracking the clandestine actions of people who often covered their tracks and sorting rumor from reality at a time when baseless accusations of foreign allegiance flew freely. On this front, he has succeeded. The narrative is an engaging one, but it is also thought provoking. The reader walks away fearful about the future given America's continued susceptibility to such destructive interference. Yet there is hope here as well. Despite the fragility of the national experiment and the malevolent impact of international intrigue, the country endures. Toward the end of his life, James Madison shared a very similar assessment of his homeland's future, an outlook characterized by a mixture of optimism and unease. He warned of disguised enemies acting as the "Serpent creeping with his deadly wiles into Paradise," but also hoped "that the Union of the States [would] be cherished and perpetuated." That same judicious and considered approach to political affairs would serve the country as well today as it might have two hundred years ago. I hope this book becomes one part of that much larger and deeply important conversation about national unity.

Notes:
1. On slavery and the ways in which it sparked fears of foreign meddling, see Robert Kagan, *Dangerous Nation: America's Foreign Policy from Its Earliest Days to the Dawn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Vintage, 2006); Matthew Karp, *This Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016); Steven Brady, *Chained to History:*

Slavery and U.S. Foreign Relations to 1865 (New York: Cornell University Press, 2022).

A Review of Tyson Reeder, *Serpent in Eden: Foreign Meddling and Partisan Politics in James Madison's America*

Brian Schoen

Combining political and diplomatic history, *Serpent in Eden* situates the pantheon of early American statesmen in a world of real and perceived deception where foreign agents and domestic adversaries routinely plotted alternate futures. It is a beautifully and tightly woven account of foreign meddling and its impact on the first thirty years of the early American republic. Carefully placed details—the setting for conversations, the weather, a person's current physical ailments—add texture and humanize the narrative without, for the most part, crowding out the book's interpretive thrust. Rather, carefully selected anecdotes, thoughtfully chosen images, and efficient prose are directed at an important argument, one perhaps best summarized at the end of its final full chapter:

> Foreign meddling bred political distrust, political distrust reinforced partisanship, and partisanship encouraged foreign meddling. On their own, foreign powers or disloyal citizens posed manageable problems. But the fear of each magnified the danger of the other. Blind to their own partisanship, Federalists and Republicans fed the cycle. It spiraled until Madison plunged the nation into war to eradicate what he viewed as a foreign threat emboldened by internal enemies (266).

The route to this conclusion is a vivid one through well-known episodes like the visit of Citizen Genêt, the XYZ affair, and the Burr Conspiracy, as well as lesser-known secret meetings between Spanish spies and possible Tennessee seceders or French and Spanish officials attempting to influence the 1796 campaign. Foreign intrigues play out in the press, in private meetings, and often in the imaginations of American leaders poised to assume the worst about their opponents. I would not hesitate to assign this book, hopefully in paperback soon, to an undergraduate course in diplomatic history or the history of the early American republic.

Serpent in Eden has a broad and diverse cast, but Reeder, an Assistant Professor at Brigham Young University, places Madison at the center of the story. Reeder's prior work as an editor for the *Papers of James Madison* allows him to recreate events and identify networks that would have been easily missed by more casual users. This book serves as a reminder that such comprehensive projects are themselves feats of historical research ladened with gem-lined veins for future historians to mine.

In hindsight, Madison may seem an obvious choice, but it's worth noting that "Little Jemmy's" life and travels didn't expand much beyond his Chesapeake and mid-Atlantic comfort zone. Unlike his immediate two predecessors and successors in the Executive Mansion, Madison never held a post abroad. Nor did he deal directly with Indian nations until he became Secretary of State. (Though Reeder does mention the little-known fact that Madison traveled with the Marquis de Lafayette to observe the 1784 Fort Stanwix treaty negotiations (35)). The broader world came to Madison through his insatiable reading of books and newspapers and his various political encounters as he rose through the ranks of Virginia politics to constitutional framer, Congressional and partisan leader, Secretary of State, and eventually wartime President. Ever on guard for threats that might corrupt his "American Eden," Madison proves an ideal vehicle for framing Reeder's broader argument.

Few Americans traversed as many of the early republic's fault lines, which ranged from tensions between states and the federal government to executive-legislative controversies to the parameters of free speech. Reeder's brief but useful analysis of Madison's *Federalist* papers suggests that he had more concern than New Yorkers John Jay and Alexander Hamilton that foreign powers would promote internal factionalism (50-52). That is partly explained by Madison's obsessive fear that Spain would use its post-1783 control of New Orleans to cultivate western secession (40). It's also likely that Madison's deep Anglophobia and Virginia-born concern of British economic dominance heightened that fear. Regardless, by 1787, Madison had determined that a stronger federal government was needed to secure the nation's liberty against foreign threats.

What Madison and his generation failed to anticipate, according to Reeder, was the potential for American political factions to array into two rival parties vying for control of the federal apparatus. Divided popular sovereignty in a vast continent composed of diverse factions could limit foreign powers' ability to cajole or bribe enough policymakers to steer the ship of state in directions that favored their nation. But polarization, largely over the Franco-British wars in Europe, led to party formation during Washington's second term and the Adam's presidency. This, in turn, provided foreign agents with easier targets, and critically, they identified both willing and unwitting American partners (chapters 3 and 4).

Scholars have long known that foreign-related issues, from Hamilton's British-style national bank to the French Revolution, Jay's Treaty, Citizen Genêt's visit, to the efforts to buy Florida to the War of 1812 helped align the interests and language of the so-called "first party system."[1] What sets this book apart is Reeder's ability, through meticulous research, to identify how, when, and where foreign agents used personal connections to consciously stoke American policymakers' fears. He uncovers sneaky efforts to bribe editors or play individuals off one another. Conversely, even when foreign collusion was mild or non-existent, it remained a looming specter and a political weapon to bludgeon domestic opponents. Unwilling to accept rival factions as legitimate or to see themselves as partisans, Federalists and Republicans believed they "competed for the nation's soul—a soul that would reflect the image of France or Britain." "By 1800, Americans muddled ideological disagreements, partisan posturing, and foreign intrusion until they became indistinguishable" (138-39).

Whether this foreign meddling was effective depends on whether we focus on their general effect or their specific aims. Reeder makes a strong case that their sustained efforts helped deepen suspicions of fellow Americans, thus widening and perhaps creating partisan rifts. But as I read the evidence, agents seldom achieved their narrower goals. British minister George Hammond may have helped pave the way for the Jay Treaty by maneuvering Secretary of State Edmund Randolph out by selectively providing damning evidence against him (106-10). That seems, though, the exception, since American partners often abandoned foreign partners for fear that they might be ruined in a society that jealously guarded its independence.

The Spanish and French appeared to be particularly ineffective, and possibly overconfident that Americans would naturally side with them. Citizen Genêt's appeals to the American people started well enough, but once he ran afoul of George Washington's neutrality policy, his popularity plummeted. His successor, Pierre-Auguste Adet, thought he had learned from Genêt's mistake and

more quietly supported Jefferson's 1796 election. Yet he too was undermined as soon as he hinted publicly of that support as "Americans still repudiated open intervention" (121). Spain's chief diplomat, Carlos Yrujo, hoped covert conversations with Federalists, western secessionists, and the bribery of editors would keep the United States out of southwestern lands. But in the intimate world of the early republic secrets were hard to keep, especially with a free partisan press ready to dig up dirt. Upon learning of his machinations, Jefferson and Madison blocked Yrujo's access and then demanded his recall. If my read is right, then Reeder's narrative provides a bigger (perhaps perversely comforting) irony in a book rich with many others. Foreign agents' success in generating partisan rancor invited the elevated scrutiny that prevented them from accomplishing more tangible geopolitical goals. Deep polarization can threaten the health of a republic especially if it invites foreign meddling, but foreign agents also risk drawing the attention and ire, especially if their American adversaries win office.

The book's narrative style downplays its explicit engagement with the broader historiography, though the author is clearly well-versed in the scholarship. Here are a few of my take-aways. A broader chronological approach to Madison's thinking on foreign policy provides some new ways of thinking about him. Reeder's Madison is neither the principled idealogue of some biographers nor the shrewd pragmatist of recent work, but a thorny combination of both. He "hadn't transformed from a philosopher-statesman into a partisan politician after the 1780s." Rather these "identities had been in tension since his earliest political involvement—tensions perpetuated by the hazy line between principles and partisanship" (272). In places, Madison appears charming and flexible (especially in his early relationship with Washington), but also dogmatic (clinging to the embargo policy) and politically savvy.

The author's adeptness in carrying the story across time and space is one of the book's many virtues and perhaps particularly noteworthy for *Passport* readers. Much of the story unfolds in Philadelphia or Washington D.C. boarding houses, offices, and private homes.

Mostly, however, the nation's fourth President appears, like the young nation itself, as fragile, insecure, and desperate to the point of folly, especially during an incident that frames the broader narrative. Amidst mounting tensions in 1812, President Madison and Secretary of State Monroe foolishly emptied their secret service fund to pay John Henry, a British spy, for an ultimately worthless cache of documents they hoped (without examining) could prove Federalist opponents in Massachusetts made dodgy deals with Britain: "By 1812, Madison lived in and had helped create a nation in which it seemed rational to trust a former British spy and mysterious French gascon more than his political opponents" (260). This was not the type of leadership secure enough to carry the nation to the "treaty-worthy" status that Eliga Gould's excellent book suggests would only be achieved after 1815.[2]

They were, however, ready to make war. Reeder is careful to note that fears of foreign agents like Henry served as "a secondary issue" in Republicans' own war calculus (260). He instead speculates that a mixture of drama and potential embarrassment over the Henry affair might have rushed Madison toward a war declaration, which if delayed, could have allowed time for the news that Britain's offensive order in Councils had been repealed to reach Washington. The book otherwise smartly avoids the elusive question of which primary issues—attacks on American sailors and neutral vessels, desire for western lands, the failure of economic coercion, or concerns about a British-Indian alliance—fueled Washington's 1812 war fever. This choice allows Reeder to fold everything from Atlantic developments to Tenskwatawa under what another scholar has called "Conspiratorial Anglophobia."[3] In some ways the book's approach to the War of 1812 also validates Roger Brown's sixty-year-old characterization of the conflict as the culmination of a decade-long partisan battle. In both accounts, Republican leaders rejected the idea of a "loyal opposition" and believed that unity and war against Britain were the only means of preserving the republic.[4] Unlike Brown and older accounts of the war's origins, Reeder takes a far broader geographical perspective by tracing the influence of France, Spain, and other meddling foreign nations.

The author's adeptness in carrying the story across time and space is one of the book's many virtues and perhaps particularly noteworthy for *Passport* readers. Much of the story unfolds in Philadelphia or Washington DC boarding houses, offices, and private homes. As necessary, though, readers are brought into the maneuverings of James Wilkinson in the Spanish-American borderlands, onto Myaamia lands, British Canada, and the streets of Paris. Reeder usefully brings together backcountry Native American agency and diplomacy into a broader geopolitical analysis. In effect, this book reinforces the work of my dearly-departed friend Leonard Sadosky and Reeder's own mentor Alan Taylor. [5] Americans of this era simultaneously looked east and west. Atlantic history and western or continental history were so deeply intertwined as to be practically indistinguishable.

More domestically-bound political historians might push back against some of Reeder's conclusions. Recent work has tended to deemphasize the rigidity of partisan lines, instead highlighting sectional divisions over slavery or the intensely personal nature of early American "political combat" involving many "chieftains" and "no uniforms" as Joanne Freeman has argued.[6] A recent *Journal of American History* article also deconstructs the traditional "party systems" approach, stressing fluidity and issue-driven alliances rather than two party systems.[7] This book seems to implicitly push back against this new scholarship by placing great weight in the bifurcation of the U.S. political system, though the author's intimate knowledge of the sources, specific relationships, and intra-party battles, preserves the nuance of any given situation.

At the risk of stretching Reeder's case further than he might be comfortable, I wonder if his approach might help reclaim some of the emotional potency of party "labels" while also appreciating the limits of their interpretive power in other arenas. Like this new political history, Reeder rejects the power of unifying ideological principles or party apparatuses. Perhaps the often-dichotomous battles against foreign influence (generally defined by Britain's rivalry with France and Spain) provided the type of organizing logic necessary to build national political alliances within the otherwise chaotic, decentralized, and fluid partisanship that this newer political history evidences. If that's true, then how might we consider the role of real or perceived foreign threats in defining, reshaping, or hardening subsequent eras of partisanship, including our own?

Serpent in Eden made me consider how to bridge Madison's fears with Abraham Lincoln's oft-cited 1838 question "At what point then is the approach of danger to be expected?" "I answer," he continued, "if it ever reach us, it must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide."[8] Had "Madison's War" and the transcontinental treaty shifted the geopolitical

situation sufficiently enough, as Gould suggests, to make the United States less vulnerable? Had foreign powers learned their lesson or just become more sophisticated? Or perhaps Lincoln's own parochialism led him to undervalue the extent to which foreign intrigue continued to inform partisan combat? This provocative book provides a great starting point to think of these questions.

A brief epilogue also encourages us to think about more recent foreign interference from adversaries aimed at deepening polarization, influencing elections, and undermining Americans' faith in democracy. Reeder notes, rightly I think, that "democracies can be uniquely resistant to foreign manipulation," but also that they are made vulnerable to it when hyper-partisanship invites foreign interference. That was most apparent in 2016 when Donald Trump publicly appealed to Russian hackers and later pressured Ukraine President Zelensky to investigate Hunter Biden. It also was evidenced in the Clinton campaign's hiring of a former British agent, Christopher Steele, to track down evidence supporting a claim of Russian collusion (a bit reminiscent of the Madison—Henry dealings). Reports of misinformation campaigns by Russia, China, and Iran ought to provoke alarm, especially in an era of ICB missiles and cyberwarfare.

The question may be, how do we navigate these times without resorting to Lincoln-like overconfidence or 1790s-style paranoia? Reeder suggests that Madison's original political vision of multiple factions or a "multi-party system [fostered by electoral reform like ranked choice voting] could help restore democracy's inherent advantages against foreign meddling" (278). A re-empowerment of a principled center in American politics would no doubt help, provided of course that Americans remain vigilant against foreign operatives.

It's also worth stressing that the global context, and the United States' place within it, is fundamentally different then 200 years ago. United States political leaders of both parties have created significant "meddling" capacity of their own and have proven willing to use it when political leaders of either party feel it serves national interests abroad, which of course creates a different set of problems. But also, unlike in Madison's day there is a battery of domestic laws and range of international agreements that provide the justice system with greater tools to track and prosecute foreign agents and those who conspire with them. The 2024 conviction of Senator Bob Menendez suggests that this can still be true, and the recent federal indictment of Democratic New York mayor Eric Adams for corruption and the illegal solicitation of campaign contributions from Turkish officials suggests vigilance from the Democratic administration. It's also possible, of course, that exhaustion with partisan politics and fears of an emerging new threat in China could prove generative of greater bipartisan cooperation, though hopefully this development does not spark an actual war.

Regardless, it seems to me that Reeder's summoning of Madison's "first principles" and the charge in his unpublished "Advice to My Country" to cherish their union and its institutions are worth evoking. Recent election cycles suggest that a multi-party system may be unlikely, but perhaps greater recognition of our own partisanship might allow us to better distinguish between actual threats to democracy and legitimate political disagreement. We also do a disservice to ourselves and the past when we pine for some "Edenic" America that has, as Reeder's magnificent book shows, never existed.

Notes:

1. See, for example, Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick, *Age of Federalism: The Early American Republic, 1788–1800* (Oxford University Press, 1993); James Roger Sharp, *American Politics in the Early Republic: The New Nation in Crisis* (Yale University Press, 1993); Peter S. Onuf, *Jefferson's Empire: The Language of American Nationhood* (University of Virginia Press, 2000).
2. Eliga H. Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth: The American Revolution and the Making of a New World Empire*, reprint ed. (Harvard University Press, 2014).
3. Lawrence A. Peskin, "Conspiratorial Anglophobia and the War of 1812," *Journal of American History* 98 (December 2011): 647-69. See also Nicole Eustace ,*1812: War and the Passions of Patriotism* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).
4. Roger Brown, *The Republic in Peril: 1812* (Columbia University Press, 1964).
5. Leonard J. Sadosky, *Revolutionary Negotiations: Indians, Empires, and Diplomats in the Founding of America* (University of Virginia Press, 2010) and Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007); Alan Taylor, *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804*, First Edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2016).
6. John Craig Hammond and Matthew Mason, *Contesting Slavery: The Politics of Bondage and Freedom in the New American Nation* (University of Virginia Press, 2012); Joanne B. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* (Yale University Press, 2002).
7. Rachel A Shelden and Erik B Alexander, "Dismantling the Party System: Party Fluidity and the Mechanisms of Nineteenth-Century U.S. Politics," *Journal of American History* 110, no. 3 (December 1, 2023): 419–48, https://doi.org/10.1093/jahist/jaad262.
8. Abraham Lincoln, "Address Delivered Before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield," Illinois Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project* https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/357275 accessed 9/27/2024

A Review of Tyson Reeder, *Serpent in Eden: Foreign Meddling and Partisan Politics in James Madison's America*

Catherine O'Donnell

Like most history professors, I come into possession of a lot of books. I buy them, borrow them, and am sent them to review, blurb, or simply read. I learn something from each one and admire many. But there is one subset that I especially prize, what I think of as the birthday books. These are the rare monographs I set aside to give to my father. (Yes, I use review copies as gifts.) My father majored in history decades ago, loves learning, and is delighted to have his assumptions challenged. He also wants to read something he enjoys. If it sounds like I'm simply designating a book as "popular history" – a phrase that bears the anxious disdain of people who learned early to value traits other than popularity -- I assure you, I am not. Of all the books I read in a given year, these birthday books are among those I enjoyed the most and are without question the most likely to change the way I teach my undergraduate students. They have sweep and drama and intriguing people who do fascinating things. In their graceful mix of analysis and narrative, these books also reveal new ways to connect familiar events to each other and to new contexts. They tend to make you think about why the world is at is, and whether it almost wasn't, or if it kind of had to be. Tyson Reeder's *Serpent in Eden* is, I am happy to report, a birthday book. It tells a good story, and it changes the stories we tell.

At the heart of this riveting monograph stands James Madison, known intimately to Reeder because of his sojourn in the Madison papers. Reeder brings Madison to vivid life as a person while also illuminating connections among early national diplomacy, war, partisan politics, conceptions of race, and understandings of sovereignty. We traverse familiar events—the Revolution, the Constitutional Convention, the Election of 1800, the Louisiana Purchase, and the War of 1812 among them —in familiar company. Along with Madison, we find

Jefferson, Washington, Hamilton, Tecumseh, and Monroe. Reeder enriches and deepens our understanding of people and events through his extraordinary use of the archive. And he crafts a persuasive argument that links them in a new way: the conceptual murkiness of popular sovereignty, in combination with leaders' half-suppressed acknowledgment of the nation's expropriation of land and labor and a widely shared belief that democracy was both unstable and invaluable, hot-wired foreign influence to the binary structure of the two-party system. Madison, Reeder demonstrates, tried "to maintain the integrity of a republican union against foreign meddling" that threatened to turn the country's strength, and its sovereign people, into its soft underbelly (271). Reeder's Madison works tirelessly but often unwisely. Convinced of both the high stakes of the endeavor and the fragility of the political body, Madison strategized and intervened in ways that increased the divisions he sought to avoid. His legacy, Reeder writes, is "complicated." "A fierce adversary of foreign meddling and determined champion of political debate," Madison was "also…a partisan operative who facilitated the first by inflaming the second" (273).

Reeder takes us to parlors and cabinet meetings, ships, jails, and the floor of the Senate. He also immerses us in the wild realm of newspaper wars, explored by other scholars but freshly illustrated here, both because of Reeder's skills and because we will surely never run out of ebulliently vitriolic early national partisan copy at which to marvel. Marvelously stuffed with character and plot (and plots) as this book is, it's also deeply engaged with ideas. Reeder's colorful schemers and acid-penned polemicists are probing where sovereignty lies as they hurl their insults and pursue their variegated interests. Does sovereignty lie with the people? Does it lie with their representatives in government? When does dissent become treason? When does partisan advocacy become deceit? Foreign agents sought to influence American policy – and sow division – by appealing directly to the people, and this both subverted and honored the political framework Madison himself had helped to devise. Anxiety as well as analysis matters here. Reeder shows that time and again foreign powers were able "to sow distrust and reap chaos" because Madison and others mistrusted American democracy as intensely as they valued it. Their sense of republics as historically fragile, their understanding of the weakness of the nation in the face of European powers, and their recognition that the United States' racial slavery and taking of Indigenous lands created endless potential for hostile alliances, all coexisted with their commitment to the success of the fledgling country. Reeder braids together this combination of patriotism and dread.

As Reeder lays out his case, he takes us through both well-known and more obscure episodes. He relates the familiar story of Citizen Genêt in fine fashion, deftly conveying Genêt's endlessly confident blunders, Madison's chagrin, and Hamilton's glee, while also explaining the warring conceptions of sovereignty the episode revealed, the role of the press, and the consequences of the affair. Other foreign visitors also become vivid characters in their own right, while providing further evidence that foreign agents successfully pitted Americans, who were devoted to their country but suspicious of their countrymen, against each other. We meet Jean Victor Moreau, a French general exiled by Napoleon who becomes the subject of reports warning that he was still in league with Napoleon and scheming to "introduce monarchy into the United States." Or perhaps Moreau was "cooperating with Irish dissidents to provoke Americans to war against Britain" (225). Maybe something still more byzantine! We encounter John Henry, an Irish-born Briton who immigrated first to the United States and then to Canada, who was by turns a newspaper editor, wine seller, and soldier, and who as tensions rose between the United States and Great Britain, vowed to do his part to dissolve the union, preferably by sending New England into the arms of the British (253). Henry and his confederate, a French grifter named Paul-Emile Soubiran, convinced Madison to spend public funds to buy documents that revealed nothing more nor less than Madison's eagerness to discredit his political opponents. Reeder gives these episodes and many others their due as semi-comic yarns while also making entirely clear their intellectual and political roots and stakes.

Another of Reeder's contributions is to broaden the scope of political history in the eyes of readers for whom political history is their primary or even sole interest. Sharing American history beyond the circle of fellow early Americanists is often, at least for me, a process of insisting, "Those aren't separate stories." Reeder brings forward voices that many readers who are drawn to this book out of an interest in political history may not have heard before. That is not to say, of course, that this book does the work that studies centering natives and enslaved peoples in their cultures and experiences do. Figures such as Tenskwatawa and Joseph Brand enter *Serpent in Eden* more or less when and in the manner that they enter Madison's world. But they enter as actors nonetheless, and their significance emerges, even if only in glimpses. It is always clear, in Reeder's telling, that we're hearing these voices indirectly, and his graceful way of limning the sourcing as well as presenting the content has its own value. Tenskwatawa, Reeder writes: "wanted ground where his people could, as one Indian agent quoted him, 'watch the Boundary Line between the Indians and the white people – and if a white man put his foot over it…the warriors could easily put him back'" (241).

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Throughout *Serpent in Eden*, Reeder also foregrounds ways in which Madison understood and treated enslaved people and Native nations as threats to the republic. Reeder explains that Madison worried, along with many other observers, that "Europeans and Indians would divide and usurp American land." Madison also knew that "enslaved men and women detested bondage," and so from the era of the imperial crisis forward, conceived of them as a potentially "subversive internal population" that might ally with external enemies in a way that "could destroy nations" (15). I suspect that wars over who gets mentioned in standard narratives in the K-12 curriculum and whether college professors are teaching through the lens of "1619" or "1776," will never end. But through its meticulous assemblage of evidence and gripping narrative, a book such as this demonstrates to readers that Madison the ambitious constitutional architect is also Madison who fears the power of peoples the young nation had wronged. Reeder's efficient, vigorous sentences draw on and extend the work of many an earnest article. "Most revolutionaries failed to see that Indians who allied with the British fought of their own accord," he writes in one such passage. "By portraying Indians as British tools, revolutionary Americans imagined them as more dangerous, not less" (18). Even small moments count, such as Reeder's interrupting his recounting of Napoleon asking James Monroe questions about Thomas Jefferson in order to correct the historical record: "Did he have children? Yes, two daughters (it was actually three daughters and a son, but Monroe didn't count – probably didn't know about – the boy and girl born to Jefferson and Sally Hemings)" (160). For its tone and content, this book will continue to find readers beyond the circle of academic scholarship. It is my hope that as it does so, its embrace of

complexity takes us one step closer to a popular conception of American history as "yes, and" rather than "either, or."

Reeder's arguments are often phrased in crystalline terms – while writing this piece, I have found myself wondering whether the editor of the roundtable will find many of us quoting the same, ringing summations. But Reeder so richly documents his claims that it's difficult to find the seam between argument and narrative; one is tricked into thinking one is discovering an argument oneself. (That is a compliment, by the way, though I did feel professionally bound, at times, to at least try to resist.) This isn't simply a gift of a prodigious archive: it is easy for scholars, when blessed with abundant sources, to fall into writing about them rather than from them. The documents become our subjects rather than the people who created them. Reeder shows how it should be done. One of the marvels of this book is that Reeder creates scenes – even the impression of dialogue! – out of the archival record and does so without distortion or strain. He makes us feel, for example, as if we have witnessed Washington's explosive impatience at the public criticism he faced during the Genêt affair: "He would rather be dead than president, he shouted, and would 'rather be on his farm than to be made *emperor* of the world," provoking a "stunned silence" among his secretaries. (87) Even when Reeder is discussing the uncertain nature of his sources – explaining, for example, the impossibility of understanding what exactly Aaron Burr intended to do in the southwestern part of the continent, and why and with whom he intended to do it – he does so in a straightforward way that makes clear the historical and the historiographic stakes.

Innumerable moments in the book reveal Reeder's expert command of his sources while giving the reader a feeling of almost uncanny proximity to the past. Sure, we already knew of the rupture between Hamilton and Jefferson. But had we been able to conjure a scene in which Washington, admitting he had been slow to realize the lashing hostility between Hamilton and Jefferson, "pleaded with Jefferson to distinguish between 'difference of opinion' and corruption," only to have "A call to breakfast interrupt… the conversation?"

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Serpent in Eden is a terrific book, one that is both timely and timeless. In his conclusion, Reeder directly addresses the contemporary resonance of accusations of foreign interference in American politics. Moving elegantly through the centuries, he suggests that a multiparty system might be less prone to being turned neatly against itself than the two-party system has proved to be. If one chooses, many of Reeder's intricate accounts of partisan furor, disinformation, and real or imagined foreign influence can bring to mind the current moment. But the book does not need to be read in that register. Readers – including those most persuaded by his analysis of the perils this republic faced and still faces – can also revel in spending time in the early national world Reeder offers us on its own terms and in riveting detail. I cannot wait to give this book to my father on his birthday.

A Review of Tyson Reeder, *Serpent in Eden: Foreign Meddling and Partisan Politics in James Madison's America*

Katlyn Marie Carter

For a country that sought to be free of European entanglements, the young United States was anything but fully autonomous. It's not news that foreign relations drove political divisions in the early American republic, but what Tyson Reeder does in his new book is adjust the focus slightly to examine the period through the lens of foreign meddling. Doing so allows him to approach some of the recurring core questions about the early republic from a fresh angle. Filled with intriguing anecdotes, spies, and con-artists, *Serpent in Eden* makes the case for why republics may be uniquely vulnerable to foreign interference and how rampant partisanship makes them particularly ripe for it. The resonance with contemporary concerns simmers beneath the surface throughout the entire narrative, serving as a cautionary tale for modern readers.

The book, which spans the post-revolutionary period through the War of 1812, necessarily covers some familiar ground. Characters like Edmond-Charles Genêt and Aaron Burr make appearances, but they are contextualized alongside lesser-known figures to illustrate a pattern of foreign interference in American politics. Ultimately, Reeder suggests that "by pitting Americans against each other, foreign agents exposed unresolved tensions about where sovereignty resided in a republic." (6). Approaching the early republic through the framework of foreign intervention allows Reeder to argue that not only were politics animated by affairs abroad, but the very enactment of republican government was shaped by foreigners seeking to manipulate it for their own benefit. More gallingly, perhaps, Americans themselves facilitated this interference as they strategically invited foreign influence for the sake of short-term political gains even while pointing to it as a structural threat long-term. The contemporary resonances, given the pervasiveness of foreign meddling in our most recent elections, are downright chilling.

As recent scholarship has made clear, the early United States was not isolated across an ocean from imperial conflict. Reeder speaks to the way in which Americans were enmeshed in imperial dynamics from the beginning due to the presence of Europeans along the western edge of the new country, in combination with the ambitions of sovereign Native American nations. The book's first chapter sets the scene in the wake of the Patriot victory in the revolutionary war, emphasizing the fragility of the American confederation and equating it with the Indian Confederacy formed at Sandusky in 1783. From the start, American leaders "worried that Europeans and Indians would divide and usurp American land." (34). These anxieties drove politicians like James Madison to seek a balance between civil liberty and national security through the creation of a stronger union with executive power. Chapter 2 very effectively revives the contingency of the 1780s, pointing out that "foreign intrusion hung like a Damocles's sword over the proceedings [of the Constitutional Convention]" (47).

According to Reeder, Americans were not wrong to worry. From the start of the revolutionary war, "the

ramifications transcended American independence" for France and Spain (25) and during the peace process, "British agents aggravated the distrust between the allies" (28). As the newly independent American states found their footing, other empires were not sitting idly by awaiting the outcome. Reeder documents efforts by Spanish agents to "use Americans' divisions against them, knowing that they would never pursue a united policy in the West" (39). Moving into the 1790s and early nineteenth century, he details continued Spanish, French, and British interventions in American politics to promote politicians or policies friendly to their ambitions, in addition to even more extensive plots to take territory in the west by linking up with disgruntled Americans (including the elusive Burr scheme, which Reeder chronicles in chapter 9).

Not only were Americans hyper-aware of these dynamics, foreign actors indeed saw the United States as a potential pawn in reaching their own geo-political goals. Scholars tend to emphasize how the young United States was on the periphery of European power struggles in the period, almost an after-thought for leaders like Napoleon Bonaparte or the British who fought him. But Reeder urges us to rethink this characterization by delving into the records of those who worked in North America advising and spying for politicians back across the pond. Many Europeans believed the United States was both strategically important and vulnerable. Even Napoleon, who according to Reeder, "couldn't see the United States surviving, much less thriving" (161) still saw the country as relevant and even useful in managing broader imperial ambitions.

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Diplomatic relevance was one thing, but how these figures went about acting on it was another. Reeder repeatedly makes the assertion that foreign powers saw the potential to successfully interfere in American politics due, firstly, to its nature as a republic. He talks about elections as the regular "lawful overthrow" of the government (7). At points, it is slightly unclear whether Reeder agrees with this characterization or is merely describing how foreign agents conceived of the electoral system. Either way, because of the nebulous nature of sovereignty in a republic, foreign agents saw and seized upon openings to advance their own interests in the gaps between officials and the public. Figures like Genêt and his superiors "struggled to divine" the implications of the American conception of sovereignty for diplomacy, believing that "a new diplomatic age" was dawning where the people had a say in foreign relations (81). Whether this confusion was genuine or merely opportunistic, Reeder shows how European officials took advantage of it again and again. While he "knew his antics would never fly in Europe," for example, Genêt "penetrated the gray area where the people's sovereignty ends and the government's begins," in the United States (81).

The press is a constant presence throughout the book as the arena where foreign agents were often most able to advance their ploys. In chapter 8, for example, Reeder introduces readers to Spanish diplomat Marquis de Casa Yrujo, who "understood that foreign powers needed the esteem of public opinion more than they needed the good graces of the president" (166). To protect Spain's claims on West Florida in the face of the Jefferson administration's plans to move into the territory, Yrujo posed as an anonymous American and published in the Federalist press. When he was eventually exposed, he defended his taking to the press, declaring that "Public opinion...is the true sovereign of a democracy" (172). This incident was one of many that posed challenges for politicians like Madison, who valued the free press but came to see it as a possible vulnerability when employed by foreigners.

The fact that foreign leaders identified this confusion between rulers and the ruled as an opportunity to interfere indeed forced Americans themselves to confront unsettled questions about where sovereignty ultimately resided. Foreign interference "demanded that Americans probe the most fundamental question about their democracy: Who held sovereignty, the people, or the rulers?" (124). Reeder suggests that Americans were "unable to distinguish the government from the people," and so "turned foreign policy disagreements into accusations of subversion and corruption—a war between liberty and tyranny, order and anarchy" (124). One of the prime examples of this process involved Jefferson's embargo policy, which "Federalists indicted … as Napoleon's scheme since its earliest days" (221) while Republicans believed Federalists were in league with the British to spread disinformation about the policy.

None of this might ultimately have mattered much had early Americans not been so deeply divided along factional lines. This polarization fused with suspicion of foreign influence to foster a toxic cycle of politicians welcoming foreign meddling in domestic politics even while they simultaneously denounced it as dangerous. The book is rife with incidents that illustrate the phenomenon. In the end, Reeder argues that Americans distrusted each other more than they did foreign agents. Though politicians suspected their opponents of being in league with foreigners, they were not averse to teaming up with outsiders themselves if they thought it would expose the perfidy of their domestic political opponents. At the end of the day, Reeder asserts, early Americans "worried less about foreign meddling than about the *wrong kind* of foreign meddling—the kind that hampered their political objectives" (4). Even as they were inviting it, associating opponents with foreign intrigue became a regular political ploy. Chapter 4, for example, chronicles foreign influence through the neutrality crisis of 1793 to highlight how accusations of foreign collusion became a common political cudgel. "If foreign agents could exploit partisanship, partisans could exploit foreign tampering to taint their rivals and advance their vision for the national future" (87).

Diplomatic operatives caught on to this dynamic; they identified the liability posed to their American political pawns if they acted publicly and saw the benefit of being able to saddle political opponents with foreign allegiances. Chapter 5 tracks British minister George Hammond's efforts to privately feed documents to Federalists that incriminated Secretary of State Edmund Randolph as being in league with the French. The next chapter follows French minister Pierre-Auguste Adet acting on the realization that "Americans wouldn't tolerate a foreign agent who publicly flouted the president. Second, partisans could stomach foreign meddling if it remained clandestine and promoted their politics" (119). In an attempt to get Thomas Jefferson elected president in 1796, Adet took to the press anonymously only to have it backfire when his suspected intervention tanked the Republican's fortunes in the election.

The cycle of partisans allying with foreign agents and simultaneously accusing their opponents of doing the same eventually fed into the creation of policies like the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798. Reeder highlights the wrong-

headedness of these measures, suggesting that "fears of foreign meddling and foreign collusion gripped Federalists until they struck at the heart of civil liberty and political opposition" (137). While the policies may have been the wrong steps to take, Reeder doesn't fully reckon with the fact that there was rampant foreign interference in domestic politics. Far from responding to false fears, Reeder's own analysis shows how the Federalists had valid concerns, though they were certainly hypocritical as they were taking part in the same kind of foreign meddling they feared of their opponents. Covering the contentious election of 1800, Reeder details justified anxiety among Republicans "the Federalists would consort with foreign powers to retake illegitimate power" (147). In short, despite being driven by partisanship, foreign meddling was in fact non-partisan; everyone was doing it to some degree.

Reeder's sustained focus on James Madison from the Constitutional Convention through the War of 1812 allows him to drive home this point and address the constant conundrum of how to weigh ideology versus strategy as explanatory factors in the past. Historians have long found Madison hard to pin down as he seemed to significantly shift his views over time. Reeder adds yet another way in which the so-called architect of the Constitution seems inconsistent if not downright hypocritical. In early chapters, Reeder traces how Madison's concerns about vulnerability to foreign interference undergirded his desire for a stronger union with the Constitution. He continued to hone in on foreign meddling as a primary threat to republican government and harbored suspicion of the intent behind foreign actors and the links between them and his political opponents across the 1790s. Yet, when it came to his own ties to foreigners, Madison appeared all too willing to engage in the very activity he feared was threatening the republic.

The final three chapters of the book follow Madison through his election to the White House and the outbreak of the War of 1812, highlighting the politician's willingness to ally with foreign figures if he felt it could expose his domestic opponents of doing the same. The behavior culminated in Madison paying an obscene amount of money via someone who turned out to be a French con-artist in order to obtain an incriminating letter that ultimately revealed no tangible evidence of collusion between his opponents and the British. While it proves to be one of the most grievous examples of it, the incident is illustrative of a dynamic running throughout the book. Not only do early American politicians appear to frequently say one thing and do the opposite, they seem to justify violating their principles as the only way to stop their opponents from committing the same unethical acts.

In the end, what Reeder successfully identifies is a vicious cycle between partisanship and foreign meddling, each phenomenon enabling and perpetuating the other. The warnings for us today are stark, and Reeder makes them most explicit in the epilogue. What's perhaps most alarming is the role of key individuals in preventing foreign meddling from being more successful (or destructive, depending on your vantage point). For example, Reeder notes that "Genêt got it wrong. In 1790s America, the voice of Washington was the voice of God" (89). Would it have been different had Washington not been president? Had he not commanded the broad public support that he did? Reeder seems to suggest it would have—and the significance of individuals in power should perhaps serve as the starkest warning of all today.

Author's Response

Tyson Reeder

I sometimes forewarn students intent on becoming academics that it is far more unnerving to submit a published work to one's peers for review than to submit a paper to a professor for grading. An egregious error or poor writing may cost some points and heartache for a student, but ultimately nobody need know about the problems except the student and professor. When an academic publishes a book, however, they submit it for public scrutiny to the brightest minds in their field — a daunting prospect. Gratification melts that icy unease upon seeing words and phrases such as "intriguing," "a beautifully and tightly woven account," "fascinating and well-written," and even "a birthday book" to describe *Serpent in Eden*. Colleagues pay an even higher compliment when they assess the book's claims and research with analytical fervor. Thanks to those scholars here who have taken the time to do that.

It is a difficult task to combine an engaging narrative with new scholarly insight, speaking to broad audiences while saying something important to fellow scholars. The author who attempts it risks doing neither well. My gratification is amplified, therefore, to see that these colleagues have discerned my intended historiographical contributions about early American politics, US foreign relations, and James Madison. In these reviews, several phrases capture what I hoped to achieve with *Serpent in Eden*: "episodes . . . take on fresh significance"; "it changes the stories we tell"; "recurring core questions . . . from a fresh angle." Brian Schoen notices that "the book's narrative style downplays its explicit engagement with the broader historiography, though the author is clearly well-versed in them." This *Passport* roundtable provides an ideal scholarly forum to engage more explicitly with that broader historiography as addressed by the reviews here.

Foreign affairs had an outsized influence on domestic politics during the early republican period. Though that concept is hardly a revelation in the historiographical literature, viewing the foreign and domestic fronts through the lens of foreign meddling and foreign collusion gives scholars new insights into their cyclical relationship.

As the reviewers note, foreign affairs had an outsized influence on domestic politics during the early republican period. Though that concept is hardly a revelation in the historiographical literature, viewing the foreign and domestic fronts through the lens of foreign meddling and foreign collusion gives scholars new insights into their cyclical relationship. Catherine O'Donnell notes that by highlighting the "conceptual murkiness of popular sovereignty," *Serpent in Eden* links familiar faces and events "in a new way." She continues, "Reeder's colorful schemers and acid-penned polemicists are probing where sovereignty lies as they hurl their insults and pursue their variegated interests." In familiar and unfamiliar cases, foreign meddling exposed unsettled questions about sovereignty in the early United States.

The Genêt Affair provides a strong example of a well-known episode seen with a fresh perspective when considering the murky lines between the sovereignty of the people and the power of the government. Scholars have too often taken for granted that French diplomat Edmond-Charles Genêt failed in his mission because Americans considered his antics an infringement on US sovereignty. Recently, for example, Carol Berkin has argued that "in his brief tenure, [Genêt] insulted the sovereignty of America, exacerbated the tensions between Republican supporters of France and Federalist supporters of Great Britain, and ignored every protocol of diplomacy foreign ministers were expected to obey." While he certainly exacerbated party tensions (my chapter on Genêt is called "Kindling Parties"),

the other two points merit a more nuanced conversation.[1]

Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick come closer to the point in *The Age of Federalism*. Genêt considered "Congress as the final arbiter" in the new government and failed to conceive that the will of the president may not align with the will of the people—and he believed he had discerned the will of the people. Further, Genêt disdained the European-style "old diplomacy"—diplomacy marked by distrust, manipulation, and secrecy. Genêt's behavior is better explained by his intention to inaugurate a new age of diplomacy than by a reckless disregard for diplomatic norms. Some historians who have recognized Genêt's reliance on Congressional favor have too quickly assumed that Americans had already demarcated the lines between Congressional and presidential power in foreign relations. As Eugene R. Sheridan wrote, "Genêt never truly comprehended that under the new dispensation [of the US Constitution] the president was ultimately responsible for the conduct of American foreign affairs." Such statements in the literature fail to recognize the Genêt Affair as a moment of contingency in US foreign affairs. Genêt was not so much mistaken about the locus of power over foreign affairs in the new government but rather on the losing side of a dispute about where such power would reside.[2]

Elkins and McKitrick successfully diagnose Genêt's failures more as the result of his understandable but erroneous expectations of support from the American public than as a personal diplomatic failing. They missed the opportunity, however, to analyze Genêt's mission as a critical glimpse at the embryonic notions of sovereignty in the new republic. By examining how Americans and foreign authorities thought about foreign meddling in the United States, we see sovereignty within a republic as a murkier, less developed concept. As I write about Genêt, he "penetrated the gray area where the people's sovereignty ends and the government's begins...If a foreign minister incited the people against their monarch, the minister would be subverting the government. But what about a government in which the people reign sovereign?" I conclude, Genêt "believed that France and the United States had unveiled a new diplomatic age, when the people directed foreign affairs through legislatures rather than executives" (81).

Christopher J. Young identifies how the Genêt Affair affected fundamental questions of sovereignty, arguing that Genêt's antics revealed and perpetuated the executive office's reliance on public opinion. Like other historians, though, Young argues that "Genêt's . . . misunderstanding of the relationship between the American people and their newly established federal government led to his downfall in the United States." By assuming that Washington and Hamilton won the dispute because Genêt misunderstood the new governing system, historians overlook this moment of uncertainty among Americans. Scholars should not write as though Washington was objectively correct and Genêt too naïve or bullheaded to see it. Rather, Washington won the debate, and he won it because he was Washington. "Vox populi vox dei?" I ask. "Genêt got it wrong. In 1790s America, the voice of Washington was the voice of God" (89). Genêt may have underestimated Americans' reverence for Washington, but he subscribed to a plausible alternative for conducting US foreign relations given the nation's new governing logic.

Genêt knew that Americans worked with new definitions of sovereignty unrecognizable to most Europeans, even if some Americans wanted Europeans to treat the president like the sovereign. As Katlyn Marie Carter notes, "The fact that foreign leaders identified this confusion between rulers and the ruled as an opportunity to interfere indeed forced Americans themselves to confront unsettled questions about where sovereignty ultimately resided." "What Genêt considered popular mobilization," I conclude, "[Alexander] Hamilton deemed subversion" (85). Through the Genêt Affair, historians should see not a moment of naïve, mistaken, or irrational diplomacy but a moment of fraught contingency in which Americans were trying to grapple with questions inherent to popular sovereignty.[3]

Less famous than Genêt, the Spanish minister Marquis de Casa Yrujo was even more vocal that US theories of sovereignty exposed the republic to new forms of foreign intervention. "Like Genêt," I argue, "Yrujo demanded that Americans probe the most fundamental question about their democracy: Who held sovereignty, the people, or the rulers" (124). At the same time that Genêt and Yrujo forced Americans to struggle with their theories about sovereignty, the diplomats also pressed them to consider how their republican theories reshaped foreign relations. Certainly, as Berkin argues, Genêt flouted traditional diplomatic protocols, as did Yrujo, but they realized that the United States was anything but a traditional power. According to their logic, by giving sovereignty to the people, Americans had rewritten diplomatic protocols, at least as they related to the new republic. Americans could not toggle back and forth between the sovereignty of the people and the sovereignty of the leaders whenever it suited them. As Young demonstrates, some Americans argued that as a sovereign people they must resist "any interference in the internal administration of the Government by any foreign power or minister." As I argue about Madison in his dealings with Yrujo, however, such protests failed to explain why foreign agents could not try to influence public opinion, given that, as Yrujo argued, "Public opinion is the true sovereign of a democracy" (172). If sovereignty belonged to the people, they would have to accept the consequences of their new system, including attempts by foreign governments to shape public opinion and even rally the people against their representatives. Those theories may have flouted diplomatic protocols under monarchies, but they seemed perfectly consistent with diplomacy in a republic with a sovereign citizenry.[4]

As Schoen suggests, *Serpent in Eden* subscribes to a historiography that situates the War of 1812 within partisan conflict, elucidating and expanding that literature with its emphasis on accusations of foreign meddling and foreign collusion. A large body of literature, Roger H. Brown's work significant among it, emphasizes the importance of partisan politics in the US march toward war in 1812. Examining why the Republican leadership in Congress and the presidency plunged the nation into war, Brown argues that they perceived a crisis of nationhood. Plagued by British infractions on US sovereignty and neutrality, the nation hadn't faced such a crisis of legitimacy since before the ratification of the Constitution. Republicans considered themselves the guardians not only of the nation's future but also of its republican purity. They contrasted their virtuous mission with the base lust for power of Federalists, characterized by pro-British and monarchist ideals. Therefore, Brown argues, the debate over war "is more clearly understood as a party division."[5]

Lawrence Peskin has more recently further developed Brown's ideas that Republicans declared war for fear that the republic would collapse, but he situates their concerns as "conspiratorial Anglophobia." Such Anglophobia often mirrored its counterpart, Francophobia, and those phobias "were largely, although not solely, partisan political phenomena." Peskin demonstrates the partisan hysteria that led to such phobias, but historians should see this hysteria—what Richard Hofstadter called the "paranoid style"—in its context of actual foreign meddling. Before the US presidential election of 2016, historians could casually dismiss conspiratorial threats from foreign powers as overwrought, even delusional suspicions—and those certainly existed. Faced with Russian meddling

in 2016, Iranian and Chinese meddling in 2020, and even some limited accusations of Israeli and Ukrainian meddling, Americans now have a heightened sense of the vulnerabilities a republic faces when foreign powers can influence its internal politics. Conspiracies have been exaggerated, misreported, embellished, and sometimes created in the imagination, but very real instances of foreign meddling and foreign collusion did occur. From the comfort of hindsight, historians have too readily dismissed early Americans' very understandable fears of the republic's vulnerability to foreign manipulation. A consensus exists among historians that we must understand the early United States as almost a nonentity on the world stage. But scholars betray an inability to truly imagine the nation as a weak, vulnerable power when they too quickly accuse early Americans of harboring irrational fears of foreign powers during the early republic. If Americans feel that sense of vulnerability today when the United States is a world superpower, those feelings must be multiplied many times to appreciate early American concerns.[6]

A consensus exists among historians that we must understand the early United States as almost a nonentity on the world stage. But scholars betray an inability to truly imagine the nation as a weak, vulnerable power when they too quickly accuse early Americans of harboring irrational fears of foreign powers during the early republic. If Americans feel that sense of vulnerability today when the United States is a world superpower, those feelings must be multiplied many times to appreciate early American concerns.

Certainly, "political paranoia" occurred frequently in early US politics, and Madison was often "blinded by political paranoia" like the rest (252, 258). As Brian Rouleau aptly writes, however, citing Joseph Heller, "Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they aren't after you." As Carter comments on the Federalist perspective, they "were not wrong to worry" about foreign meddling in domestic politics during the especially fraught period of the late 1790s. Political paranoia and partisan hysteria did not appear in the republic ex nihilo. Those phenomena resulted from serious threats to US sovereignty and very real possibilities that the republic could collapse in the face of foreign pressure. For decades after the Peace of Paris of 1783, foreign powers did expect to control, annex, or partition a weak United States, and foreign agents did explore and try to effectuate those possibilities. American partisans frequently distorted and exaggerated those threats, but those threats were dispositive to partisan fears. Historians cannot fully understand the increasingly paranoid style in US politics without understanding a key component of the cycle that generated it: foreign meddling. Gratifyingly, then, Rouleau finds "that it becomes hard to deny the very real ways that foreign agents propelled events forward and altered how Americans at the time understood their republic's relationship to the wider world."

Serpent in Eden builds on but also expands the chronology and geography of analyses that have followed Brown's lead. It also expands the cast of relevant characters. When analyzing partisan bickering, the drama "unfolds in Philadelphia or Washington DC boarding houses, offices, and private homes," as Schoen describes. But the other side of the book's coin—foreign meddling—brings the reader to the western stretches of the republic, Shawnee wigwams, decrepit hôtels and grand palaces in Europe, and British Canadian forts. Those venues help readers internalize the vulnerability of the United States.

Schoen identifies possible pushback that I anticipated about the rigidity of party organization. With the caveat that "the parties remained fluid and ill-defined," party loyalty is a major organizing theme for the book (6). But party loyalty is different than party organization. Here too, without falling into a presentist approach, recent experience gives insight into past phenomena. For over a decade now, Americans have slipped into an era when party power is at a low but partisanship is at a high, and that combination can have a detrimental effect on public discourse. Early Americans also lived at a time when many considered themselves deeply loyal to a party—to an imagined community (to borrow from Benedict Anderson) that thinks like them—but not to a party apparatus. Rather, Americans, again as Schoen identifies, adopted the "emotional potency of party 'labels'" even if the actual organization remained fluid. They defined those differences according to foreign policy and the foreign image (either British or French) after which Americans would create their republic.[7]

Rouleau and O'Donnell differ in their assessments of the book's treatment of slavery, which, together, may capture the balance of the book on that issue. Rouleau raises what he perceives as a "quibble" that slavery did not feature more. O'Donnell finds that the book "foregrounds ways in which Madison understood and treated enslaved people" and that it recognizes that "that the United States' racial slavery and taking of Indigenous lands created endless potential for hostile alliances." As I argue of the Revolutionary War period, "Madison counted the enslaved among the internal enemies," leading him to conclude that "alone, external enemies posed little threat. Combined with subversive internal populations, however, they could destroy nations" (15). That concern persists throughout the book: "Thomas Jefferson addressed Indian attacks in tandem with 'domestic insurrections' that the British excited among the enslaved" (18); "Even worse, those enslaved in America might be inspired to start slaughtering their masters— to use slaveholders' imagery— as they had in Saint- Domingue" (122); The French "might garrison Louisiana with black troops— a dangerous example to the South's enslaved population" (155); "Madison worried also that enslaved laborers would flee to French territory, believing that they considered 'the French as patrons of their cause'" (156); including the example the Rouleau gives, "The monarch would rely on 'the support of federal partizans, avowd Tories, his own Subjects here, & Burr's Choice Spirits'— a wise crack about Aaron Burr's followers— '& I suppose Insurrections of Slaves in the Southern States'" (219).

Rouleau may differ from O'Donnell because the book never singles out an enslaved community or incident of rebellion for analysis in the way it does Tenskwatawa's or Joseph Brant's Native American confederacies. Although I analyze Native American and enslaved communities in the same vein as "simultaneously a part of and apart from the American body politic," it is true that enslaved communities receive less particularized attention (18). Though viewed by white Americans as potential internal threats, the enslaved community fit less neatly into the internal political divisions under scrutiny throughout the book. Native American nations never fit neatly into those divisions, either, but they more closely resembled the foreign threats in analysis and therefore called for greater attention than the enslaved community. The British did recruit the assistance of slaves during the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. *Serpent in Eden* analyzes that dynamic as it related to the Revolutionary War, but because the book almost never focuses on actual hostilities during the War of 1812, it would have made little sense to include that dynamic during that period. Threats did exist in the white American imagination, but, as I note earlier, those are mentioned throughout the book as applicable.

Rouleau mentions an intriguing exception to consider—Gabriel's Rebellion. Simon Newman has placed that rebellion in the larger political context of the 1790s,

along with Fries's Rebellion. When seen alongside Fries's Rebellion, Gabriel's plot becomes a political revolt as much as a slave revolt, inspired by Republican rhetoric of the period. Like most discussions of domestic politics, Newman's work considers the foreign affairs context of political debate. With a deeper focus on foreign meddling in reality and imagination, however, historians may learn something new and valuable not just about the cycle I identify in *Serpent in Eden*, but about race, slavery, and politics in the early republic. Neither Gabriel's Rebellion nor Fries's Rebellion featured in *Serpent in Eden*, though they are relevant to the trajectory and argument of the book. Each contributed to and resulted from the intertwined foreign and domestic suspicions of the time. But in a late-1790s moment replete with more directly relevant intriguers and participants such as Georges-Henri-Victor Collot, Pierre-Auguste Adet, Tadeusz Kościuszko, William Blount, George Logan, and Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand, other developments would have interrupted the narrative flow without a proportionate contribution to the analysis.[8]

Finally, we can train our historiographical sight on the central figure of the book, James Madison. When historians consider Madison's constitutional theories, they most often credit him with insights into balancing power and liberty within a republic. His most famous *Federalist* essays, no. 10 and no. 51, are usually viewed more in conversation with each other than with the essays that surround them. By pitting competing elements among the rulers and the ruled against each other, the Constitution would stabilize democracy. Those theories do characterize Madison's constitutional theories, but they are an incomplete picture of what he sought to accomplish. Scholars can complete that picture when they consider how concerns of foreign meddling featured in Madison's constitutional thought. Rather than jump from *Federalist* no. 10 to *Federalist* no. 51 to determine how Madison hoped to balance power and liberty, scholars should see no. 10 as it related to the essays immediately around it. We can then discern a clear relationship between those essays and Madison's "Notes on Ancient and Modern Confederacies" and his arguments at Virginia's ratifying convention. Scholars have recognized that Madison needed to determine how to balance government power with civil liberty because he believed they must exist in a delicate equilibrium. More fundamentally, though, achieving that balance would allow Americans to engage in virulent political conflict without allowing foreign powers to exploit their divisions and intrude on national sovereignty. In the essays immediately following no. 10, Madison reiterates his findings from his notes on confederacies: "History abounded with examples of mighty powers inciting internal divisions" in weaker confederacies, I argue (46). Madison's notes on confederacies, his negotiations with Spanish diplomat Diego de Gardoqui, his earliest *Federalist* essays, and his arguments at the Virginia ratifying convention all

place no. 10 within a new frame of reference, with foreign meddling a fundamental concern.[9]

That new frame of reference presents national security as a dispositive concern in Madison's constitutional thought. Akhil Reed Amar has argued, "Whereas Alexander Hamilton and George Washington understood best of all how to create a strong government to protect against external foes, James Madison understood best of all how to protect freedom of thought and freedom of expression against internal oppression." Amar follows the standard logic of Madison primarily concerned with matters of domestic power and liberty rather than national security. Amar goes even further, suggesting that because national security was the cohering logic of the Constitution and because Washington was the major advocate of that national security vision, Americans should consider Washington the true Father of the Constitution. *Serpent in Eden* corrects the mistaken image of Madison as unconcerned with national security and places the issue at the very center of his own constitutional logic.[10]

Through the lens of foreign meddling, *Serpent in Eden* complicates traditional narratives about Madison. Most recently, Noah Feldman has reiterated a long-standing depiction that the statesman Madison of the 1780s evolved into a partisan Madison of the 1790s. Certainly we can identify a moment (or perhaps series of moments) in the early 1790s in which Madison transformed into an "opposition party leader" (75). Because the Republican party evolved during that period and because Madison became a leader of it, he by definition had transformed into a party leader. But we do not see Madison surrender a once-principled vision of republicanism for a new vision inspired by political expedience. At the same time, I do not dismiss Madison's political pragmatism as readily as Lance Banning. I do subscribe to Banning's contention that republican liberty remained a driving force in Madison's political ideas ("Madison maintained his devotion to civil liberty," I write, "but he reversed his theory about how to safeguard it" in the late 1790s). Schoen identifies my contention that Madison "hadn't transformed from a philosopher-statesman into a partisan politician after the 1780s" (272). Rather, those "identities had been in tension since his earliest political involvement—tensions perpetuated by the hazy line between principles and partisanship" (272).[11]

Madison is at times, as Schoen describes, "insecure and desperate to the point of folly," but I meticulously avoid allegations that he was corrupt, especially when it came to the notorious Henry–Soubiran Affair. "By 1812," I assert, "Madison lived in and had helped create a nation in which it seemed rational to trust a former British spy and mysterious French gascon more than his political opponents." However shortsighted when it came to his political opposition, and however myopically he equated the nation's interests with his own, Madison maintained at least the integrity of trying to guide the republic in a direction he thought best for it. I hope *Serpent in Eden* captures his folly but also his genuine desire "to protect a vulnerable democracy and sustain a strong nation" (279). As Madison explained in his *Federalist* essays, he and his fellow Framers had tried to design a constitution that would persist not just through the best impulses of the people and leaders but one that could absorb their worst tendencies. Americans may see Madison's follies reflected in their current political moment, but perhaps they can also share his hope, expressed to his colleagues at the Constitutional Convention, that they were "framing a system which we wish to last for ages."[12]

Notes:

1. Carol Berkin, *A Sovereign People: The Crises of the 1790s and the Birth of American Nationalism* (Basic Books, 2017), 82; For the exacerbation of party tension, see Harry Ammon, *The Genêt Mission* (Norton, 1973).
2. Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick, *The Age of Federalism: The Early American Republic, 1788–1800* (Oxford University Press, 1993), 344–45; Eugene R. Sheridan, "The Recall of Edmond Charles Genêt: A Study in Transatlantic Politics and Diplomacy," *Diplomatic History* 4 (Fall 1994): 467.
3. Christopher J. Young, "Connecting the President and the People: Washington's Neutrality, Genêt's Challenge, and Hamilton's Fight for Public Support," *Journal of the Early Republic* 31 (Fall 2011): 435–66.
4. Young, "Connecting," 464.
5. Roger H. Brown, *The Republic in Peril: 1812* (Columbia University Press, 1964), 45.
6. Lawrence A. Peskin, "Conspiratorial Anglophobia and the War of 1812," *Journal of American History* 98 (December 2011): 648; Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics: And Other Essays* (Knopf, 1965).
7. Frances McCall Rosenbluth and Ian Shapiro, *Responsible Parties: Saving Democracy From Itself* (Yale University Press, 2018); Julia Azari, "Weak Parties and Strong Partisanship Are a Bad Combination," *Vox, November 3, 1016; Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, Revised edition, 1991).
8. Simon Newman, "The World Turned Upside Down: Revolutionary Politics, Fries' and Gabriel's Rebellions, and the Fears of the Federalists," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 67 (Winter 2000): 5–20.
9. James H. Read, *Power versus Liberty: Madison, Hamilton, Wilson, and Jefferson* (University of Virginia Press, 2000).
10. Akhil Reed Amar, *The Word That Made Us: America's Constitutional Conversation, 1760–1840* (Basic Books, 2021), 212, 380, 443.
11. Lance Banning, *Sacred Fire of Liberty: James Madison and the Founding of the Federal Republic* (Cornell University Press, 1995); Noah Feldman, *The Three Lives of James Madison: Genius, Partisan, President* (Random House, 2017).
12. "Term of the Senate," June 26, 1787, in *The Papers of James Madison Digital Edition, J. C. A. Stagg, ed.* (University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2010).

William McKinley's Strategic-Economic Policy Toward the Phillipines, 1898: A Research Note on Aroop Mukharji's "The Meddler's Trap"

William Burr

No debate among members of the Society of American Foreign Relations (SHAFR) and U.S. historians generally has continued longer than the one over President William McKinley's decision to annex the Philippines. Aroop Mukharji's recent contribution to the debate in *International Security* advances a novel argument even as it underscores traditional historiographic divides.[1] Acknowledging that the decision was one of the "most consequential" in the history of U.S. foreign relations, Mukharji finds it "puzzling" partly because he considers "conventional" explanations such as the impact of foreign trade expansionism unconvincing (although he also mentions interpretations involving gender and public opinion). Writing as an international relations theorist, Mukharji believes what really mattered was that McKinley "felt ownership" over the Philippines and could not possibly envision "letting [them] go." He was caught in what Mukharji identifies as a "meddler's trap," a "self-created entanglement," which constrained him to see no alternative to annexation. Mukharji's challenge to historians requires a response, especially from historians of foreign relations.

Focusing his skepticism on the "most prominent" "foreign trade expansionism" interpretation, Mukharji contends that McKinley "distrusted" foreign markets, finding them unreliable compared to the home market. Instead, he argues, the President supported complete annexation of the Philippines because of three beliefs. First, McKinley assumed the Filipinos were unable to govern themselves, a situation that he feared might create a power vacuum attracting intervention by such powers as Germany or Japan. Second, he believed U.S. governance of the islands would prevent such an outcome. Third, according to Mukharji, McKinley had a cognitive bias caused by the "endowment effect": the war with Spain had put the U.S. military in the Philippines, and therefore McKinley felt that the United States "owned" those islands. That "self-created entanglement" changed the President's perception of U.S. national interests. McKinley could not "let [the Philippines] go" because "the United States was already there and not because of prospective trading opportunities."

During the summer of 1898, Mukharji explains, McKinley had not decided on full annexation, as his appointment of anti-annexationist William Day to head the Peace Commission to negotiate with Spain made evident. At that point, McKinley "lacked a larger reason to annex" (66). Mukharji acknowledges the argument that "The United States could theoretically derive economic benefits either from controlling the Philippines and extracting its wealth or from gaining future access to other markets in Asia, enabled by a coaling station near Manila." But he rejects it because "the president had mixed evidence that either benefit would soon yield predictable and major profits." According to Mukharji, the "slide" from seeking a coaling station to seeking the "entire archipelago was caused by a set of factors that represented the meddler's trap far more than they did economic greed." Near the close of his presentation, Mukharji notes that annexation made the United States a "regional power in Asia for the first time," which "enabled U.S. power projection elsewhere on the continent."

Mukharji has done extensive research using primary sources and has evidence to support his interpretation about not "letting go." Yet he ignores the ample data that demonstrates the role of broad commercial and military interests in McKinley's thinking about the value of the Philippines. Mukharji sees U.S. commercial interests as essentially secondary in McKinley's decision making when in fact they were central. There is significant primary source material that confirms that during 1898, when there was growing international competition for control of the markets of China, McKinley believed that the United States's new position in the Philippines presented a "commercial opportunity" that he could not ignore.

The purpose of this extended comment is to present context and evidence that Mukharji, perhaps in his quest for theoretical parsimony, discounts or ignores. McKinley typically kept his own counsel and seldom spoke publicly or wrote privately about his thought processes and purposes. He was far more comfortable giving idealistic reasons for his controversial decision to annex the Philippines. Nevertheless, the evidence presented in these comments suggests that broader commercial and strategic purposes were highly relevant to McKinley's decision to take an imperialist course in the western Pacific. A range of considerations influenced McKinley, including ideological, but this essay will focus on the role of strategic-economic considerations. These comments largely reinforce the "revisionist/Wisconsin school" interpretations that Mukharji is determined to refute.[2]

While Mukharji allows that trade and investment opportunities were an element in McKinley's thinking, he denies that they were "dominant." Yet robust evidence supports the argument that they were fundamental and highly relevant to explaining McKinley's general approach. Indeed, Mukharji cites several studies on McKinley's decision making that give centrality to strategic economic policy considerations in the President's thinking. For example, Mukharji praises Paolo Coletta's essay on McKinley and the Philippines for its "wealth of information." But one of that author's main points was that McKinley supported annexation because a "commercial port in the Philippines would enhance American trade in the markets of the Orient, then deemed 'limitless,' … and also prevent the powers who were slicing the Chinese melon from infringing upon" U.S. interests. Another cited author, Lewis Gould, argued that "somewhere between accident and design the United States pursued a line of policy that included an opportunistic assault on a vulnerable point for Spain, a generalized awareness that a greater naval presence

in the Pacific would support economic initiatives in Asia, and a commitment to the view that foreign markets were a beneficial addition to the nation's search for prosperity." Instead of finding value in the context that these authors provide, Mukharji tacitly rejects it by trying to refute arguments about possible "economic benefits."[3] It warrants investigating why authors such as Coletta and Gould made such statements.

This review also calls attention to a secondary source that Mukharji overlooked, a consequential study by Thomas J. McCormick: *China Market: America's Quest for Informal Empire* (1967), the fourth chapter of which, "A Dose of Insular Imperialism," is directly relevant. McCormick made ample use of primary sources to support his argument that annexing the Philippines was integral to the McKinley administration's "pragmatic expansionism" aimed at improving the United States's capabilities to develop overseas markets. For McKinley and his advisers, the Philippines were strategically important for supporting the growing U.S. interest in trade and investment in East Asia, China in particular, where competing powers threatened to block access by establishing spheres of influence. U.S. concern over these developments motivated Secretary of State John Hay to deliver the famous "Open Door" notes during 1899-1900.[4]

By giving short shrift to the role of strategic-economic concerns, Mukharji does not do justice to McKinley's perspective. Thus, when Mukharji observes that, during the 1896 campaign, McKinley was "skeptical of foreign markets" and "distrusted" them because of their unreliability, he implies that is all that needs to be said on the subject (1, 51). Yet, during the 1890s, the U.S. foreign trade position was a dynamic one, and it changed significantly during McKinley's presidency. As Secretary of State John Hay noted in his February 1902 eulogy for McKinley, in the month of the slain president's first inauguration, "steel rails began to be sold at $18 a ton – one of the most significant facts of modern times [because] America had begun to undersell the rest of the world."[5] This sense of economic opportunity abroad set the tone for McKinley's administration.

McKinley himself was an astute observer of marketplace trends and he recognized the United States's changing commercial and financial position, even before he was elected. At the founding meeting of the National Association of Manufacturers in 1895, then Governor McKinley showed no doubts about the value of exports: "We want a reciprocity which will give us foreign markets for our surplus products, and in turn that will open our markets to foreigners for those products which they produce and which we do not."[6] During October 1898, when he was making his decision on Philippines annexation, McKinley proclaimed in a Hastings, Iowa speech, that "We have good money, we have ample revenues, we have unquestioned national credit, but what we want is new markets, and as trade follows the flag, it looks very much like as if we were going to have new markets." [7]

Far from assuming that domestic markets were adequate, McKinley believed that the export trade could solve what many then saw as an "overproduction" problem. In Boston on February 17, 1899, McKinley spoke of the United States's "enormous export trade" and noted that "our capitalists … sought foreign investments," and "we are fast going from a debtor to creditor nation." He also stated that the United States was turning its attention "to getting trade wherever it can be found." In his last speech, at Buffalo on 5 September 1901, he declared: "What we produce, beyond our domestic consumption, must have a vent abroad. The excess must be relieved through a foreign outlet and we should see everywhere we can and buy wherever the buying will enlarge our sales." Opposing traditional protectionism, McKinley told his audience, "The period of exclusiveness is past."[8]

That the administration saw advancing foreign trade and investment as a consequential policy issue was embodied in a State Department report that McKinley sent to Congress on May 16, 1898, when the United States had already defeated Spain's fleet in Manila Bay. According to the report on the *Commercial Relations of the United States with Foreign Countries During the Years 1896 and 1897,* "every year we shall be confronted with an increasing surplus of manufactured goods for sale in foreign markets if American operatives and artisans are to be kept employed the year round." That problem made the "enlargement of foreign consumption of the products of our mills and workshops … a serious problem of statesmanship as well as of commerce." Such a statement, along with McKinley's public statements, suggest that Mukharji's observations about the unreliability and unpredictability of foreign markets miss the mark because the problem of "surpluses" made the McKinley administration see overseas trade and investment as necessary, potentially valuable, and worth cultivating. [9]

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McKinley's policy toward the Philippines correlated to the challenges of the new international competition. Although the United States had destroyed the Spanish fleet in May 1898, it did not occupy Manila until August. Yet McKinley was keeping his options open ("when the war is over we must keep what we want"), even though nationalist leader Emilio Aguinaldo had declared independence. As Mukharji recounts, in early May, a State Department position paper contemplated keeping a coaling station in the Philippines (or one in the Caroline Islands). The Navy's War Board focused McKinley's attention on a port in the Philippines, a development that Mukharji misses. On May 20, the Board recommended that if the United States had the "intention to hold the Philippines or the port and neighborhood of Manila," the War Department should take action to fortify Manila Bay and the Navy should send a shallow-draft monitor for harbor defense. Defensive measures, they claimed, would enable Admiral Dewey to keep his position in the bay in the event of an attack by a more powerful fleet and ensure that the Navy had a base in the Far East. McKinley accepted the Board's recommendations and ordered the War and Navy Departments to carry them out "at the earliest practical moment."[10]

As Mukharji also notes, during June 1898, McKinley discussed the possibility of retaining a "port and necessary appurtenances" in the Philippines. That same month, Charles Denby, the U.S. Minister to China (and subsequently a member of the Philippines Commission), wrote to the State Department that "I don't like to speak out but I am greatly inclined to the annexation of Hawaii and the retention of the Philippines" because "it would be a grand thing for our trade."[11] The actions that McKinley had taken so far, e.g. approval of eventual fortification of Manila Bay and expressed interests in naval facilities there, were consistent with the development of a capability to project U.S. power in East Asia, thus supporting what Denby had in mind.

During the summer, McKinley preserved his freedom of action. In his talks with French emissary Jules Cambon on the protocol that would end the fighting, McKinley insisted that the negotiations between U.S. and Spanish peace commissioners would settle the final status of the Philippines. At the time, he told a newspaper editor that "as we go on [if] it is made to appear desirable that we should

retain them all, then we will certainly do it." As for the eventual negotiations, McKinley assured his control of the U.S. side of the process by deciding that "no man will be put on that [U.S.] commission who is hostile to the acquisition of outside territory." He also rejected any power sharing arrangements with the "insurgents."[12]

Near the close of his essay, Mukharji rightly observes that annexation made the United States a "regional power in Asia for the first time" and that it "enabled U.S. power projection elsewhere on the continent" of Asia. The latter was exactly the point that the U.S. Navy's War Board made in August 1898 when it discussed post-war naval base requirements. Mukharji overlooks this report, written by Alfred Thayer Mahan. Yet it nicely illustrates Gould's point about a "generalized awareness that a greater naval presence in the Pacific would support economic initiatives in Asia." The report included a review of what naval stations outside of U.S. territory should be available to the navy in time of war, and Manila was prominent among the desiderata.[13]

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According to the report, U.S. naval stations should be located in areas that "owing to unsettled political conditions, and our having great political and commercial interests in them, are liable to become scenes of war" where the United States "may be engaged, directly or indirectly." With respect to the Pacific Ocean, the United States had important interests because of "the notorious changes that are taking place in the political relations of China, the intrusion of European control upon her territory, and the consequent effect upon her trade relations." That made China's future the "most interesting commercial question of the Pacific to us at the present moment."

The War Board found that "possession of [the Hawaiian] islands, which we happily now own, is militarily essential, both to our transit to Asia, and to the defense of the Pacific."[14] The Board wanted to control Manila as well because it "is very centrally situated as regards the whole sweep of the eastern coast of Asia." Within a radius of 2,000 miles, "very easy steaming distance," the United States could reach Beijing, Hong Kong, and Shanghai, as well as the islands of Sumatra, Java, and Guam. If the United States retained Manila, "the position must in any event be adequately defended on account of [its] political and commercial importance … and therefore the naval station might as well be situated there and share in the defense provided." Implicitly, control of Manila would make it possible for the United States to project military power to support U.S. commercial interests in China in the event that European powers threatened U.S. access.

The War Board clearly conveyed to the Senate that the United States needed the means to project its power in East Asia in order to support commercial and strategic interests. Evidence has not surfaced on whether McKinley was aware of the War Board report although its line of argument about the importance of holding Philippine territory for strategic-economic reasons was consistent with his developing thinking. Certainly, Mahan and McKinley interacted extensively during the period of the War.[15]

Admiral George Dewey was thinking along the same lines as the War Board. In late August, his concern about the ambitions of other naval powers, Germany in particular, motivated him to ask the Navy Department to add a battleship and an armored cruiser to his forces in Manila because of the "critical state of affairs in the East as well as in the Philippines."[16] A few days later, he sent Secretary of the Navy John D. Long a more detailed message about the value of holding Luzon. Dewey tasked General Vincton Greene to deliver the message personally. As the latter had done his own thinking about the situation in the Philippines (see below), it is possible that the General had an impact on the content of Dewey's message.[17]

Going further than the War Board, Dewey argued that of all of the Philippines, Luzon was the "most desirable" to retain for commercial and military reasons. Manila had great commercial value and if kept in "our hands would soon become one of the first ports in the world." Dewey further observed that Manila is "nearest the great centers of trade in the Far East," including Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Yokohama, "and nearest the trade routes from the United States and Honolulu to those centers; consequently its influence would be greater if held by us." Moreover, Subic Bay, north of Manila was "decidedly the best harbor in the Philippines, having no equal as a coaling station or naval and military base."

Dewey's message reached the White House, and McKinley no doubt received it. Mukharji cites a copy found in presidential aide George Cortelyou's papers, without mentioning the observations on the Far East or on commercial advantage. The message also appeared in the "confidential" documents compendium that McKinley later sent to the U.S. Senate. Dewey's approach dovetailed with what McKinley would soon be saying about the value of holding Luzon at a minimum prior to his decision on complete annexation.[18]

By mid-September, McKinley was sharing his thought processes, making explicit what had been implicit in his actions. When he met with a delegation from the National Civil Service Reform League on September 15, he asked them how much of the Philippines the United States should keep and how much could be left to Spain. If there was discussion of that point, it may not have been recorded, but McKinley asked if the delegation thought that possession of Manila would "facilitate the expansion of our trade in the Orient." Receiving a positive response, McKinley "nodded a good deal."[19]

The next day, McKinley disclosed even more when he met with the members of the Peace Commission, as they were about to head for Paris to negotiate the treaty with Spain. Mukharji says nothing about this event, about which one of the members, Whitelaw Reid, wrote a detailed account.[20] It should be noted that, in keeping with McKinley's earlier decision, of the five individuals that he chose for the Commission, three supported the acquisition of the Philippines, which would help McKinley avoid complications during the negotiations. They were Reid, the publisher of the *New York Herald Tribune*, and Senators Cushman Davis (R-MN) and William Frye (R-ME), both of whom were on the Foreign Relations Committee and could help build support for a treaty with Spain that included annexation. The Commission's chair, former Secretary of State William Day, was personally close to McKinley and at that point favored the limited objective of keeping Manila as a naval base. But Day was loyal and would follow the President's negotiating instructions. For political balance, McKinley included an outright opponent of annexation, Senator George Gray (D-Delaware), also a member of the Foreign Relations Committee.[21]

During the meeting, McKinley heard statements that strongly leaned toward annexation as a way to promote U.S. commercial objectives. Senator Davis declared that the Philippines presented a "great opportunity for the United States with reference to trade in the East, as well as reference to naval power." Senator Frye spoke of the "moral features of the case," noting that a majority in New England would

oppose returning the islands to Spain "with any show of consistency or morality." According to Reid, Day "spoke in a strongly conservative sense" against further territorial acquisition, especially of islands with many people "still in a state of savagery, and also a great variety of religions," including "depraved" Muslims. He did allow, however, for the possibility of keeping "the harbor and bay of Manilla."

Whitelaw Reid, as was his wont, spoke fulsomely on the strategic importance of holding the islands in their entirety. "I spoke of the great importance of the Philippines" with "reference to the trade in China, of the difficulty morally of taking one part and abandoning the rest to Spain." Reid further argued that the United States could conduct "very considerable" trade with the Philippines" and possessing them "would give us an enormous advantage in the vastly greater commerce that might be cultivated with China." With Hawaii already under U.S. control, holding the Philippines would enable the United States to "build up such a commercial marine on the Pacific Coast as should ultimately convert the Pacific Ocean into an American lake."

McKinley entered the discussion cautiously, observing that while the "acquisition of new territories was naturally attractive to the American mind," the situation could change later when "difficulties, expense, and loss of life became manifest." The potential for future conflict notwithstanding, "we could not possibly give up Manila and doubted the wisdom of attempting to hold it without the entire island to which it belonged." He was "not inclined to go" further.

He saw Manila as the best harbor for a coaling and naval station but acknowledged other good locations such as Subic Bay. While the United States could limit itself to Luzon, Bradford saw the island as militarily vulnerable. Moreover, dividing the group, he asserted, "would materially injure the commercial importance of Manila."

Mukharji argues that McKinley lacked a "larger reason" to annex the Philippines by the time he appointed Day to chair the Peace Commission, but the President's statements suggest otherwise. Significantly McKinley referred to an "incidental" matter, by which he did not necessarily mean minor or secondary, but a pointed reason for the U.S. presence on the islands: "our tenure in the Philippines [provides] the commercial opportunity to which American statesmanship cannot be indifferent." He further observed, no doubt with ongoing developments in China in mind, that the United States "seek[s] no advantages in the Orient which are not common to all." Thus, the United States promoted an "open door" in the region and was also "ready to accord the open door to others." Moreover, "the commercial opportunity which is naturally and inevitably associated with this new opening depends less on large territorial possession than upon an adequate commercial basis and upon broad and equal privileges." In other words, however much Philippine territory the United States seized, it was a means to an end: the prospective commercial vistas afforded by holding strategically important territory. This exemplifies the pragmatic expansionism that Thomas McCormick had in mind in *China Market*.

The instructions that McKinley read to the Commissioners indicated that he was keeping his options open: "the United States can not [sic] accept less than the cession in full right and sovereignty of the island of Luzon." That was congruent with Admiral Dewey's thinking, but it left McKinley with scope to support far more comprehensive acquisitions. Yet, if Spain was left with some Philippine territory, he wanted to be sure that an agreement ensured U.S. commercial access: "It is desirable … that the United States shall acquire the right of entry for vessels and merchandise belonging to citizens of the United States into such ports of the Philippines as are not ceded to the United States upon terms of equal favor with Spanish ships and merchandise." Thus, if he decided against complete annexation, McKinley sought a practical application of the "Open Door" policy to the islands.

After the mid-September discussion with the Peace Commission, McKinley met with General Vinton Greene. Greene argued in favor of complete annexation.[22] Mukharji rightly focuses the reader's attention on the General, whose experience in the Philippines gave him information and perspectives that he shared with the President. Mukharji observes that "perhaps indicating his lack of interest in the commercial element of the Philippines, Greene included just one paragraph in his sixty-page report that addressed potential growth in commerce for the United States" (75). Yet Greene wrote that "with these islands in our possession and the construction of railroads in the interior of Luzon, it is probable than an enormous extension should be given this commerce, nearly all of which would come to the United States." This was qualitatively important information that challenges Mukharji's interpretation of a "lack of interest" on Greene's part.[23] Indeed, it provides additional evidence of the positive considerations that influenced McKinley's determination to annex the Philippines.[24]

When the Commission was in Paris negotiating with Spanish diplomats, its members received the same policy inputs that President McKinley had been receiving. They met with General Greene, who reinforced the inclinations of the U.S. Commission's majority to favor complete annexation. Also in the policy mix supporting complete annexation was Commander Royal B. Bradford, the chief of the navy's Bureau of Equipment, who discussed broader strategic naval and commercial interests when he met with the Peace Commission in Paris on October 14, 1898.

According to author Margaret Leech's account, McKinley had Bradford sent to Paris so that the Commissioners could hear the naval strategy perspective.[25] Bradford told them that he was mainly interested in the military aspects of the problem, but he also believed that "the entire group would be a very valuable acquisition for naval and commercial purposes." He saw Manila as the best harbor for a coaling and naval station but acknowledged other good locations such as Subic Bay. While the United States could limit itself to Luzon, Bradford saw the island as militarily vulnerable. Moreover, dividing the group, he asserted, "would materially injure the commercial importance of Manila."[26]

Like the Naval War Board, Bradford saw holding the Philippines as highly relevant to broader U.S. strategic interests in East Asia. When asked by Day, "Do you not think a commercial station in those islands is much more valuable to the United States, with a view to its trade in China and Japan and other parts or that sea, than it is with reference to any trade with the islands themselves?," Bradford replied that a "commercial station at the Philippines [was] valuable for that purpose." Still, its value "depends largely upon our influence in China," he acknowledged. When Day asked whether the United States had to "be all over the Philippine islands" in order to play a role in China, Bradford responded that "it will be a great advantage to possess all of them." Mukharji does not mention Bradford's thinking, but according to Reid, Bradford "impressed Secretary Day a little," and may have influenced his support for limited annexation.[27] McKinley must have been impressed as well because he included the Bradford testimony in the compilation that he sent to the Senate.

When the Commissioners sent their recommendations to the president, Davis, Frye, and Reid supported annexation; it was evident that their thinking coincided

with the views of military officers like Bradford and Greene on the various justifications for taking that course. Their basic view was that "it would be [a] naval, political, and commercial mistake to divide the archipelago." Moreover, dividing the islands would "needlessly establish dangerous rivals at our door."

William Day sent a minority report in which he modified his earlier anti-annexation position, which Mukharji does not mention. Citing the "strategic advantage … shown by high naval authority," he supported the annexation of Luzon and adjacent territory. To protect U.S. commercial and strategic interests, Day proposed "stipulations for absolute freedom of trade and intercourse among all the islands of the group." Day believed that would give "us practical control of the situation, with a base for the navy and commerce in the East, and responsibility for the people to whom we owe obligation and those most likely to become fit for self-government." In his statement, Senator Gray objected to annexation altogether because that would "reverse [the] accepted continental policy of [the] country declared and acted upon throughout our history."[28]

By the time the Commissioner's advice reached Washington, McKinley had decided on complete annexation. Through a campaign of speeches in the previous weeks, he had already prepared public opinion for that possibility. McKinley's views on the matter were consistent with the reasoning that had been advanced by the three annexationist commissioners as well as Bradford and Greene. In an unsent October 26 message that suggested the President's mindset, Secretary of State Hay wrote that McKinley had concluded that taking Luzon alone "can not [sic] be justified on political, commercial, or humanitarian grounds." Thus, "the cession must be of the whole archipelago or none," and the latter was "inadmissible."[29]

The McKinley administration treated the Philippines as a laboratory for currency reform, while the Roosevelt administration launched the Commission on International Exchange, which attempted to reform currency systems in China, Mexico, and elsewhere. But that is another story.

Notably, McKinley did leave some evidence consistent with Mukharji's theory. On October 25, he wrote to Day privately that the United States was in a "situation where it cannot let go" in view of the "interdependency of the several islands, their close relation with Luzon, the very grave problem of what will become of the part we do not take, … and it is my judgement that the well-considered opinion of the majority would be that duty requires we should take the archipelago." Had Mukharji cited this statement, he could have used it as evidence of the "meddler's trap." He does not. But even if he did, there is another way to interpret McKinley's meaning. At a minimum, his use of the word "duty" may have been a reference to the requisite that the United States did not forfeit an opportunity to support its strategic-economic objectives in East Asia.[30]

On October 28, Hay sent the Commissioners a message instructing them that the President sought annexation of the Philippines in their entirety. Hay further noted that McKinley had given "the views of the Commissioners the fullest consideration, and in reaching the conclusion above announced, in the light of information communicated to the Commission and to the President since your departure, he has been influenced by the single consideration of duty and humanity."[31] Those statements suggested that McKinley had in mind the reasoning advanced by the Commissioners—the need to avoid a naval, political, and commercial mistake—along with related policy inputs that supported it, more than a mere feeling that he could not "let [the islands] go."

McKinley's directive to the U.S. Peace Commission set the stage for difficult negotiations with Spain, which ended successfully when the United States agreed to pay $20 million for the Philippines. Mukharji suggests that annexing the Philippines was somehow inconsistent with John Hay's 1899 Open Door Notes (78), but the terms of the treaty with Spain embodied the Open Door premise of U.S. access to export markets. As the U.S. Commission's Secretary John Bassett Moore explained to the Spanish commissioners, it was U.S. policy "to maintain in the Philippines an open door to the world's commerce" and that the United States was willing to admit Spanish merchandise and ships to Philippines ports for a period of years on the "same terms as ships and merchandise of the United States."[32] Those terms were covered in Article IV of the Treaty, allowing for a 10-year period.

To support his argument that economic expansion was not a McKinley priority, Mukharji maintains that the president "did not expand trade with much fervor," noting that exports to Asia slowed and that the President put "little time and energy [into] negotiating reciprocity treaties with other countries." The latter point disregards the 13 treaties negotiated under the 1897 Dingley Tariff, for example with France and Argentina, which were held up in the Senate by conflicts between free traders and protectionist-minded industries. McKinley announced a new drive for reciprocity the day he was assassinated. As for exports to Asia, both McKinley and his successor, Theodore Roosevelt, took the long view, assuming that prospects for overseas trade and investment required currency and other administrative reforms to create a more stable climate. Thus, the McKinley administration treated the Philippines as a laboratory for currency reform, while the Roosevelt administration launched the Commission on International Exchange, which attempted to reform currency systems in China, Mexico, and elsewhere. But that is another story. [33]

McKinley had certainly "meddled" in the Philippines and there were certainly strong pressures, such as prestige concerns and great power rivalries, which influenced his decision for complete annexation. But positive strategic-economic reasons for a more or less permanent U.S. political and military presence informed McKinley's decision. "Trapped" does not do justice to McKinley's position; it is reminiscent of the old "greatness thrust upon it" canard, which denies that U.S. policymakers purposefully sought to maximize the United States's power position in 1898. Yet, from the outset of the United States's intervention in the Philippines, McKinley sought naval bases and "appurtenances," and later far more, so that the United States could project power and advance its position in the great power rivalries over access to China. Through a selective use of sources, Mukharji evades any consideration of such evidence.

In his recent McKinley biography, Robert Merry observed that McKinley avoided public discussion of the hardnosed purposes that informed his decisions on annexation. Merry quotes as an example a speech in which McKinley declared that "our concern was not for territory or trade or empire, but for the people whose interests and destiny, without our willing it, had been put in our hands." Merry contrasts McKinley with Mahan, Lodge, and Roosevelt, who more explicitly spoke of the goals of "projecting power into the world for the purposes of trade and wealth and national prestige." McKinley "couldn't quite bring himself to say [that]" but Merry nevertheless sees him as a "force behind imperialism."[34] There is plenty of evidence that speaks to that point; not only his private and public statements, but also the reports and messages by Admiral Dewey, General Greene, and Commander Bradford that the President made available to the U.S. Senate.

Aroop Mukharji should receive due credit for reviving

one of the richest and most interesting debates in the historiography of U.S. foreign relations. But too much of the evidence is inconsistent with, or even refutes, his theories. Sometimes the older interpretations hold up well because they are in harmony with the primary sources. In any event, McKinley and the annexation of the Philippines is a subject that invites continuing reflection and discussion.

Thanks to Lynn Eden, Stanford University; Richard Immerman, Temple University; and David Painter, Georgetown University, for helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper.

Notes:

1 . Aroop Mukharji, "The Meddler's Trap: McKinley, the Philippines, and the Difficulty of Letting Go," *International Security* 48 (2023): 49-90.

2. Mukharji oversimplifies by stating that the "Wisconsin School" was so-called because of William A. Williams' professorship at that state's major university. While Williams was highly influential, so was Fred Harvey Harrington because Williams was his Ph. D. student as were Walter LaFeber, Thomas McCormick, and Lloyd Gardner, among others. See this *festschrift* for Harrington: Thomas J. McCormick and Walter LaFeber, eds., *Behind the Throne: Servants of Power to Imperial Presidents, 1898-1968* (Madison, University of Wisconsin, 1993).

3. Paolo Coletta, "McKinley, the Peace Negotiations, and the Acquisition of the Philippines," *Pacific Historical Review* 30 (1961), 345; Lewis L. Gould, *The Presidency of William McKinley* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1980), 96. More recently, in her important book on gender and gender politics, Kristin Hoganson acknowledges that "economic motives certainly played a significant role in the decision to fight for the control of the Philippines, which were located close to the hotly contested and potentially lucrative China market. Those who believed the nation needed strategic bases to secure its share of eastern profits regarded the Philippines as a stepping-stone." See Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 134.

4. Thomas J. McCormick, *China Market: America's Quest for Informal Empire, 1893-1901* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1990). For a related interpretation, see Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), and more recently, *The American Search for Opportunity, 1865-1913, Volume II, The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 157-60.

5 . John Hay, *Memorial Address* (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1902), on Library of Congress Website at https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/public/gdcmassbookdig/williammckinleym01hayj/williammckinleym01hayj.pdf.

6. Jennifer A. Delton, *The Industrialists: How the National Association of Manufacturers Shaped American Capitalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 43; also quoted in William A. Williams, *The Contours of American History* (Chicago: Quadrangle Paperbacks, 1966), 363-64.

7. William McKinley, *Speeches and Addresses of William McKinley From March 1, 1897, to May 30, 1900* (New York: Doubleday & McClure, 1900), 124, but also 98 and 109. The "trade follows the flag" statement is also quoted in Margaret Leech, *In the Days of McKinley* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), 341.

8. McKinley, *Speeches*, 198-199; McKinley's 1901 speech reproduced at "The American Presidency Project," https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/president-mckinleys-last-public-utterance-the-people-buffalo-new-york. For the widespread conviction among business leaders, politicians, and economists during the 1890s that the United States was experiencing chronic overproduction, see Martin J. Sklar, *The Corporate Reconstruction of American Capitalism, 1890-1916* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 55-57. For McKinley's changing views on tariffs and protectionism, see Paul Wolman, *Most Favored Nation: The Republican Revisionists and U.S. Tariff Policy, 1897-1912* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

9. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Foreign Commerce, *Commercial Relations of the United States with Foreign Countries During the Years 1896 and 1897*, (Washington, D.C,: Government Printing Office, 1898), 21-22.

10. Gould, *The Presidency of William McKinley*, 97, 99, and 101; William Reynolds Braisted, *The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977), 29.

11. Gould, *The Presidency of William McKinley*, 99; H. Wayne Morgan, *America's Road to Empire: The War with Spain and Overseas Expansion* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965), 100.

12. Robert Merry, *President McKinley: Architect of the American Century* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018), 310-12, 334; Gould, *The Spanish-American War and President McKinley* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1980), 67. Day may have been influenced by a memorandum that he had received from Senator Henry Cabot Lodge (R-MA), who emphasized the importance of a naval base in the Philippines. According to Lodge, "With our cheap steel and a foothold at Manila--which is the greatest commercial and strategic point in the East--the carrying trade would fall into our hands very largely when the Nicaraguan Canal is opened, and until that is done would pass to San Francisco and New York." See Richard H. Werking, "Senator Henry Cabot Lodge and the Philippines: A Note on American Territorial Expansion," *Pacific Historical Review* 42 (1973): 234-40. For more on Lodge and the Philippines, see Richard Immerman, *Empire for Liberty: A History of American Imperialism from Benjamin Franklin to Paul Wolfowitz* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010),146-54

13. Naval War Board to Secretary of the Navy John D. Long, mid-August 1898, Robert Seager II and Doris D. Maguire, *Letters and Papers of Afred Thayer Mahan, Volume II, 1890-1901* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1975), 581-82. The archival version is cited and discussed in Braisted, *The United States Navy in the Pacific,* 52-53.

14. Merry, *President McKinley*, 204-213; LaFeber, *The American Search for Opportunity*, 147-148; Gould, *The Spanish-American War and President McKinley*, 15. The annexation of Hawaii during the summer of 1898 was a crucial development not mentioned by Mukharji, but one that McKinley strongly supported.

15. Mahan to Seth Low, 28 June 1900, Seager and Maguire, *Letters and Papers of Afred Thayer Mahan,* 691. For an outstanding recent study of Mahan's thinking and its impact, including his interactions with McKinley, see Nicholas A. Lambert, *The Neptune Factor: Alfred Thayer Mahan and the Concept of Sea Power* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 2023).

16. Braisted, *The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909*, 51.

17. Rear Admiral Dewey to Secretary Long, 29 August 1898, Gardner Weld Allen, ed., *Papers of John Davis Long, 1897-1904* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1939), 188-90.

18. Mukharji, "Meddler's Trap," 68 (at note 85); *Message from the President of the United States Transmitting a Treaty of Peace Between the United States and Spain*, 383-84.

19. Smith, "William McKinley's Enduring Legacy," 231.

20. H. Wayne Morgan, ed., *Making Peace with Spain: The Diary of Whitelaw Reid, September-December 1898* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), 26-31. McCormick cites this discussion in *China Market* but used the diary in Reid's personal papers.

21. Leech, *In the Days of McKinley*, 329-30; Morgan, *Making Peace with Spain*, 14-15; Merry, *President McKinley*, 324.

22. Merry, *President McKinley*, 338. For an early account of the Greene-McKinley interactions drawing on Greene's personal papers, see Ephraim K. Smith's informative essay, "William McKinley's Enduring Legacy: The Historiographical Debate on the Taking of the Philippines," in James C. Bradford, ed., *The Crucible of Empire: The Spanish-American War and Its Aftermath* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1993), 234-36.

23. For the quotation from Greene's report, see 55th Congress 3d Session Executive B Part 2, *Message from the President of the United States Transmitting a Treaty of Peace Between the United States and Spain Signed at the City of Paris on December 10, 1898, Accompanying Papers,* January 4, 1899 (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1899), 409 (also quoted in Merry, *President McKinley* at 328). The Library of Congress' online copy has "Confidential" printed on the title page and a State Department declassification stamp from 24 May 1960. The declassification was perhaps *pro-forma* because Leech's book, published in 1959, cites this document.

24. Developing the Philippines as a market was a long-term project that lasted beyond McKinley's presidency. See Carl Parrini, "Charles Conant, Economic Crises, and Foreign Policy," in McCormick and LaFeber, *Behind the Throne,* 35-66; Sklar, *The Corporate Reconstruction of American Capitalism, 1890-1916,* 83-84 at note 58.

25. Leech, *In The Days of McKinley*, 330. For Bradford's testimony to the Commissioners, see *Message from the President of the United States Transmitting a Treaty of Peace,* 472-90.

26. For Reid's account of the Commission's meeting with Bradford, see Morgan, *Making Peace with Spain,* 73-74.

27. Morgan, *Making Peace with Spain,* 73-74.

28. Peace Commissioners to Secretary of State Hay, 25 October 1898, U.S. Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, With the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to Congress December 5, 1898* (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printintg Office, 1901), Document 813.
29. Hay to Day, 26 October 1898, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States,* Document 814. On the unsent message, see Richard W. Leopold, "The *Foreign Relations* Series: A Centennial Estimate," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 49 (1963): 598, n 12. For McKinley's effort to influence public opinion, see Gould, *The Presidency of William McKinley*, 136-37.
30. Merry, *President McKinley*, 338.
31. Hay to Day, 28 October 1898, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States,* Document 818.
32. *Message from the President of the United States Transmitting a Treaty of Peace Between the United States and Spain*, 210-11, and 218; Treaty with Spain, 10 December 1898, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, Document 712a.
33. Wolman, *Most Favored Nation*, 30-31; Peter Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest: Conflict and Change in American Foreign Policy* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1998), 82-83; Parrini, "Charles Conant, Economic Crises, and Foreign Policy:" 35-66. See also Allan E. S. Lumba, *Monetary Authorities: Capitalism and Decolonization in the American Colonial Philippines* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2022).
34. Merry, *President McKinley*, 340-41, 486.

In the next issue of *Passport*:

*A roundtable on Sergey Radchenko,

To Run the World;

*A roundtable on Philip Dow,

Accidental Diplomats;

*2025 SHAFR conference information;

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Yalta after 80 Years: Some Reflections on What We Know and What We Don't and Why

Henry D. Fetter

As the 80th anniversary of the Yalta Conference, which convened in the Crimea in early February 1945, approaches, there is still much that we don't know, and much that has been obscured by what has been written—and not written—about it. Without making any claim to comprehensiveness, and intending to be somewhat provocative, my purpose here is to identify a number of gaps in our knowledge and the limitations in our sources, but at the same time to revisit perennial questions about the conference and to stimulate further discussion as to its purpose, conduct, and outcome.

The departure point in what follows is an article I wrote a few years ago which appeared in the *Journal of Cold War Studies* entitled "Alger Hiss at Yalta: A Reassessment of Hiss's Arguments against Including Any of the Soviet Republics as Initial UN Members."[1] That article did not provide an overall assessment of the nature and extent of Hiss's role at Yalta or of the claims made, by former Soviet intelligence officers, that Hiss undermined American interests by disclosing confidential information to the Soviets during the conference.[2] It was more narrowly focused and endeavored to show that an oft-cited memorandum prepared by Hiss during the conference which argued against according separate United Nations membership for two or three Soviet republics rather than being a "puzzling anomaly" for those believing in Hiss's guilt, was, in fact consistent with Hiss's service as a Soviet agent.

It is not my purpose here to reargue the persuasiveness of that proposition, which readers can judge for themselves,[3] but instead to discuss some more general questions about historical approaches to Yalta, in terms of methodology and interpretation, which arose in the course of writing that article and which merit examination as we mark the 80th anniversary of the Yalta Conference. I hope the discussion can encourage and guide further research on a subject which continues to inspire debate and controversy.

1. A Question of Sources – Gaps and Limits

I will begin with a methodological problem which has, perhaps, not been sufficiently acknowledged: the lack of contemporaneous sources recording the internal deliberations among Franklin D. Roosevelt and his advisers *en route* to and during the conference. The volume devoted to the Yalta conference in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series (*FRUS: The Conferences at Malta and Yalta 1945*) is virtually bereft of any records reflecting such deliberations. The most sustained set of contemporary accounts of what transpired outside of the conference chambers may be found in the frequent letters Roosevelt's daughter Anna sent to her husband, John Boettiger, from Yalta as well as the diary she compiled at the time. Though her diary and letters provide details about what life was like at Yalta, including FDR's daily routine during the conference, as well as the sometimes fractious relations among his advisers, all of which have been extensively cited in recent accounts, they do not shed light on FDR's or the American delegation's decision-making process.[4]

The lack of records, however problematic and indeed disappointing for historians, is entirely consistent with FDR's general preference and practice and has often been noted in accounts of his wartime leadership. Andrew Polsky has written that "testimony by Marshall and other senior military commanders confirms that they often discussed with the president the political implications of military operations but Roosevelt insisted that no notes or minutes be taken. (For example, we do not have a record of the 1944 Hawaii conference on the Philippine invasions; the putative exchanges were reported subsequently by the participants and are open to question.)"[5] Similarly, David B. Woolner's account of the last months of the Roosevelt presidency noted that FDR "rarely confided his innermost thoughts to his family, friends, and advisers; he also refused to take notes during meetings and insisted that the members of his cabinet and other senior officials do the same."[6] Indeed, an archivist at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library ("FDRL") has cautioned researchers that the FDR papers contain only "sparse records of the President's participation in international conferences with Churchill, Chiang and Stalin."[7] Roosevelt's interpreter at Yalta, Charles Bohlen, recalled that the President "did not like any rules or regulations to bind him. He preferred to act by improvisation rather than by plan." [8] Roosevelt had "an innate preference for doing business orally and informally" Eric Larrabee concluded about his leadership style, saying that "the thousands of day-to-day decisions, minor as well as momentous, that make up the full texture of administration are precisely those that he went to the greatest lengths to conceal." Larrabee quotes New Deal aide Rexford Tugwell, who wrote that "there are carloads of papers, records galore, correspondence in reams; and remarkably little of it is of much essential use...There is hardly a dependable record of a conversation in Franklin Roosevelt's whole life."[9] "No war was better recorded," Maurice Matloff, the chief historian of the U.S. Army wrote, "but all too often the historian who has struggled through mountains of paper finds the trail disappearing at the crucial point of decision-making, somewhere in the vicinity of the White House."[10] As a result, "little record exists of the thoughts of this most elusive and dissembling of presidents."[11]

FDR discouraged any record keeping regarding his decision-making process. He generally preferred to keep his cards to his chest, even for posterity.

Former Soviet intelligence officers have claimed that the Soviets bugged the rooms occupied by FDR and his advisers at Yalta and that transcripts were provided

to Stalin.[13] If so, perhaps the day will come when those transcripts will be released and, for the first time, provide a contemporaneous record of what they were thinking and planning at the time.

One potential source of insight into FDR's preparations for the Conference and concomitant consultations with his advisers is the Briefing Book that the State Department prepared for FDR's guidance concerning the issues expected to be considered at the Conference (for which there was no formal agenda). It has, however, been beset by mischaracterization in the literature concerning both its contents and the extent to which it was actually studied by FDR.

As to the latter, there is a long-standing and likely unresolvable dispute about the extent to which FDR consulted the Briefing Book. "Whether Roosevelt had done his homework on the long sea voyage is still an unresolved question," Fraser Harbutt has written.[14] In his memoir, James Byrnes contended that "Roosevelt had made little preparation for the Yalta Conference doing no more on the Atlantic crossing than on a few occasions, after dinner, to discuss some of the questions to be considered with him and Admiral Leahy." "But not until the day we landed at Malta," Byrnes wrote, "did I learn that we had on board a very complete file of studies and recommendations prepared by the State Department. I asked the President if the Department had given him any material and he advised that it was all in the custody of Lieutenant William M. Rigdon [an assistant to FDR's Naval Aide]…I greatly regretted they had not been considered on board ship. I am sure that the failure to study them while *en route* was due to the President's illness."[15]

There is a long-standing and likely unresolvable dispute about the extent to which FDR consulted the Briefing Book. "Whether Roosevelt had done his homework on the long sea voyage is still an unresolved question," Fraser Harbutt has written.

Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius, Jr. who (as we shall see) was anxious to parry various claims by Byrnes when he prepared his own memoir of the conference after Byrnes's had been published, perhaps self-servingly insisted that "the President was greatly impressed by the thoroughness of the material prepared by the State Department staff….It had been placed in a loose-leaf binder for him. After he had thumbed through it, he said, 'I want this binder in my cabin aboard ship,' and I handed it to Miss Tully" before FDR's ship sailed for Malta.[16] Of course, in refereeing this round of the Byrnes-Stettinius war of words, it needs noting that Byrnes sailed with the President and Stettinius did not. "It is often said, with justice," Fraser Harbutt concluded, "that Roosevelt did not adequately study his briefs or otherwise prepare suitably for Yalta."[17]

Apart from the uncertainty over FDR's recourse to the Briefing Book, there has been a certain amount of confusion over what that book actually contained. In that regard, historians appear to have been led astray by the way *FRUS: Malta and Yalta* is organized. As the editors of that volume explained: "in view of the fact that this volume is to be published prior to the annual FRUS volumes for the years 1944 and 1945 it was felt desirable to present in this chapter [headed "Negotiations and Recommendations on Principal Subjects"] a collection of documents designed to show in broad outline the pre-conference status of the principal subjects which came up for discussion at Malta or Yalta….Also included are papers from the so-called Yalta Briefing Book which was prepared for the use of Secretary Stettinius and President Roosevelt….Briefing Book papers will be found at the end of each subject dealt with in this chapter…."[18]

Despite that advisory, however, it has been common practice to cite such background materials as though they were included in the Briefing Book itself.[19] An examination of the actual Briefing Book at the National Archives confirms that those preliminary papers are not included in that book, a distinction which has been ignored by those writers who cite those materials as though they were included in FDR's Briefing Book.[20]

2. Secretary Stettinius's Problematic Memoir

The lack of contemporaneous documentation has left historians attempting to reconstruct what happened behind the scenes, so to speak, at Yalta at the mercy of the subsequent, often defensive and blame-shifting memoir literature. An oft-cited source has been Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius, Jr.'s account of Yalta, *Roosevelt and the Russians: The Yalta Conference*, which was published on November 3, 1949, a few days after Stettinius's premature death at the age of 49. Stettinius's book followed upon the publication of those offering the perspectives of James F. Byrnes, Stettinius's successor as Secretary of State who had attended the Yalta conference at FDR's invitation although without a formal role in the proceedings, and the President's closest adviser Harry L. Hopkins. Timing, therefore, shaped the composition and contents of Stettinius's version of events.[21] Indeed, in his book's preface, Stettinius was at pains to emphasize that "there are certain facts that may be known to me alone since the deaths of President Roosevelt and Harry Hopkins."[22]

In an article about Stettinius and the writing of his memoir published in 1992, the author regretfully concluded that the book "has come to be frequently overlooked or hurriedly passed over in more recent studies of the Crimean conference."[23] It was and is a curious claim given the numerous references to Stettinius's book in both older and recent accounts. It has, in fact, served as a standard source for writing about the conference.[24] What is most problematic about the memoir is not that it has been ignored by historians but that historians have placed too much reliance on it given the circumstances of its preparation.

Stettinius's papers at the University of Virginia (as well as those of Professor Walter Johnson of the University of Chicago, his collaborator on the memoir) reveal that in the spring of 1948, the former Secretary of State had engaged Johnson to work with him on a series of memoirs, the first of which Stettinius intended to relate to the founding of the United Nations and "with no idea of book on Yalta." However, on his own initiative, and "while he [Stettinius] was trying to decide whether we should do the Yalta mss.," Johnson proceeded to draft a book about Yalta, believing quite reasonably that the subject would be of greater interest to the public.[25]

Johnson evidently compiled his first draft primarily from conference transcripts without Stettinius's involvement, and then sought to supplement those records with Stettinius's recollections. As Johnson explained his "method" to an academic mentor from his undergraduate days, "I took his [ERS's] notes and the official documents and wrote the first draft as though I had been the Secretary. …Stettinius then went over my draft and added some recollections of basically an external not a policy type." [26] However, when he conferred with Stettinius, Johnson often found what he said "either too corny, irrelevant, or naïve" to be included in the final version of the book. As a result, Johnson wrote, "it was necessary to base most of the story of the Foreign Minister's meetings and the plenary sessions on Edward Page's and Charles E. Bohlen's notes" with Stettinius's "diaries and his dictation…add[ing]some good material."[27] And, indeed, most of the book is given over to a more or less verbatim transcription of those proceedings, years before the "official" texts were released to the public

in 1955.[28]

More generally, Stettinius advised Johnson to consult with former State Department colleagues, including Leo Pasvolsky, H. Freeman Matthews, Wilder Foote, and Alger Hiss, to provide information which he could not recall.[29] This was especially true with respect to Hiss, who worked closely on the issues regarding the future international organization which was the Secretary's primary reason for attending the conference and which provided the occasion for his only intervention at the "Big Three" plenary meetings at the conference. Accordingly, Stettinius made a point of telling Johnson that Hiss "can be most helpful" as the project got underway.[30]

Thereafter, Stettinius frequently advised Johnson to "see Alger about this" when Johnson probed his recollections and Johnson (as well as Stettinius) discussed the conference on several occasions with Hiss who also reviewed working drafts and provided detailed comments in the spring of 1949 on the completed manuscript that Stettinius had sent to him, even as Hiss was preparing for his upcoming perjury trial which began on May 31.[31]

In the course of his work on "Operation Stettinius" (as he would refer to it), Johnson reviewed Byrnes's and Hopkins's versions of certain events with Stettinius which provided the opportunity for the former Secretary to "correct the record" as it were.[32] However, Johnson found that Stettinius often either had no memory of an event or his memories were inconsistent and driven by a retrospective need to justify his actions in response to subsequent criticism (especially from his successor at State, James F. Byrnes). "At times ERS's dictation worried me" Johnson remembered. "Other than straight corn or irrelevance, I was worried as to its accuracy." Johnson found one Yalta episode worthy of special mention in that regard.

At Yalta the Americans and British agreed that the Soviet Union would, in effect, have three votes in the general assembly of the proposed international organization. However, this agreement was not included in the published conference communique, and Roosevelt did not disclose it in his address to Congress upon his return from Yalta. He only acknowledged its existence in response to leaks in the press in late March. To the end of his life, he downplayed its formal status, misleadingly describing it, either willfully or negligently, as only a personal–and not an official–undertaking.[33]

Although ultimately of little substantive consequence, that agreement, and its initial concealment, played a significant part in poisoning a portion of public opinion about Yalta at the outset. Roosevelt speech writer and Hopkins confidant Robert E. Sherwood judged the belated disclosure of the agreement on the Soviet republics "one of the worst all-around botches of the war" which triggered the questions "why it had been kept secret–and how many more secrets were left over from Yalta?"[34] In Sherwood's view, "from then on the very word' Yalta' came to be associated in the public's mind with secret and somehow shameful agreements."[35] Stettinius himself acknowledged to Johnson that "the extra votes and the Kuriles business with the Soviet Union gradually caused Yalta to become a symbol of appeasement."[36]

In his memoir, Byrnes charged that it was Stettinius who was responsible for reaching an agreement for the admission of the Soviet republics at the foreign ministers' meeting and who "as the [plenary] meeting opened... advised the President of the action which the President later announced, and the heads of government approved."[37] Similarly, FDR's interpreter Charles Bohlen attributed the decision to a miscommunication between Stettinius and Roosevelt as to the outcome of the Foreign Ministers meeting on 8 February 1945 for which he held Stettinius responsible.[38]

Given the controversial nature of that agreement and, as Stettinius himself acknowledged, its contribution to public suspicions about what had been decided, but not disclosed, at Yalta, Stettinius was determined to rebut Byrnes's claim that he was responsible and shift the onus of responsibility onto the late President's shoulders. To do this, Stettinius's memoir claims that he had a one-on-one discussion between FDR and the Secretary on the evening of 7 February, as well as a preceding private conversation between Roosevelt and Stalin after the plenary session that afternoon which Roosevelt relayed to the Secretary in the evening. Stettinius's memoir is the sole source for these conversations.

Notwithstanding its patently self-serving nature as a way of undercutting Byrnes (who had replaced Stettinius as Secretary of State after Truman assumed the presidency), Stettinius's account has generally been accepted by historians writing about Yalta.[39] While there is nothing implausible about this version of events, no reference is made to either conversation in any contemporaneous document, and in the course of preparing his memoir, Stettinius had trouble recalling when that discussion with Roosevelt took place.

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Nevertheless, Stettinius's collaborator had his doubts about its veracity. As Johnson wrote, "I still am not convinced that the story [in Stettinius's book] of how the U.S.A. agreed to the extra votes for the U.S.S.R. is complete or entirely accurate. It took ERS a number of dictations and changes before he reached the final version. There was nothing on this in his diary, and I had the feeling that he was thinking out his explanation in terms of making sure 1) he wasn't responsible for it 2) it would sound plausible. There is only a dead man [FDR], however, who could correct the picture if it is inaccurate."[42]

Given the circumstances of its composition, and his collaborator's own concerns about its accuracy, the memoir requires careful handling and a skeptical, or at least a questioning eye, which is often not forthcoming.

3. The Purpose of – and Need for – the Conference

In his post-conference speech to Congress, FDR emphasized the military aspects of the conference and historians have argued that the subsequent debate over Yalta's post-war geopolitical ramifications has unduly neglected the fact that it was a wartime conference which was held before the war in Europe was over, let alone the war in the Pacific (which it was widely thought would extend at least into 1946). Indeed, the makeup of the U.S. delegation was dominated by military personnel including Army Chief of Staff George Marshall, while FDR's

"political" advisers comprised only a small portion of the hundreds of American attendees.[43] Indeed, even recently appointed Secretary of State Edward Stettinius, Jr. was not included in FDR's initial thinking about the makeup of the U.S. delegation (Stettinius's predecessor Cordell Hull did not attend the initial "Big Three" summit at Tehran in 1943). Roosevelt had to be persuaded to include a few State Department subject area specialists, along with Stettinius, in his party.[44]

As the troops of the western Allies and the Soviet Union converged in early 1945, it was certainly necessary to have direct talks between them to map out their respective spheres of activity and avoid "friendly fire" problems as well as to try to secure a more cooperative and communicative relationship with the secretive and often uncooperative Soviets (as manifested by the refusal to allow American planes to fly from Soviet-controlled air bases in support of the Warsaw uprising by the Polish Home Army in the summer of 1944). But that leaves open the question of whether a "political" summit at the highest level was necessary. And whether it yielded outcomes sufficiently favorable to American interests to justify what FDR famously described as a "14,000" mile journey. Indeed that journey fatigued him to the extent that for the first and only time in his presidency FDR referred to his disability in explaining why he had to address Congress while seated when he delivered his report on the conference in early March a few days after returning to Washington.

The problem with the "Yalta formula," as it was called, regarding the extent of the veto was that in neither the American draft proposal nor the text accepted at Yalta "was there a positive definition of what types of question might be considered 'procedural.'"

The standard justification—and defense—of the conference from the American perspective is that FDR went to the conference with two prime objectives which he achieved: (1) to secure a Soviet commitment to go to war against Japan on a certain date (the basic agreement that the Soviets would intervene had been secured at Tehran in late 1943) and (2) to reach agreement on open issues regarding the structure of the proposed post-war international organization, which had not been resolved at Dumbarton Oaks or in subsequent exchanges with the Soviets, and thereby allow the founding conference of that organization to convene in the spring of 1945.

As to the first objective, the Soviet commitment to enter the Pacific war three months after the end of the war in Europe (to the extent it actually was a commitment), was secured by Roosevelt's agreement to the Soviet demands more or less in toto regarding territorial gains at the expense of Japan – and also to some extent China. However, this could have been accomplished by an exchange of cables. It did not require a personal meeting between FDR and Stalin at Yalta. For its part, the State Department was completely cut out on this issue, its recommendations on the scope of territorial concessions to the Soviets were ignored, and Secretary Stettinius played no role in the discussions on this subject at Yalta.

As to the second stated achievement, the agreement of the Soviet Union to the American proposal regarding voting procedure in the Security Council, which was necessary to proceed with the founding of the international organization, actually proved more illusory than has generally been recognized. Although Bohlen later wrote that "the agreement on the voting procedure in the Security Council was the one solid and lasting decision of the Yalta Conference" and that "Soviet acceptance of the voting formula was unconditional," that did not prove to be the case. [45] When the San Francisco Conference convened, that issue turned out to be unsettled and it triggered a dispute with the Soviet Union which threatened to derail the conference.

The problem with the "Yalta formula," as it was called, regarding the extent of the veto was that in neither the American draft proposal nor the text accepted at Yalta "was there a positive definition of what types of question might be considered 'procedural.'"[46] At the founding conference of the United Nations in San Francisco in April 1945, the Soviets seized on a lack of precision in the text of the provision (which State Department officials, including Hiss, had labored over for months prior to Yalta) to assert the contention (which the Americans believed had been resolved at Yalta) that the decision even to discuss an issue by the Security Council was subject to veto as substantive not procedural.[47] At that time, Stettinius acknowledged in an internal State Department telegram that this issue had not been addressed either at Yalta or Dumbarton Oaks.[48] The U.S. and UK officials acknowledged—privately—that the apparent Yalta agreement was ambiguous and provided the Soviet Union with an opening to back away from what the United States thought had been agreed at Yalta.

Interestingly, the Soviet acceptance of the text proposed by the United States at Yalta was preceded by an off-the-record discussion between Hiss and Gromyko in which Hiss claimed he clarified the language of the American proposal.[49] This conversation, of course, provided an opportunity for Hiss to alert the Soviets to the ambiguity of the formula so that a pro forma acceptance of the formula did not definitively settle the issue. Of course, whether or not Hiss did so is unknown and unrecorded.

The resulting impasse during the San Francisco conference threatened to derail the founding of the United Nations. President Truman urgently requested presidential emissary Harry Hopkins to discuss the issue with Stalin in the course of negotiations in Moscow on other matters. When Hopkins raised the subject, Stalin once again managed to secure some measure of American goodwill by purporting to be unaware of the Soviet position and then brushing it aside as "an insignificant matter," instructing Foreign Minister Molotov to "accept the American position." In what reads like a *Saturday Night Live* skit, Hopkins—playing an unwitting or witting straight man—recorded that, when he raised the issue, there "ensued a conversation in Russian between Mr. Molotov and Marshal Stalin from which it was clear that the Marshal had not understood the issues involved and had not had them explained to him. During the conversation Marshal Stalin remarked that he thought it was an insignificant matter and that they should accept the American position." Taking the bait, Hopkins then "said that he thought that possibly the difficulties at San Francisco had grown more out of misunderstandings than real differences."[50]

During his time as ambassador to Moscow, Harriman and his staff had learned—as they summed it up—that when "trading with the Russians you had to buy the same horse twice," [51]and this is what had happened once again in the bargaining over the extent of the veto. However, this aspect of that negotiation has been elided by writing that Stalin "sweetened things by agreeing that the veto in the Security Council should pertain only to action, not to discussion" without noting, or drawing any conclusion from the fact, that this is what he had already agreed to at Yalta as that same author had previously mentioned.[52]

In an oral history interview in 1990, Hiss, rather improbably given the magnitude of the dispute and its potential to disrupt the San Francisco conference, attributed the renewed Soviet position on the extent of the veto to an unauthorized initiative by Molotov, without Stalin's knowledge, which "Stalin immediately countermanded.... when Hopkins ...stated the issue to Stalin he understood it immediately and said 'of course.'"[53] In such public statements, Hiss tended to be charitable on the subject of Stalin and

the nature of his regime, as noted by Susan Jacoby in her study of Hiss.[54]

The idea that Molotov or Gromyko (deputizing for Molotov in San Francisco after May 9) was acting on his own to blow up the San Francisco conference over this issue without Stalin's knowledge— and that once Hopkins raised the matter when he met Stalin in Moscow in June Stalin "overruled" Molotov—is hard to credit but has been advanced by other writers (including the usually hard-headed William H. McNeill) and even by Ambassador Harriman who cabled President Truman after he and Hopkins met with Stalin and Molotov that "it was clear that Stalin had not understood at all the issues between us. In spite of Molotov's explanation and defense of the Soviet position, Stalin waved him aside and accepted our position."[55] Wilson Miscamble, sensibly enough, is more skeptical, treating Stalin and Molotov as playing good cop, bad cop on the issue and winning American gratitude when, as Harry Hopkins rather ingenuously put it, Stalin overruled Molotov.[56] And Fraser Harbutt recognizes that the byplay between Stalin and Molotov in their meeting with Hopkins on June 6 was a "charade."[57] In his account of the origins of the United Nations, Stephen C. Schlesinger similarly—and sensibly—doubts that Stalin could have been unaware of what was happening in San Francisco regarding the extent of the veto.[58]

As to these priority issues for the United States, which according to most scholars represented the significant policy achievements for the United States at Yalta, one could have been accomplished by an exchange of cables and the other was illusory and had not actually been definitively resolved at all but would resurface thereafter.

4. Roosevelt's Performance at the Conference:

Those limited results need to be weighed against the downside of FDR's participation in the conference from the U.S. perspective. Two might be mentioned. First, in a talk at the Yalta 75th anniversary symposium at the World War II Museum, Serhii Plokhii (Plokhy) mentioned a paper by a student of his which compared FDR's performance at Tehran and Yalta, as reflected in the transcripts, and concluded that he participated in the discussions at Yalta less actively than at Tehran, reflecting the "bad state in terms of [his] health."[59] No doubt this decline in FDR's abilities registered on the acutely perceptive Stalin.

Second, and perhaps of greater consequence, were FDR's entirely gratuitous, repeated avowals that U.S. forces would be withdrawn from Europe within two years after the end of the war.[60] Those comments reinforced FDR's previous statement at Tehran, in a private session with Stalin apart from their joint meetings with Churchill, about American reluctance to send ground troops to Europe in event of a crisis after the war.[61] As Adam Ulan observed, "Stalin's quick mind registered instantaneously the slightest hint of weakness or hesitation on either ally's part" and "a whole volume might be written on the influence of [this statement] on the future course of Russian strategy for postwar diplomacy….To Stalin this meant one could go along with the Americans' schoolmasterish ideas and declarations about free elections in all countries liberated from Germany; in two years they would be packing up and going home anyway."[62] More recent scholars have made a similar observation: " [I]n Stalin's view the presence or absence of troops on the ground was a decisive factor in the division of Europe into spheres of influence" which explains the virtually obsessive interest the Soviets showed in the withdrawal of the Allied troops from Italy after the war.[63]

In both these respects, the conference had an adverse impact on future American dealings with Stalin and the Soviets separate and apart from the terms of the formal agreements that were reached at Yalta.

That said, there is one aspect of FDR's performance at Yalta that is to his credit, but which has not been sufficiently recognized. As discussed in my article on the topic, whether as a result of Hiss's (unholy) guidance or his own inattention to detail, Stettinius had agreed to a Foreign Ministers's report which would have had the effect of excluding the Latin American "associated nations' from initial UN membership by setting a deadline for adherence to the UN declaration which most, if not all of them, would have been unable to meet and thereby torpedo a major U.S. objective[64] It was only at FDR's own initiative at that day's plenary session that the deadline for adherence was extended to March 1 which did provide time for those nations to take the action necessary to secure initial membership status.[65]

5. American Perspectives on Stalin and Soviet Decision Making

There is one important aspect of U.S./FDR relations with the Soviets both in connection with Yalta and more generally concerning U.S. perceptions of power relations within the Soviet government which merits more attention than it has received. Roosevelt and other American officials apparently believed that Stalin faced internal opposition from Kremlin "hardliners" as well as pressure from Soviet public opinion which made it necessary to try to bolster Stalin's position vis a vis such challenges. The necessary implication of this perception – or more accurately misperception - was that Stalin needed to be conciliated lest he lose ground to political forces more hostile to the West than he supposedly was.

In her recent book on Stalin's "team," Sheila Fitzpatrick writes that "when Stalin wanted to temporize in dealing with foreigners, he sometimes indicated that the problem would be getting it past his Politburo. This was taken as a fiction, since the diplomats assumed, correctly, that the final decision was his.[66] In fact this was **not "**taken as a fiction" by FDR and his colleagues. I have collected a few of the assessments of Stalin as a leader who had to appease Soviet public opinion and his more "extreme" colleagues that guided FDR and other U.S. policymakers at Yalta. No commentary is necessary. Their misperceptions of Soviet reality are evident.

> a. "Marshal Stalin said that it is clear that if these conditions [i.e. Soviet territorial demands re Japan] are not met it would be difficult for him and Molotov to explain to the Soviet people why Russia was entering the war against Japan. They understood clearly the war against Germany which had threatened the very existence of the Soviet Union, but they would not understand why Russia would enter a war against a country with which they had no great trouble. He said, however, that if these political conditions were met, the people would understand the national interest involved and it would be very much easier to explain the decision to the Supreme Soviet."[67]
>
> b. After the Feb 7 plenary session, Secretary of State Stettinius dined with FDR and "had an opportunity of discussing privately with him the Russian request for two or three extra seats in the Assembly....In reviewing the entire matter of additional seats for the Soviet Union, the President told me that evening at Yalta that Stalin felt his position at Yalta was difficult and insecure. A vote for the Ukraine was essential, the Marshal had declared, for Soviet unity....The Marshal also felt that he would need the three

votes to secure the acquiescence of his associates to Soviet participation in the world organization."[68]

c. "Hopkins later said to me [Robert Sherwood regarding Yalta] ....The Russians had proved that they could be reasonable and farseeing and there wasn't any doubt in the minds of the President or any of us that we could live with them and get along with them peacefully for as far into the future as any of us could imagine. But I have to make on amendment to that - I think we all had in our minds the reservation that we could not foretell what the results would be if anything should happen to Stalin. We felt sure that we could count on him to be reasonable and sensible and understanding - but we could never be sure who or what might be in back of him there in the Kremlin."[69]

d. In the aftermath of the conference as relations between the United States and the USSR deteriorated, Stettinius entertained the view that what he regarded as "a spectacular change from the mood of the Conference to the more recent developments of an unfavorable nature can be explained on the basis of political leaders whom Stalin had to advise on his return to Moscow. These leaders may well have told Stalin that he had 'sold out' at Yalta. They are the equivalent of our 'isolationists.'"[70]

e. Such perspectives survived the intervening years of escalating Cold War tensions and can be found in Stettinius's account of Yalta, although attributed to State Department personnel: "The high degree of co-operation attained by the three leaders of Yalta began to break down shortly after Yalta. It was the opinion of some of the State Department group who were on President Roosevelt's staff at the Conference that Marshal Stalin had difficulties with the Politburo, when he returned to Moscow, for having made too many concessions to the two capitalist nations which could, in dogmatic Marxist eyes, never be really trusted by Communist Russia. Certain members of the Politburo may well have taken the line that the Soviet Union had been virtually sold out by Yalta."[71]

f. "Marshal Stalin said that it is clear that if these conditions [i.e. Soviet territorial demands re Japan] are not met it would be difficult for him and Molotov to explain to the Soviet people why Russia was entering the war against Japan. They understood clearly the war against Germany which had threatened the very existence of the Soviet Union, but they would not understand why Russia would enter a war against a country with which they had no great trouble. He said, however, that if these political conditions were met, the people would understand the national interest involved and it would be very much easier to explain the decision to the Supreme Soviet."[72]

g. During FDR's return voyage from Yalta, "the President made it clear, not only when we were working alone on the speech, but in luncheon and dinner conversation, that he was certain that the Yalta Conference had paved the way for the kind of world that he had been dreaming, planning and talking about. He felt that he understood Stalin and that Stalin understood him. He believed that Stalin had a sincere desire to build constructively on the foundations that had been laid at Yalta; that Stalin was interested in maintaining peace in the world so that the Soviets could make the industrial and social changes he thought necessary. The only reservation Roosevelt had was whether or not the others back in the Kremlin would sincerely go along with that Stalin had signed at Yalta. He did not doubt that on the surface they would subscribe to the Yalta agreements; he did have doubt whether, when the chips were down, Stalin would be able to carry out and deliver what he had agreed to. He was also worried what would happen if Stalin should die or be stripped of his power. But there was no doubt in his mind that if the Soviet leaders would back Stalin, a new era in world peace was at hand."[73]

h. Harriman after meeting Stalin with Hopkins in May-June 1945, I believe I told you [Truman] that I was certain Molotov is far more suspicious of us and less willing to view matters in our mutual relations from a broad standpoint than is Stalin. The fact that we were able to see Stalin six times and deal directly with him was a great help. If it were possible to see him more frequently, many of our difficulties could be overcome."[74]

Indeed these (mis) perceptions persisted throughout Stalin's remaining years in power. As pungently expressed by United States Ambassador to Moscow, Walter Bedell Smith, in 1948 "At risk of whipping what should be a dead horse, believe it essential explode myth two schools of thought in Politburo, conciliatory one headed by Stalin and tough one by Molotov….This one of oldest gags on Soviet confusion-propaganda circuit. This Soviet version Bergen-McCarthy act has been used for years as come-on game to confuse gullible statesmen being taken into camp. Tough 'McCarthy' Molotov makes exaggerated demands which kind pipe-smoking 'Bergen' Stalin whittles down into so-called concessions which temporarily relieve anxiety of foreign statesman until he wakes up to reality of tough bargain he has been forced to accept.

"Alleged dissension in backfield of Soviet football team causes opponents to relax vigilance and come to their senses only after Stalin has called for the old Statue of Liberty play which Molotov executes for a touchdown.

"Even cursory study Soviet history will show that despite Stalin's soft-spoken words to interviewers about the desire for cooperation, the 'tough policy' always comes to the fore in the end despite any tactical zig-zags on way to goal. Does anyone think this was over Stalin's opposition?"[75]

Nevertheless, this kind of thinking (that Stalin's own conciliatory intentions were subject to being overruled by hard line subordinates) lived on in the minds of post-war American presidents. When Stalin was on his death bed in March 1953, Former President Truman, who had just left office less than two months earlier, was quoted as saying "I got very well acquainted with Joe Stalin, and I liked Old Joe…But Joe is a prisoner of the Politburo. He can't do what he wants."[76] And Truman's successor, Dwight D. Eisenhower commented when the NSC met after the announcement of Stalin's death that "it was his conviction that at the end of the last war Stalin would have preferred an easing of the tension between the Soviet Union and the Western powers, but the Politburo had insisted on heightening the tempo of the cold war and Stalin had been

obliged to make concessions to this view."[77]

The misguided quality of these interpretations has been obscured by incomplete quotations in standard accounts of U.S.-Soviet relations. For example, in his classic book on Roosevelt's foreign policy, Robert Dallek quotes Harry Hopkins saying "The Russians had proved that they could be reasonable and farseeing and there wasn't any doubt in the minds of the President or any of us that we could live with them and get along with them peacefully for as far into the future as any of us could imagine" and omits the balance of Hopkins's concern (as quoted above) about "what the results would be if anything should happen to Stalin." And similarly, Professor Dallek quotes Roosevelt's doubt to Samuel Rosenman during his return to the United States about "whether, when the chips were down, Stalin would be able to carry out and deliver what he had agreed to" and fails to quote the source of that doubt—whether "the Soviet leaders would back Stalin"—again obscuring the misreading of power relations in the Kremlin.[78]

The extent to which such perceptions underlay specific negotiations and policies vis a vis Stalin and the Soviets needs more careful attention than it has received in the literature and is one Yalta-related subject which has hardly been exhausted and might fruitfully repay further study.

Eighty years later there may not be much more that can be learned about what happened at Yalta, due to the limited sources at our disposal and the unlikelihood that additional materials may yet surface, notwithstanding the (disputed) claim that the Soviets recorded FDR's conversations with his advisers. Yet the materials at hand do invite further inquiry which may provoke new questions and yield new answers to old questions.

Notes:

1. Henry D. Fetter, "Alger Hiss at Yalta: A Reassessment of Hiss's Arguments against Including Any of the Soviet Republics as Initial UN Members," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 22:1 (Winter 2020): 46-88.
2. As noted, (but discounted) in S.M. Plokhy, Yalta*: The Price of Peace* (Viking, 2010), 357.
3. See the assessment by Vernon L. Pederson, H-Diplo Article Review 995 on Fetter. "Alger Hiss at Yalta: A Reassessment of Hiss's Arguments against including any of the Soviet Republics as Initial UN Members." https://networks.h-net.org/node/28443/discussions/6679341/h-diplo-article-review-995-fetter-%E2%80%9Calger-hiss-yalta-reassessment.
4. See especially Frank Costigliola, *Roosevelt's Lost Alliances: How Personal Politics Helped Start the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), and Catherine Grace Katz, *The Daughters of Yalta* (Mariner Books, 2021). The letters are contained in the John Boettiger Papers, Box 6, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library (FDRL) and the Diary in the Anna Roosevelt Halsted Papers, Box 84, FDRL.
5. Andrew Polsky, *Elusive Victories: The American Presidency at War* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 180.
6. David B. Woolner, *The Last 100 Days: FDR at War and at Peace* (Basic Books, 2017), xi.
7. Introduction to the Finding Aid for the President Map Room Papers, 2 at https://www.fdrlibrary.org/documents/356632/390886/findingaid_roos_maproom.pdf/f50f884b-dfd7-4184-aa45-4cf9d0c09909 (accessed October 9, 2024).
8. Charles E. Bohlen, *Witness to History 1929-1969* (W.W. Norton & Company, 1973), p. 136
9. Eric Larrabee, *Commander in Chief: Franklin D. Roosevelt, His Lieutenants and Their War* (Harper & Row, 1987), pp. 4, 624.
10. Maurice Matloff, "Mr. Roosevelt's Three Wars: FDR as War Leader," Harmon Memorial Lecture 6, Air Force Academy, 6 quoted in Larrabee *Commander in Chief*, 16.
11. Waldo Heinrichs, *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War II* (Oxford University Press, 1988, vii.
12. *Financial Times*, December 14/15, 2019.
13. Plokhy, *Yalta: The Price of Peace* (Viking, 2010), 233-234.
14. Fraser J. Harbutt, *Yalta 1945: Europe and America at the Crossroads* (Cambridge University press, 2010), 289.
15. James F. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly* (Harper & Brothers, 1947), 23.
16. Edward R. Stettinius, Jr, edited by Walter Johnson, *Roosevelt and the Russians: The Yalta Conference* (Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1949), 30.
17. Harbutt, *Yalta 1945*, 285.
18. Editorial Note," U.S. Department of State, *The Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conferences at Malta and Yalta* [hereafter "*FRUS: Malta and Yalta*]"), 41-42.
19. See, for example, John L. Snell, ed. *The Meaning of Yalta* (LSU Press, 1956), 99-100 and Plokhy, 185, 419n4 referencing documents as though were included in the Briefing Book but which were published in *FRUS: Malta and Yalta* for background only and are not contained in the Briefing Book itself.
20. See "Briefing Book for Yalta Conference," Record Group (RG) 43.4.1 (World War II Conferences-Yalta), Box 3, U.S. National Archives and Record Administration (NARA), College Park, MD.
21. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*; Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins, An Intimate History* (Harper & Brothers, 1948).
22. Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians*, x.
23. Jack L. Hammersmith, "In Defense of Yalta," *Virginia Magazine of History*, July 1992.
24. See, e.g., Plokhy, *Yalta*, 191; Ruth B. Russell, *A History of the United Nations Charter*(Brookings Institution Press, 1958), 535; Susan Butler, *Roosevelt and Stalin: Portrait of a Partnership* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2015) [Kindle edition location 7062]; Stephen C. Schlesinger, *Acts of Creation: The Founding of the United Nations* (Westview Press, 2003), 59; Forrest C. Pogue, "The Big Three and the United Nations," in John L. Snell, ed. *The Meaning of Yalta* (LSU Press, 1956), 182; and Robert A. Divine, *Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in America During World War II* (Atheneum, 1967), 266.
25. Walter Johnson, "Random Thoughts on Operation Stettinius," March 24, 1949, Walter Johnson papers, Box 19, Folder 13, University of Chicago Library.
26. Johnson to John M. Mecklin (Professor emeritus at Dartmouth College where Johnson had been an undergraduate), October 8, 1949, Johnson papers.
27. Johnson, "Random Thoughts."
28. U.S. Department of State, *The Foreign Relations of the United States: The Conferences at Malta and Yalta* (1955).
29. Johnson, "Random Thoughts"; Hiss was the second person mentioned in the draft of the "Acknowledgments," handwritten by Stettinius in the course of finalizing the book for publication. However, that acknowledgment was not included in the published book. Stettinius papers, Box 876; Roosevelt and the Russians, pp. vii-viii. Nor did the published text include mention of the apparently euphoric post-conference moment (as related by Stettinius to his collaborator) when his train leaving Yalta had stopped on a mountain top and the Secretary "told Alger I would make him head of the department having to do with United Nations affairs, in charge of San Francisco [conference]." Stettinius to Johnson, October 10, 1948, Stettinius papers, Box 279, folder "Yalta: February 11, 1945."
30. Johnson, Memo of Conversation with ERS, June 19, 1948, Stettinius papers, Box 877.
31. The records of Hiss's extensive involvement in the preparation and review of the book may be found in the Stettinius papers, Boxes 277, 278, 875, 876, 877, 879, 890.
32. See notes regarding Johnson's discussions with Stettinius as to statements in Byrnes's book and Sherwood's Roosevelt and Hopkins [ERS and WJ, November 4, 1948, Stettinius papers, Box 277, 278, "ERS- WJ Conversations re Roosevelt and Retrospect, November 4, 1938, Box 876.]
33. Yalta Conference Communique, February 11, 1945, in *FRUS: Malta and Yalta*, 968-75; Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 876-77; text of Roosevelt address to Congress on March 1, 1945 in *New York Times*, March 2, 1945, 12; for the delayed disclosure of the agreement in late March, see "Who Can Belong to the Security Organization?" *Newsweek*, vol. 25 (March 26, 1945), 62; Joseph C. Grew to President Roosevelt, March 23, 1945, in U.S. Department of States, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1945: vol. 1 [General: The United Nations], 152; *U.S. State Department Bulletin*, vol. 12, no. 301 (April 1, 1945), 530; "Minutes of the Third Meeting of the United States Delegation Held at Washington, March 30, 1945, 11 A.M." in *FRUS*, 1945: vol. 1, 170; Bertram D. Hulen, "United States, Russia to Seek 3 Votes in Security Assembly," *New York Times*, March 30, 1945, 11; and Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy 1932- 1945* (Oxford University Press, 1995), 522-523. For Roosevelt's repeated mischaracter-

izations of the agreement as a personal undertaking only, not binding on the US government, see Charles E. Bohlen, "Report of the Meeting of the San Francisco Delegation with the President March 23," March 24, 1945, in "Calendar Notes 3/12-4/19", 1945, Stettinius papers, Box 244; Arthur H. Vandenberg, Jr., ed., *The Private Papers of Senator Vandenberg* (Houghton Mifflin, 1952), 159, 160-62; Thomas M. Campbell and George C. Herring, eds., *The Diaries of Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., 1943-1946* (New Viewpoints, 1975), 306; and "Extracts from Franklin D. Roosevelt Press and Radio Conference at the Little White House, Warm Springs, Georgia," April 5, 1945, in *FRUS*, 1945: vol. I , 197. The text of the Yalta Conference Protocol was not made public until March 1947. See, *FRUS: Malta and Yalta*, 975n1.
34. Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* 876.
35. Ibid., 877.
36. Stettinius to Walter Johnson, November 4, 1948, "Comments on *Roosevelt and Hopkins*," Stettinius papers, Box 876.
37. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, 40.
38. Notes of Interview of Alger Hiss by Walter Johnson re 'Extra Votes,' November 19, 1948 in Stettinius papers, Box 277.
39. See e.g., Plokhy, *Yalta*, 191; Russell, *History of the United Nations Charter*, 535; Susan Butler, *Roosevelt and Stalin: Portrait of a Partnership* [Kindle edition location 7062]; Stephen C. Schlesinger, *Acts of Creation*, 59; Forrest C. Pogue, "The Big Three and the United Nations," in John L. Snell, ed. *The Meaning of Yalta* (LSU University Press, 1956), 182; and Robert A. Divine, *Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in America During World War II* (Atheneum, 1967), 266.
40. See drafts and notes on drafts in Stettinius papers, Boxes 878, 879; Stettinius to Walter Johnson, December 2, 1948, Stettinius papers, Box 877.
41. Meeting of the Foreign Ministers, February 8, 1945, in *FRUS: Malta and Yalta*, 735.
42. Johnson, "Random Thoughts."
43. Unlike the FRUS volume on the Tehran Conference (*FRUS: The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran 1943*, [hereafter *FRUS: Cairo and Tehran*] 462), *FRUS: Malta and Yalta* does not contain a list of the makeup of the American delegation at the conference but has been described as numbering several hundred members. See, Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory, 1943-1946* (Viking Press, 1973) 520 and Plokhy, *Yalta*, 46; ,
44. See, Henry D. Fetter, "Alger Hiss at Yalta" *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 22:1 (Winter 2020): 58-65.
45. Bohlen, *Witness to History*, 193-94. To the same effect, Fraser Harbutt in *Yalta 1945* ("FDR secured …full acceptance of his voting rights formula," 309).
46. Sydney D. Bailey, *Voting in the Security Council* (Indiana University Press, 1969), 14-15; Russell, *History of the United Nations Charter*, 737.
47. Russell, *History of the United Nations Charter*, 713-14, 728-35.
48. Stettinius to Grew, June 3, 1945 in *FRUS: Malta and Yalta*, 995.
49. See Hiss Notes, *FRUS: Malta and Yalta* , 677.
50. See Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins* (Harper & Brothers, 1948), 911-12.
51. W. Averell Harriman and Elie Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin 1941-1946* (Random House, 1975), 412
52. Costigliola, *Roosevelt's Lost Alliances*, 354. In his discussion of Yalta itself, Costigliola wrote that this formula had been agreed to by Stalin at that conference. Ibid., 248.
53. Hiss, United Nations oral history Project interview transcript, (February 13, 1990) 13 [https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/474711?ln=en&v=pdf]
54. Susan Jacoby, *Alger Hiss and the Battle for History*, 173-74.
55. William H. McNeill, *America, Britain & Russia: Their Cooperation and Conflict 1941- 1946* (Oxford University Press, 1953), 588; The Ambassador to the Soviet Union (Harriman) to the President, June 8, 1945, *FRUS: The Conference of Berlin (The Potsdam Conference)* [*FRUS:Potsdam*], 62; Bohlen, *Witness to History* , 220-21 as well as David L. Roll, *The Hopkins Touch: Harry Hopkins and the Forging of the Alliance to Defeat Hitler* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 396 (relying on Bohlen) as well as Alger Hiss in his United Nations oral history, 13-14; and Alger Hiss, *Recollections of a Life* (Henry Holt & Company, 1988), 136.
56. Wilson Miscamble, *From Roosevelt to Truman* (Cambridge University Press, 2006) p. 160 (quoting Hopkins to Truman, June 6, 1945, Harry L. Hopkins Papers, FDRL.
57. Harbutt, *Yalta 1945*, 368.
58. Stephen C. Schlesinger, *Acts of Creation, 217-218*.
59. Video at https://www.c-span.org/video/?468410-4/yalta-conference-crimea.
60. *FRUS: Malta and Yalta,* 617, 628.
61. *FRUS: Cairo and Tehran*, 531.
62. Adam Ulam, *Stalin: The Man and His Era* (The Viking Press, 1973), 608.
63. Elene Agarossi and Victor Zaslavsky, *Stalin and Togliatti : Italy and the Origins of the Cold War* (Stanford University Press, 2011), 248.
64. Fetter, "Alger Hiss at Yalta," 76-77.
65. Fetter, "Alger Hiss at Yalta," 78.
66. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *On Stalin's Team" The Years of Living Dangerously in Soviet Politics* (Princeton University Press, 2015), 1. This is, in fact, the first sentence in the book which highlights how often Stalin resorted to this ploy in his dealings with foreign officials.
67. *FRUS: Malta and Yalta,* 769, re: meeting with Stalin, Feb 8, 1945.
68. Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians*, 186-87.
69. Sherwood in *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, 870.
70. ERS, "Yalta Trip, Conversation with Dr. H. Freeman Matthews," April 19, 1945, Stettinius papers, Box 276.
71. Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians*, 309-10.
72. *FRUS: Yalta*, 769, meeting with Stalin, Feb 8, 1945.
73. Samuel I. Rosenman, *Working with Roosevelt* (Harper & Brothers, 1952), 526.
74. The Ambassador to the Soviet Union (Harriman) to the President June 8, 1945, *FRUS: Potsdam* 1, 61.
75. Ambassador Walter Bedell Smith to the Secretary of State, March 6, 1948, *FRUS: Eastern Europe; the Soviet Union* 1948: 4, 818-19.
76. "Truman Says He is Sorry about Stalin's Breakdown," *New York Times*, March 5, 1953, 10 quoted in Joshua Rubenstein, *The Last Days of Stalin* (Yale University Press, 2016), 21.
77. "Memorandum of Discussion at the 135th Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, March 4 , 1953" in *FRUS* 8, 1091-1093 quoted in Rubenstein, *Last Days of Stalin*, 152.
78. Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy 1932-1945*, 520-21.

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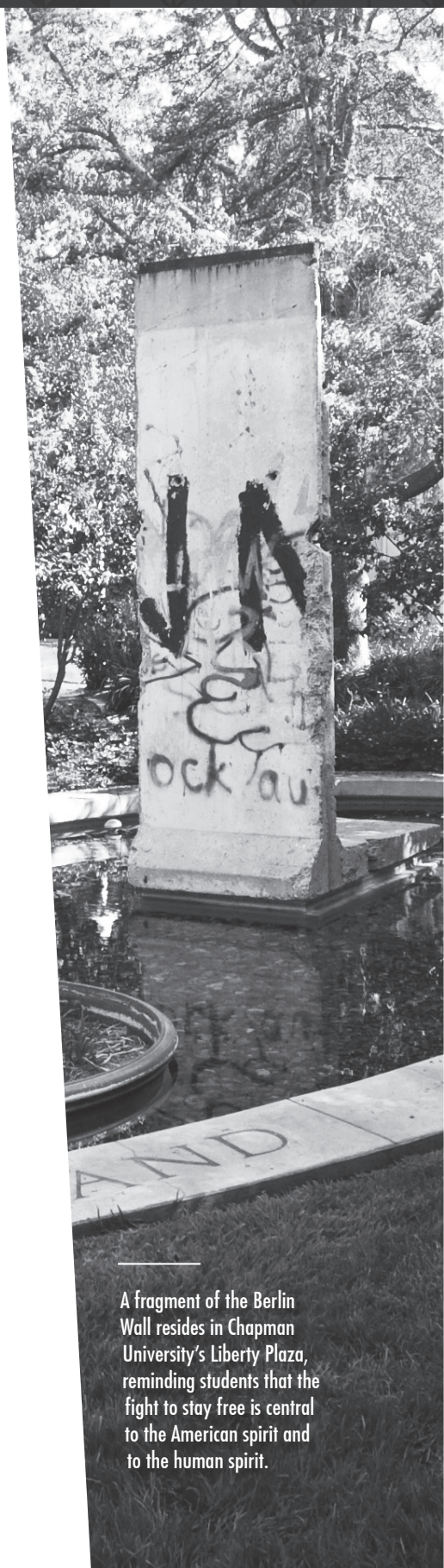

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Seven Questions on…
U.S.-Middle East Relations

Roham Alvandi, Peter L. Hahn, Osamah Khalil, Kelly Shannon, Joseph Stieb, Kate Tietzen-Wisdom, and Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicutt

Editor's note: *"Seven Questions On..." is a regular feature in* Passport *that asks scholars in a particular field to respond to seven questions about their field's historiography, key publications, influences, etc. It is designed to introduce the broader SHAFR community to a variety of perspectives for a given field, as well as serving as a literature and pedagogical primer for graduate students and non-specialists.* **BCE and SZ**

1. What drew you to this field and inspired you to focus on your specific area of the history of U.S.-Middle East relations?

Roham Alvandi: My interest was always in the history of "Iran and the World." The United States loomed large in that history, both in the books I read as a student but also in my own family history. When it came time to choose a topic for my Ph.D., the Nixon and Ford presidential materials on Iran had been released and nobody had really mined them on Iran, so it was an obvious choice. The 1970s was so consequential for Iran's contemporary history and featured some wonderful characters, in whose company I could spend a few years of fruitful research.

Peter L. Hahn: I was drawn to the Middle East by the headlines of my college years. The Camp David Accords of 1978 led to the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of 1979 but also to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. The Iranian Revolution of 1979 upended the U.S. prominence in the Gulf and triggered the Iran Hostage Crisis that absorbed the attention of the American people for 444 days. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan of 1979 prompted President Jimmy Carter to resume registration for a military draft, which started in the summer of 1980, some five weeks after my twentieth birthday. As a double-major in history and religion at Ohio Wesleyan University, I read deeply about the history and meaning of these developments, under professorial direction and on my own time. In dining hall conversations as well as late-night bull sessions in the dorms, no topic (other than college basketball) prompted deeper or more contentious debate than the Middle East and the U.S. role in it.

During my first year of graduate school at Vanderbilt University, I enrolled in a research seminar taught by Melvyn Leffler, who was then exploring the Truman Administration's security policy in Turkey for an article he was destined to publish in the *Journal of American History* (Melvyn P. Leffler, "Strategy, Diplomacy, and the Cold War: The United States, Turkey, and NATO, 1945-1952," *Journal of American History* 71:4 (Mar. 1985): 807-25). During the first week of the course, I visited Mel during office hours to scope out a topic for my paper. When I revealed my fascination with the Middle East, he immediately recommended that I write a paper on U.S. policy toward Egypt during the early Cold War. While researching U.S. policy toward Turkey, he explained, he found considerable archival evidence indicating that security officials had assigned seminal importance to Egypt, and yet he could not find a single book or article probing that topic. "I am convinced that there is a major story there waiting to be told," Mel essentially told me. "I am confident that you'll find enough material to write a paper, a thesis, or even a dissertation and first book, if you want to pursue it that far."

Mel's words prompted me to write a seminar paper on U.S. national security strategy in Egypt during the Truman era. That paper grew into my doctoral dissertation and first book, which I broadened to include Eisenhower's as well as Truman's policymaking, British as well as U.S. diplomacy toward Egypt, and Israel, decolonization, neutralism, and other topics as well as national security policy (Peter L. Hahn, "Strategy and Diplomacy in the Early Cold War: United States Policy toward Egypt, 1945-1956," Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1987; Peter L. Hahn, *The United States, Great Britain, and Egypt, 1945-1956: Strategy and Diplomacy in the Early Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991)). For the duration of my career, I have been hooked on U.S. policy in the Middle East.

Osamah Khalil: Growing up in a Palestinian-American family in New Jersey, U.S.-Middle East relations were a daily discussion. Our roots in the United States dated to before the First World War when my maternal grandfather migrated from Palestine and initially settled in New York's Little Syria colony. My family traveled to Israel and Palestine regularly and we understood the disparity between the realities on the ground and how they were presented in American media and by policymakers. We understood that the "Middle East" was not populated with exotic and hostile individuals without agency, hopes or dreams as they were often depicted in American media and films. We also had family and friends living in large Arab-American communities in the U.S. and understood that there was more than a century of interaction between these regions. Well before September 11, we were keenly aware of the lack of knowledge about the region and those who lived there and how international tensions could lead to greater misunderstanding and derogatory labeling. I hoped studying the history of U.S.-Middle East relations would help bridge that artificial divide.

Joseph Stieb: I was drawn to this field for a few reasons. Growing up in the midst of the War on Terror made me want to explore the historical roots of these conflicts and U.S.-Middle East relations as a whole. I got into my specific focus on the Iraq War and terrorism by teaching a high school elective in Western Massachusetts on these topics. I found myself hooked on these conflicts, and I zeroed in on the question of why the United States pivoted from containment to regime change in Iraq. When I got to grad school at UNC Chapel Hill, my advisor Wayne Lee generously allowed me to switch topics from counterinsurgency to containment, and the rest was history.

Kate Tietzen-Wisdom: At the risk of aging myself, I remember being in elementary school and watching the 9/11 attacks unfold on television. Then came the war in Afghanistan, and then Iraq. By the time I arrived at university, the United States had been at war in the Middle East for nearly a decade. I had friends who had already returned from deployments, while others were slated to head to boot camp after graduation. Even after finishing my Ph.D., U.S. troops were still in both countries. So, there was definitely a personal interest in the region—these conflicts shaped my generation in so many ways, both seen and unseen.

However, this experience also sparked my interest in this field, specifically Iraq, as much of the coverage neglected Iraqi voices. In the worst cases, various actors completely misconstrued or oversimplified their analysis of Iraqi history to fit specific narratives related to the 2003 invasion. But, I also realized there were gaps in this area. I am a military historian by training, and much of the historiography on the United States in Iraq (and arguably the region) has been dominated by American narratives. There was no real push to connect Iraq in the Cold War to the First Gulf War, to 2003, and beyond–both in diplomatic and military lenses–as well. Fortunately, this is changing. But back then, I was frustrated with this lack of Iraqi context, sourcing, and perspectives. I wanted to do my (albeit very small) part to help rectify this.

Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicutt: I was transferring from community college to UC Santa Cruz in the fall of 2002. This is to say that I was choosing a major while the Bush administration was leading the country to war. It seemed obvious to me then that the administration was lying about Iraqi ties to al Qaeda and 9/11. And it seemed equally obvious that the U.S. had no sincere concern for human rights. Even then I was aware that it was the U.S. that had provided Iraq with the arms, intelligence, and diplomatic cover that Iraq needed to carry out attacks such as the one on Halabja in 1988. Or at least this much became abundantly clear to me when Joyce Battle published "Shaking Hands with Saddam Hussein" in early 2003 (and later documented more fully by Hiltermann, *A Poisonous Affair*). Given that the airwaves were so filled with lies, I became determined to find the truth. (The pattern of willful and systematic deception was later documented in the publications listed below).

At UCSC, I took all the Middle East related courses that I could and attended frequent "teach ins" and other speaking events that shed greater light on the Bush administration's true motives in the region. The more I studied the issue the clearer it became that war was, at some fundamental level, about oil and Israel. I soon began to research graduate programs and was determined study this nexus of interests and how it had shaped the history of U.S. foreign policy in the region. I resolved very early that I wanted to understand the history U.S. foreign policy in Iraq, but from an "Iraqi perspective." From there I began taking Arabic and, in the fall of 2004, I entered the PhD program in Middle Eastern History at Stanford. At Stanford, Joel Beinin directed me to focus my studies on the political economy of oil as the key to understanding the role of the U.S. in the region.

2. Which scholars do you see as having laid the groundwork for the study of the United States and the Middle East?

RA: The pioneering work on Iran's contemporary diplomatic history was done by two Iranian scholars: Rouhollah Ramazani and Shahram Chubin. They were writing in the 1970s on current affairs, but their work has stood the test of time. They were followed by several American scholars, many of them former Peace Corps volunteers in Iran, who wrote on U.S.-Iran relations. James Bill and James Goode were pioneers in the field, and I still assign their work to my students. Whilst they wrote American diplomatic history, they could read Persian and were sensitive to Iranian concerns and interests.

PLH: When I embarked on my dissertation, the literature on U.S.-Middle East relations was relatively thin compared to the extensive scholarship on U.S. policy in Europe, Latin America, and Asia. But there were individual works that provided starting points for one beginning to study the Middle East. A series of concise books by Thomas A. Bryson collectively provided a narrative overview of U.S. policy in the region (Thomas A. Bryson, *American Diplomacy in the Middle East* (St. Charles, Mo.: Forum Press, 1975); Thomas A. Bryson, *American Diplomatic Relations with the Middle East, 1784-1975* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1977); Thomas A. Bryson, *Seeds of Crisis: The United States Diplomatic Role in the Middle East during World War II* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1981)).

Individual, pioneering scholarly works probed such discrete matters as oil diplomacy in Saudi Arabia; U.S.-Soviet rivalry in Iran, Turkey, and Greece; U.S. approaches to the Arab states; and Truman's decision to recognize Israel. These works followed the traditional approach of analyzing the elites who formulated state-to-state relations on behalf of their national interests (Aaron David Miller, *Search for Security: Saudi Arabian Oil and American Foreign Policy, 1939-1949* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Irvine H. Anderson, *Aramco: The United States and Saudi Arabia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); Robert W. Stookey, *America and the Arab States: An Uneasy Encounter* (New York: Wiley, 1975); Evan M. Wilson, *Decision on Palestine: How the U.S. Came to Recognize Israel* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1975); Michael J. Cohen, *Palestine and the Great Powers, 1945-1948* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982)). A burgeoning literature that probed and debated the depth and flavor of Anglo-American relations also provided a useful perspective, given that Britain and the United States cooperated and competed on the Middle East stage during and after World War II (D. Cameron Watt, *Succeeding John Bull: America in Britain's Place* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Christopher Thorne, *Allies of a Kind: The United States, Britain, and the War against Japan* (New York: Oxford, 1978); Robert M. Hathaway, *Ambiguous Partnership: Britain and America, 1944-1947* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); William Roger Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East: Arab Nationalism, the United States, and Postwar Imperialism* (London: Oxford, 1984)).

OK: The scholar with the greatest influence on my own research and writing has been Edward Said. His trilogy of *Orientalism*, *The Question of Palestine*, and *Covering Islam* as well as *Culture and Imperialism* continue to inspire my research. Said's writing as a public intellectual, especially his collected essays, informed my decision to pursue a doctorate as well as my area of study.

In thinking about the U.S. as an economic and military empire, I continue to return to the classics by Gabriel Kolko and William Appleman Williams. Their insights into the relationships between domestic and foreign policy and American economic, political, and military power align well with Said's analysis of Euro-American imperial culture.

JS: Some of the most critical figures in the field for me are Edward Said, Salim Yaqub, Douglas Little, Melani McAlister, and Phebe Marr. I don't necessarily agree with all of their interpretations; I have a very critical article coming out in the *Journal of American Studies* on Said, McAlister, and other scholars' views on the Iraq War, for instance. But scholars like these have been essential in exploring the diplomatic, political, cultural, and other linkages between the United States and Middle Eastern societies.

KTW: First and foremost, anyone wanting to better grasp U.S-Middle East relations must understand the region and its people. There are countless works on this, too many to name here. But one cannot go wrong with Albert Hourani's *A History of the Arab Peoples* (1991) and Eugene Rogan's *The Arabs: A History* (2009). Salim Yaqub's *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (2004) and *Imperfect Strangers: Americans, Arabs, and U.S-Middle East Relations in the 1970s* (2016) and Melani McAllister's *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East since 1945* (2001) all offer groundbreaking cultural-political analyses of U.S.-Middle East relations. I will also mention Nathan Citino's *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC: Eisenhower, King Sa'ud, and the Making of U.S.-Saudi Relations* (2002), which examines the entanglement of nationalism, oil, and foreign policy.

Several seminal works specifically deal with Iraq. Hanna Batatu's *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (1978) is arguably the grandfather of all modern Iraq works. This tome delves deep into Iraqi society, class structure, and revolutionary movements. Joseph Sassoon's *Saddam Hussein's Ba'th Party: Inside an Authoritarian Regime* (2012) and Dina Rizk Khoury's *Iraq in Wartime: Soldiering, Martyrdom, and Remembrance* (2013) both broke new ground for Iraqi scholars by using Ba'th Party archives first made available in the late 2000s/early 2010s. Any student wanting to study Ba'thist Iraq absolutely must start these two, at the very least.

BWH: Edward Said was the single most important scholar to influence my study of U.S.-Middle East relations. It was Said who first proposed a general conceptual framework to makes sense of the ways in which the Bush administration sought to willfully and systematically deceive the public. Said illuminated the underlying pattern that structured government and media discourses. At the time, Melanie McAlister and Doug Little had recently published books demonstrating how Said's concept could be used to explain particular instances in the historical relationship between the U.S. and the region. However, I quickly grew dissatisfied with discursive analyses, or with the history of representations of the region. I wanted to know the reality behind the representations, and I felt that the political economy of oil was a sorely neglected aspect of that reality.

To make sense of the economic realities concealed behind orientalist rhetoric, I was drawn to the work of Immanuel Wallerstein and his approach to world systems analysis. Wallerstein's *The Decline of American Power* was one of the first and most influential books that I read on the subject. From there I was introduced to the work of scholars such as Samir Amin and Giovanni Arrighi. As I tried to incorporate conceptual insights from world systems theory, I trained my analysis on the role of Middle East oil in the world economy–with a particular focus on the causes and consequences of the 1973 Arab Oil Crisis. Toward this end, I turned to Daniel Yergin's *The Prize* as an essential starting point, but found the book wholly lacking any sort of critical perspective. It was not until a few years later that Robert Vitalis and Timothy Mitchell published more critical studies that helped shape my own approach.

3. Discuss how the field has evolved to include different approaches to analyzing U.S.-Middle East relations.

RA: I'm afraid that the field has developed in directions that I do not find very interesting. Recent work on U.S.-Iran relations has followed a trend of being particularly concerned with the rights and wrongs of American Empire in Iran. Most of the work (though not all) does not engage with Persian-language sources and does not concern itself with questions that would be of interest to an Iranian audience. It is mostly written by Americans, using American sources, for an American audience. Consequently, it is shaped by the fashions and incentives of American academia (a focus on race, gender, empire, etc.) that reflect American identity politics. This is, in my view at least, largely irrelevant to the major issues in contemporary Iranian history.

PLH: Like all subfields of recent U.S. history, the scholarship on U.S.-Middle East relations has grown with the passage of time. As government records aged, declassification officers released them to public scrutiny, archives and presidential libraries made them accessible, and scholars perused them and published their findings. For someone like me who entered graduate school in 1982, the chronological range of the history of U.S. policy in the Middle East since World War II has doubled. As the Middle East became the site of multiple U.S. military interventions in the post-Cold War era, moreover, U.S. diplomacy became more substantial, complex, contested, and consequential.

In terms of conceptual approaches, the field has broadened from its original focus on the formulation of official policy by government leaders in Washington. Adopting a cultural approach, some scholars have probed how the American people interpreted the Middle East and how their views might have shaped international relations, and how U.S. cultural artifacts were consumed and interpreted by Middle Easterners (See, for example, Kathleen Christison, *Perceptions of Palestine: Their Influences on U.S. Middle East Policy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); *Michelle Mart, Eye on Israel: How America Came to View the Jewish State as an Ally* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006); Brian T. Edwards, *After the American Century: The Ends of U.S. Culture in the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015)). Other chroniclers emphasized the religious impulses behind popular understandings of the Middle East as well as official policy toward the region (See, for example, Irvine H. Anderson, *Biblical Interpretation and Middle East Policy: The Promised Land, America, and Israel, 1917-2002* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005); Victoria Clark, *Allies for Armageddon: The Rise of Christian Zionism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Thomas S. Kidd, *American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009)). The influence of gender on U.S. perceptions of the Middle East and on the making of policy has also been explored (See, for example, Mary Ann Heiss, *Empire and Nationhood: The United States, Great Britain, and Iranian Oil, 1950-1954* (New York: Columbia, 1997); Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001)).

Some scholars have advanced the internationalization of the field by conducting research across national and linguistic lines. Using archives in Persian, Arabic, and Hebrew, several books have revealed the perceptions of U.S. policy among foreign states, the efforts by those states to shape U.S. policy, and the impact of U.S. diplomacy on those states. These books have added clarity and depth to the accumulated knowledge about U.S. foreign relations (See, for example, James F. Goode, *The United States and Iran: In the Shadow of*

Musaddiq (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Ussama Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of U.S.-Arab Relations, 1820-2001* (New York: Public Affairs, 2010); Paul Thomas Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order* (New York: Oxford, 2012); Nathan J. Citino, *Envisioning the Arab Future: Modernization in U.S.-Arab Relations, 1945-1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Yaacov BarSimanTov, *Israel, the Superpowers, and the War in the Middle East* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987); Peter L. Hahn, *Caught in the Middle East: U.S. Policy toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1945-1961* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004)).

OK: The field has developed significantly over the past two decades and the works produced offer increasingly sophisticated and nuanced analysis. After lagging behind other fields, U.S. foreign relations has at long last discovered and engaged with the scholarship outside of a narrow frame and an even smaller source base. This includes the use of non-English language sources (archives, media, etc.), as well as engaging with Said, Foucault, Fanon, the Israeli "new historians" and considering agency, race, religion, and gender. Scholars of U.S. foreign relations can no longer ignore regional actors or pretend they were merely pawns in a great power struggle. Or in the case of non-state actors like the Palestinians and the Kurds, that they didn't exist or Washington did not have a policy toward them. But there is still more to be done and there are limits to what is possible as I discuss below.

JS: I think the field has changed in a few ways. There's more emphasis on the interactions of non-state, transnational actors reaching across borders: missionaries, lobbying groups, intellectuals, activists, etc. There is more room for "critical" approaches that show how cultural biases, identity, narrative, and so on affect diplomatic, political, and military affairs. Finally, the field is simply more diverse and transnational in and of itself, which leads to different questions and approaches.

KTW: Like the broader study of U.S. foreign relations, scholars of the U.S. and the Middle East are somewhat divided between two approaches: U.S.-centric and "U.S. and the World." Since the 1990s, considerable attention has been devoted to the latter, with a heavy emphasis on culture and ideology, especially from a transnational lens. In the post-9/11 era, there has been additional analysis on terrorism, transnational identities and ideologies, and nation-state building. The field also now heavily promotes research and methodologies using several archives and languages across multiple states. But to be fair, some recent works have attempted to place the United States back in the center. One such example is Osamah Khalil's *America's Dream Palace: Middle East Expertise and the Rise of the National Security State* (2016), which shows how the Middle East shaped American foreign policy bureaucracy after World War II. Finally, scholars and graduate students have begun using foreign archives to examine the United States from, for example, Baghdad or Ankara's perspective. Instead of relying on U.S. repositories to delineate trends and events abroad, these records can now be used to examine American foreign policy from afar.

BWH: When I started, postcolonial studies/Saidian discursive analysis was seemingly hegemonic in the field. I was interested in political economy–and the political economy of oil in particular–but that seemed very difficult to find in a field seemingly dominated by cultural and literary studies. After wrestling with debates generated by the subaltern studies collective, I concluded that just as orientalism had been the cultural logic of late 19th century European imperialism, so had postmodernism become the cultural logic of late 20th century U.S. imperialism. It seemed to me that all of the arguments about language and signs overlooked (and indeed diverted attention from) what was actually happening in the region. While most of my cohort seemed unduly taken with postmodern epistemologies, I became firmer in my resolve to understand what really happed.

As I grew increasingly disillusioned with postmodernism, I turned more and more to political economy, and to a more positivist approach to the sociology of knowledge–specifically I became interested in the debates around modernization theory. In this area, I found works by Gendzier, Latham, Gilman quite generative. I think those debates occupied center stage in the field throughout the aughts, as they offered the best ground from which counter arguments about the "clash of civilizations' at the "end of History."

In the aftermath of the Great Financial Crisis of 2008, public attention turned inward. Public and media attention grew exhausted with "endless wars in the Middle East." This corresponded with a massive shock to university hiring–a decisive blow to an enterprise that had long been on the ropes. The wars remained, but public attention was increasingly directed elsewhere. Before long, many on the "left" were proclaiming, "We are the 99%!" Ironic, given that we had been the "10%" only a few years prior. (90 percent approval for President Bush was a rather fleeting phenomenon, but the point stands.)

4. What are some of the challenges faced by scholars working in the field?

RA: I would say that the greatest challenge is using Persian-language sources. There is an abundance of Iranian sources available outside of Iran on U.S.-Iran relations, most recently the Zahedi Papers at Stanford. It astounds me how many recent Ph.D.s do work on U.S.-Iran relations without engaging with Persian-language sources. I cannot imagine that anybody would write on U.S. relations with Latin America without reading Spanish sources, or U.S.-Soviet relations without reading Russian sources–yet this sadly remains the norm for those working on U.S.-Iran relations. The Iranian actors are viewed and interpreted solely through English-language sources, which is highly problematic. It leads to significant misreadings that continue to plague the field.

PLH: Scholars must first aim to understand the complexity of the Middle East. Forming the intersection of three continents, the region contains diverse nationalities with competing political aspirations. Its historic role as the birthplace of three major religions attracts international attention to the region and generates intense fervor for land and identity among its inhabitants. Such natural resources as oil, warm water ports, and maritime routes render the region important to distant empires and causes clashes between them. The legacies of historical imperialism, ranging from arbitrary borders to rentier economics, continue to generate political conflict and social underdevelopment.

Scholars seeking to explore U.S. policy in the Middle East based on government records face challenges. The U.S. government's aspirational goal of releasing official records for public inspection after a 30-year delay frequently

remains unrealized. A historian working on a topic in 30-35 year rearview range should be prepared to file numerous Freedom of Information Act or Mandatory Review petitions, to wait for years for responses, and to brace for frustrating if not absurd results. One example: while working at the Kennedy Library in the early 1990s, I filed a Mandatory Review request on still-classified correspondence between Kennedy and Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion. While awaiting a reply, I ventured to the Ben-Gurion Library in Sde Boqer, Israel, where I discovered the Israeli cache of this correspondence. About six months after returning home, I received a letter from the Kennedy Library—denying my Mandatory Review request!

Western scholars seeking to explore primary sources of the Middle East face multiple challenges. With the exception of Israel, most states in the region do not practice the custom of preserving or systematically declassifying sensitive government records. To explore what sources are available, nonnative scholars would need to master Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, or Turkish. "It's not like learning French, you know," a professor of Hebrew told me some 30 years ago when I decided to learn that language so I could consult Israeli archives for my second book.

In light of ongoing conflicts across the region, a scholar considering venturing to the Middle East must remain cautious of security situations. When I spent many months working in Israeli archives in the 1990s, I was slightly unnerved by a series of bus bombs around the country, including some close to my temporary home–and that was at the height of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. As a brand-new department chair in the summer of 2006, I spent several tense days advising three graduate students on finding safe passage out of Syria and Lebanon after the Israel-Hezbollah war suddenly erupted and Israeli jets pockmarked the runways at Beirut's airport. (The two in Damascus found a bus ride to Amman; the one in Beirut was helicoptered by U.S. Marines to a Navy ship on the Mediterranean.) As I write in October 2024, I would discourage a graduate student or colleague from traveling for research purposes to Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, or Libya. Air raid sirens are not conducive to deep study.

OK: The initial barrier to entry is language acquisition, especially to use archival and media sources in any of the regional languages. This has been a longstanding issue that dates to the post-World War II origins of the field of Middle East studies in the United States. Over the next four decades, it was exacerbated by the politicization of the field.

Even when scholars have the necessary language skills, accessing archives can be difficult. Either they are not available or are restricted to select researchers. In some cases, especially for non-state actors, the archives do not exist or have been seized by the United States, Israel, or Turkey and are restricted. The politicization of archive access is not limited to states in Western Asia and North Africa. In researching my dissertation and first book, two American institutions rejected my request to conduct research in their archives and there were hurdles to the use of others, including overt racism.

Gaps in the U.S. national archives and presidential records persist and they have not been resolved by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). I have FOIA requests that are 12-15 years old related to my dissertation and first book that have not been fulfilled. What is particularly troubling is that these gaps and omissions exist for records that are nearly eighty years old. The *FRUS* series, which is an essential resource for scholars, is a decade or more behind schedule. The records of the Global War on Terror presidencies from Bush to Biden are likely to suffer from even more delays and omissions due to the heightened security restrictions. Of course, the records of leading corporations are generally restricted or unavailable. While archives of some philanthropic and nongovernmental institutions are available, there are gaps and restrictions.

Politicization of the study of the Middle East has been and remains a consistent issue and hurdle that scholars must overcome. Although academia has been increasingly in the crosshairs of America's contentious politics, this has been a persistent issue related to the study of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. It has limited the questions that can be asked, mitigated the findings, and enervated scholarly discussion of key issues.

These issues are compounded by the macroeconomic trends affecting academia. The collapse of the academic job market has constricted the number of talented doctoral students that will have the ability to publish their research with institutional support. It is also limiting the number of students that can enter graduate school and eventually conduct publishable research. In addition, academic presses are under financial pressure and fewer titles are being published.

JS: One challenge we face is trying to achieve synthesis for our fields. The proliferation of methodologies and points of focus is a net positive, but then we need people trying to put disparate pieces together. How, for example, do missionaries, Arab-American students, other non-state and transnational groups actually influence policy? To borrow from political science, what are the mechanisms by which they do so? Is it just through shaping discourse? By changing the minds of the powerful? By entering the halls of power and becoming decision-makers? The more we can show these connections in action, the more relevant our work to existing policymakers as well as fields like political science, who tend to be skeptical of this stuff.

For instance, I work at an institution with students who have a limited time period to study a whole lot of foreign policy-related material and who have a very specific career track. If I'm going to assign historical material (or convince my colleagues to do so, as we teach a unified core curricula), I have to convince them that this more constructivist history actually impacts policy, military strategy, alliances, etc.

One additional problem is how to relate to current events. Topics like Israel-Palestine are incredibly urgent and emotionally laden. It's hard to take a step back and try to write history that does not just speak to the current moment. The more SHAFR can be a big-tent place where we do step back from the headlines, the more it will succeed at bringing together different perspectives and ultimately producing better history.

KTW: One of the biggest challenges for scholars working on the 20th/21st centuries, let alone the Middle East, is the transition from paper to digital documentation. Throughout this process, countless records have been lost due to failed data transfers, insufficient means of preservation, or were merely misplaced in the shuffle. This has diminished our ability to see the written response. Who saw this email exactly? Did anyone leave notes or comments jotted down by hand, and if so, what did they say? Are drafts of this speech or text, for example, still available, or were they deleted during the collection process? It will be difficult to reconstruct or trace how policy decisions or frameworks, for instance, came to fruition without these.

A second issue is, of course, the matter of classification. Lack of funding, backlogs, and delays for this matter have all stalled and, quite frankly, threatened both future scholarship and the field. However, there is another issue compounding our craft, and one that has yet to be fully grasped. Not only is the process for declassification so far behind, but we need to take into account the issue of overclassification. In light of incidents like the Wikileaks data dump in 2010-2011, there has been a tendency to err on the side of caution and classify documents and records that really do not warrant such protection. Even then, there are increasing classification layers like "Controlled Unclassified Information," which, according to the U.S. Department of Defense, is "sensitive information that does not meet the criteria for classification but must still be protected." This cover-ourselves-now-and-deal-with-it-later approach will create an even larger nightmare for historians in the future. What a gloomy prospect.

Finally, a third issue is accessibility to overseas archives. Various issues compound non-American research: budget cuts to critical language study programs, restricted visa and entry documents, and geopolitics impacting fieldwork approval and safety. But, especially for those of us working on Iraqi studies, there are legal, moral, and ethical considerations when using Saddam Hussein-era documents that were seized in the wake of the 2003 invasion. And while they are now housed in the United States, they remain largely inaccessible to Iraqis. Their removal from Iraq has also raised critical questions surrounding their provenance and ownership.

BWH: When was the last time someone was hired to teach Diplomatic History? The discipline in which I was trained has ceased to exist as a career field in which emerging scholars might find gainful employment. The U.S. had some 800 military bases around the world, and spends unfathomable sums on "defense," but the organized study of the U.S. role in the world has fallen into entropy. The U.S. has fully entered its Era of Imperial Senescence. Much like the Alzheimer patient who currently leads the empire, the U.S. bombs places and then seem to not even remember where or why it's bombing. Connelly's *The Declassified Engine* talks about this in relation to electronic record (non)keeping. Everything is classified and nothing is remembered. In the 1980s, it was possible to take a new look at what happened in the 1950s. But today, only a small handful of documents pertaining to U.S.-Middle East relations since 1990 have ever been published in *FRUS*. Records aren't archived for scholars. Scholars aren't hired to probe the silences in the archive. The audience for scholarly monographs has evaporated in the searing heat of a warming climate. The society has lost its bearings and has become completely unmoored from reality. A not insignificant segment of the population believes that the weather is controlled by Jewish Space Lazers and that nothing can save us now but the Second Coming of Christ. (Schema here taken from Trouillot's four "critical moments" in which History is produced. See, *Silencing the Past*, 26.)

5. What are some of the significant questions in the field that you feel need to be addressed in greater detail or, alternatively, which questions need to be reconsidered by contemporary scholars?

RA: There are some tropes that have been baked into the historiography of U.S.-Iran relations that are very hard to shift, no matter how much evidence emerges to challenge them. The view of the last Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, as a CIA-installed rightwing dictator, who did the bidding of the United States, remains a popular myth. This is hardly surprising given the Left-wing prejudices of most American academics. On the other hand, there is now a revisionist history of the 1953 coup being propounded by several Iranian scholars that wants to exonerate the United States (and the Shah) of any culpability in the overthrow of Mosaddeq.

This debate rages, largely to serve present-day political agendas, while more interesting questions remain neglected. For example, I have been waiting for someone to write a history of U.S.-Iran commercial relations in the 1970s. What happened to all the Iranian petrodollars that were recycled into the U.S. economy? Iran's role in American corporate history, from the Chase Manhattan Bank, to Grumman, to Pan Am, would be a fascinating story to tell. What role did these commercial and financial ties play in the relationship between the two countries? Did corporate interests influence American policy? Did Iranian finance influence American policy? What role did corruption play in these relationships? Many of these U.S. corporate archives are now open, and many Iranian memoirs and oral histories are now available, all waiting for someone to dive into them.

PLH: There is now a robust literature on U.S. relations with Israel and U.S. policy toward the conflict between Israel and the Arab states. Notwithstanding excellent studies by Paul T. Chamberlin and Seth Anziska, however, there is considerable room for more analysis of U.S. approaches to Arab Palestinians, including not only the proto-state Palestine Authority of recent decades but also the Palestinian institutions that dwelled in the shadows of the interstate Arab-Israeli conflict of the last century (Chamberlin, *Global Offensive*; Seth Anziska, *Preventing Palestine: A Political History from Camp David to Oslo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018)).

On a related note, there is a need for examination of U.S. policy toward other stateless, minority groups across the region. Most prominent are the Kurds who dwell in borderlands of Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Kurds have been objects of U.S. policy and have affected U.S. relations with various states over many decades. While political scientists have probed recent U.S. approaches to the Kurds in theoretical context, archives-based historical narratives would be welcomed (Vera Eccarius-Kelly and Michael M. Gunter, eds., *Kurdish Autonomy and U.S. Foreign Policy: Continuity and Change* (New York: Lang, 2020); Marianna Charountaki, *The Kurds and U.S. Foreign Policy: International Relations in the Middle East since 1945* (London: Routledge, 2011)).

As government records become available in future years, the Arab Spring of 2011-12 and its tumultuous consequences across the region should become a focal point for U.S. foreign relations historians. It might be possible to begin that exploration by examining the foundations of U.S. policy in the Arab world that might have contributed to the eventual onset of the Arab Spring.

OK: Many of the questions that apply to U.S.-Middle East relations are applicable more broadly to the field of U.S. foreign relations and diplomatic and international history. How can we understand the role of corporate interests? How do they influence policy development and implementation? How can scholars better understand their role?

Similarly, the role of domestic politics and its influence on foreign policy needs more study. How have domestic lobbies influenced foreign policy? This includes corporate lobbies as well as those related to particular issues. These are important factors and we have barely scratched the

surface of understanding how they have influenced policy and continue to do so. And research is limited by the politicization of academic inquiry as well as the silences and gaps in the archival record.

Scholars have examined the respective roles of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as well as the intersection between them. However, the influence and evolution of the military intelligence branches has not been sufficiently explored. The military intelligence branches predate the OSS and CIA and there was crossover between the agencies. A greater understanding is needed of their role and influence, not just in the Middle East but more broadly.

The influence of religion on foreign policy needs to be explored further. This is not only the promotion of Christianity or Islam as a counterbalance to communism, but how perceptions of religious superiority or inferiority were reproduced in policy development and implementation.

JS: I honestly think my field is doing fantastic work conceptualizing and addressing new questions. In terms of reconsideration, I'd actually like to see the field look more at the neoconservatives, but with more emphasis on archival work and getting inside their heads to unpack how they saw the Middle East and American power. Sometimes the more critical approaches don't get at the subjectivity of the people being critiqued, which is often the neocons. I'm trying to do more to unpack their worldviews in my second book on how the right interpreted and debated modern terrorism from the 1960s to the present, and I hope to do the same in my third book project, a biography of the Lebanese-American thinker Fouad Ajami. I'm drawn to him because there's a fairly large community of right-leaning Arab-Americans, or figures like Kanan Makiya that broke with the Left on Middle East policy, that deserve closer attention. Divides within this community over the Iraq War, insofar as I've explored them, are fascinating.

KTW: The field is definitely trending in the right direction when it comes to placing foreign relations in global contexts using multiple archives and perspectives. Asher Orkaby's *Beyond the Arab Cold War: The International History of the Yemen Civil War, 1962-68* (2017) comes to mind for this. Another exciting example is Daniel Chardell's dissertation on the 1990-1991 Gulf War (Harvard University, 2023), which places the conflict in an international context with impressive archival work. The subsequent book should be a most welcomed contribution to the literature.

And yet, I would argue that the field warrants further integration of military and diplomatic studies from a global perspective. I worry that sidelining the study of military history–which has moved far from the older narratives of merely describing how battalions, brigades, and divisions moved on the battlefield like chess pieces–will only harm both fields. Incorporating how militaries operate, including their influences, leaders, bureaucracies, strategies, and tactics, can only strengthen diplomatic studies. (As someone who floats between both, let me add one stipulation–I assign equal blame for this unfortunate phenomenon. I would argue the same for military historians when it comes to embracing diplomatic studies). Moving forward, I would love to see further inclusion and acknowledgment between the two.

BWH: Is the U.S. a rational actor on the world stage? It is abundantly clear that the U.S. in not a moral actor in international relations (see Gaza, Iraq, etc.). But is it a strategic actor? Are its actions strategically efficacious? Does the moral and financial cost of US aid to Israel yield some strategic benefit? Or is U.S. foreign policy captured and manipulated by the Israel Lobby? Or perhaps U.S. foreign policy is driven by deep seated ethnic and religious hatreds–what Herman Melville called the "metaphysics of Indian hating." How deeply rooted in American society are Christian Zionist ideas about the End of Days and the Second Coming of Christ? Does that well of pre-millennialist sentiment have any actual influence within the blob? Or is all that just circus bread to satiate the masses? Or, alternatively, perhaps a genocide in Gaza serves some brutally rational end. Every time a 2,000 bomb is dropped on refugees sheltering in tents, what happens to the value of my 401k? How is the value of the U.S. dollar maintained? Would our money be worth what we say it is without the contemporary operations of petro-weapons-dollar complex? How does new weapons technology emerge and acquire value without what Anthony Lowenstein calls "The Palestine Laboratory"? If it weren't for Israel who would assassinate all of those Iranian scientists?

Much recent work comes down on the irrationalist side of the interpretive spectrum. Simon's *The Grand Delusion*, Bacevich's *The War for the Greater Middle East*, Vitalis's *Oilcraft*, and my own *The Paranoid Style in American Diplomacy* all argue in one way or another that U.S. policymakers are somehow confused about what's in their own best interest. Policymakers are seen blundering and stumbling around without any clear sense of what they are doing or why. The fantastic wealth that accumulates in Northern Virginia and is on display in glittering capitals throughout the world is somehow a product of dumb luck. A thoroughly insulated blob of mandarins remains impervious to any sort of public accountability. People like Nuland, McGurk, and Abrams become institutions of American power. Figures like Bush and Cheney are held out as paragons of democratic virtue. That they were never sentenced as war criminals is just luck? The Iraq War was a strategic blunder? Would U.S./Israel be able to do what it is now doing to the region had Iraq remained a coherent state with formidable military industrial capacity? Where might Iran's military industrial development be without the presence of 10s and 100s of thousands of U.S. troops on its doorstep? Where might Syrian military industrial development be without the tacit alliance with ISIS to bring about regime change in that country? I don't believe that the U.S./Israel have been redrawing the map of the region since 1990 in a fit of absentmindedness. There is a clear line of causal connection running from the Draft Defense Policy Guidance, through the Clean Break memo and PNAC charter, to the carnage that we now see from Rafah to Dahiya and beyond. The idea that the U.S. invasion of Iraq was a "strategic blunder" needs to be rethought a very fundamental level. It seems now an essential first step in a global end game.

6. For someone wanting to start out in the history of U.S.-Middle East relations (or your own specific field of research), what 5-8 books do you consider to be of seminal importance–either the "best" or the most influential titles?

RA: Gholam Reza Afkhami, *The Life and Times of the Shah* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009)

Roham Alvandi, *Nixon, Kissinger, and the Shah: The United States and Iran in the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014)

James A. Bill, *The Eagle and the Lion: The Tragedy of American-Iranian Relations* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988)

Mark J. Gasiorowski, *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Shah: Building a Client State in Iran* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991)
Robert Jervis, *Why Intelligence Fails: Lessons from the Iranian Revolution and the Iraq War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010)

Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, *Heroes to Hostages: America and Iran, 1800-1988* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023)

PLH: It is hard to identify the "best" books, because the field is so rich and remarkable. For me, these works (listed from most recent to oldest) have been influential:

David M. Wight, *Oil Money: Middle East Petrodollars and the Transformation of U.S. Empire, 1967-1988*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2021.

Amy Kaplan, *Our American Israel: The Story of an Entangled Alliance*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018.

Shaul Mitelpunkt, *Israel in the American Mind: The Cultural Politics of U.S.-Israeli Relations, 1958-1988*. London: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Nathan J. Citino, *Envisioning the Arab Future: Modernization in U.S.-Arab Relations, 1945-1967*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Osamah F. Khalil, *America's Dream Palace: Middle East Expertise and the Rise of the National Security State*. New York: Harvard University Press, 2016.

Douglas Little, *Us Versus Them: The United States, Radical Islam, and the Rise of the Green Threat*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016.

Salim Yaqub, *Imperfect Strangers: Americans, Arabs, and U.S.-Middle East Relations in the 1970s*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2016.

Craig Daigle, *The Limits of Detente: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Arab Israeli Conflict, 1969-1973*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012.

OK: In addition to *Orientalism* and Jack Shaheen's *Reel Bad Arabs*, students would benefit from considering not only the U.S. role in the Middle East, but how communities from Western Asia and North Africa have called the United States home for over a century. This includes Sarah Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White* and *Arab Routes*, Laila Lalami, *Conditional Citizens*, and Pamela Pennock, *The Rise of the Arab American Left*.

Some titles to consider for an introduction or comprehensive exams include Ervand Abrahamian's *Oil Crisis in Iran*, *The Global Offensive* by Paul Chamberlin, Nate Citino's *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC*, Alex Lubin's *Geographies of Liberation*, *Epic Encounters* by Melani McAlister, Robert Vitalis, *America's Kingdom*, Karine Walther's *Sacred Interests*, and Salim Yaqub's *Containing Arab Nationalism*. And my first book, *America's Dream Palace*, examines the influence of U.S. foreign policy on the origins and expansion of Middle East studies and expertise from World War I to the Arab Spring.

JS: I would say *Epic Encounters* by Melani McAlister, *American Orientalism* by Douglas Little, *Imperfect Strangers* by Salim Yaqub, Sam Helfont's *Iraq Against the World*, David Lesch's *Arab-Israeli Conflict*, and Lawrence Wright's *The Looming Tower*. The first three do a great job integrating political, diplomatic, and cultural history. Helfont's book is an excellent example of more recent global approaches to U.S.-Middle East relations. And Lesch's book is still the most evenhanded historical treatment I've read on this conflict.

KTW: I will quickly bypass debates over Samuel Huntington, Bernard Lewis, and Edward Said and just say their works and arguments, with all caveats, still warrant consideration for anyone starting out in this field. With those in mind, David W. Lesch and Mark Hass's edited volume, *The Middle East and the United States: History, Politics, and Ideologies* (sixth edition, 2018), certainly deserves mention. Other influential works include David Fromkin's *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (1989), Douglas Little's *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945* (2002), and Rachel Bronson's *Thicker than Oil: America's Uneasy Partnership with Saudi Arabia* (2006).

I would be remiss without mentioning Afghanistan or Iran. For the former, Steve Coll's *Directorate S: The CIA and America's Secret Wars in Afghanistan and Pakistan* (2018) brings to light the impact of covert operations and relationships on foreign policy. Elisabeth Leake's *Afghan Crucible: The Soviet Invasion and the Making of Modern Afghanistan* (2022) provides an impressive global history of Afghanistan in the latter half of the 20th century. As for the latter, Gregory Brew's *Petroleum and Progress in Iran: Oil, Development, and the Cold War* (2022) shows how international and local forces shaped the emergence of the petro-state under autocratic rule. Finally, let me suggest two impactful books on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Ronen Bergman's *Rise and Kill First: The Secret History of Israel's Targeted Assassinations* (2018) and Rashid Khalidi's *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonial Conquest and Resistance, 19171-2017* (2020).

For Iraq specifically, Ofra Bengio's *Saddam Word: Political Discourse in Iraq* (1998) and Amatzia Baram's *Culture, History, and Ideology in the Formation of Ba'thist Iraq, 1968-1989* (1991) are essential for understanding Saddam's regime. Oles M. Smolansky and Bettie M. Smolansky's *The USSR and Iraq: the Soviet Quest for Influence* (1991) is an excellent start for Iraq in the Cold War. Lastly, I also recommend Sam Helfont's new book *Iraq and the World* (2023), which examines the Ba'th Party's diplomatic efforts in the 1990s to shape foreign policies abroad in favor of Iraq.

BWH: Said, *Orientalism* (chapter 3): Seminal work defining an intellectual agenda for the field. Both influential and good.

Little, *American Orientalism*: Essential place to begin in making sense of the U.S. role in the region.

Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy*: Best single volume on the political economy of oil.

Kadri, *Unmaking Arab Socialism*: Most advanced theorization of the U.S. role in the region; though not yet an "influential work."

Capasso and Kadri, "The Imperialist Question: A Sociological Approach," *Middle East Critique*, 32:2 (2023), 149166: Succinct distillation and application of Kadri's conceptual approach.

Mearsheimer and Walt, *The Israel Lobby*: Essential place to begin thinking about the role of the lobby.

7. For someone wanting to teach a course on U.S.-Middle East relations or add U.S.-Middle East elements to an existing course on U.S. foreign relations, what core readings and/or media would you suggest?

RA: There are several works on U.S. foreign relations that do a great job of incorporating an Iran case study into broader histories. A few I would recommend:

Jessica M. Chapman, *Remaking the World: Decolonization and the Cold War* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2023)

Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980)

Michael E. Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011)

Mark Atwood Lawrence, *The End of Ambition: The United States and the Third World in the Vietnam Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023)

Daniel J. Sargent, *A Superpower Transformed: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015)

PLH: To gain understanding of the broad contours of the U.S. experience in the Middle East, one could read sweeping overviews by such intellectually diverse scholars as Douglas Little, Lawrence Freedman, Seth Jacobs, Ray Takeyh, and Walter Russell Mead, to name a few (Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Lawrence Freedman, *A Choice of Enemies: America Confronts the Middle East* (New York: Public Affairs, 2008); Matthew Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East: The Building of an American Foreign Policy, 1918-1967* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Ray Takeyh, *The Last Shah: America, Iran, and the Fall of the Pahlavi Dynasty* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022); Walter Russell Mead, *The Arc of a Covenant: The United States, Israel, and the Fate of the Jewish People* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2022)). My own textbook, *Crisis and Crossfire*, serves as a concise overview of the U.S, diplomacy since World War II and is intended for undergraduate instruction and general readership.

OK: In addition to the texts above, Paul Chamberlin's *The Cold War's Killing Fields* as well as my new book, *A World of Enemies*, fit in well with broader courses on the history of U.S. foreign relations, the U.S. and the Middle East, and the U.S. since 1945. Linda Jacobs, *Strangers in the West* offers insights and resources on the Little Syria colony and immigration from Greater Syria. Deepa Kumar's *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire*, *Never Ending War on Terror* by Alex Lubin, and *Oilcraft* by Robert Vitalis will challenge the preconceived notions of students and scholars.

My students have enjoyed the first-person accounts in books by Mustafa Bayoumi's *How Does it Feel to be a Problem?* and *A Country Called Amreeka* by Alia Malek. I have also had success with historical fiction, including the classic *Cities of Salt* by Abdelrahman Munif. Laila Lalami has authored two outstanding works of contemporary and historical fiction: *The Other Americans* and *The Moor's Account*.

There are a number of films and documentaries that can be shown in classes. Of particular note are *Amreeka* (2009), *Control Room* (2004), and *Slingshot Hip Hop* (2008). Two recent television series are also highly recommended: *Ramy* (Hulu) and *Mo* (Netflix).

JS: *Frontline* has outstanding and pretty evenhanded documentaries on U.S.-Middle East relations, especially in the War on Terror era. In the Iraq War elective, I've found a couple of pieces to be especially useful: Daniel Chardell's article in *Texas National Security Review* rethinking Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Chaim Kaufmann's exploration of threat inflation and the Iraq War in *International Security*, primary sources in the volume *The ISIS Reader*, excerpts of *The Last Card* volume on the 2007 troop surge in Iraq, Cole Bunzel's work on the Islamic State's ideology, and my own piece in *TNSR* on the historiography of the Iraq War at 20 years. I've also assigned famous essays by figures like Said, Huntington, Buchanan, and Fukuyama as primary sources and asked students to explore the arguments and assumptions within these texts about how the U.S. should approach the Middle East.

KTW: Let me recommend some newer material to enhance some of the more foundational and seminal works detailed above. They also will help anyone looking to add to their Iraq and Afghanistan wars syllabi. For essential background, Lawrence Wright's classic *Looming Tower: Al Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (2006) and Joe Stieb's article "Why Did the United States Invade Iraq? The Debate at 20 Years" (found in the Texas National Security Review summer 2023 issue) are both absolute musts. Stieb's book, *The Regime Change Consensus: Iraq in American Politics, 1990-2003* (2021), impressively traces how U.S. policymakers consolidated around the necessity to remove Saddam Hussein from power. The best comprehensive account of the Afghanistan war is Carter Malkasian's *The American War in Afghanistan: A History* (2021). Steve Coll's latest book, *The Achilles Trap: Saddam Hussein, The C.I.A., and the Origins of America's Invasion of Iraq* (2024), which examines the road to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, will prompt lively discussions about the U.S. between the end of the Cold War and the 9/11 era.

And finally, permit me to suggest some media options that can supplement course material while also highlighting Iraqi voices. I highly recommend season 3 of the *In the Dark* podcast, which, in partnership with the *New Yorker*, reexamines the U.S. Marine Corps and the Haditha massacre in Iraq in late 2005. Ghaith Abdul-Ahad's *Stranger in Your Own City: Travels in the Middle East's Long War* (2023) provides a personal account of life in Iraq before and after 2003. Netflix's *Mosul* (released in 2019) is a gripping, emotional film that traces the Ninewa SWAT team's efforts to retake the city from ISIS.

BWH: Citino, "The Middle East and the Cold War," *Cold War History* (2019): Good historiographical overview to introduce new scholars to the field. Key debates and intellectual concerns laid out very clearly.

Little, "Opening the Door: Business, Diplomacy, and America's Stake in Middle East Oil," in *American Orientalism* (2004): Good survey of U.S. oil interests in the region covering the period from 1945-2003. Works well in the classroom.

Jones, "America, Oil, and War in the Middle East," *Journal of American History* (2012): Good update to Little carrying the story through aughts. Works well in the classroom.

Little, "Revelations: Islamophobia, the Green Threat, and a New Cold War in the Middle East," in *Us Versus Them* (2016): Good introduction to idea of irrational impulses shaping public policy. Useful application of Melville's "metaphysics

of Indian hating" to U.S.-Middle East relations. Works well in the classroom.

Simon, *The Grand Delusion* (2023): Highly readable "insider" survey putting forward the idea that American policymakers are incompetent, rather than evil.

Blumenthal, *The Management of Savagery* (2019): Highly readable "outsider" survey putting forward the idea that policymakers are far more evil than they are incompetent.

Rose, "The Gaza Bombshell," *Vanity Fair* (2008): Important article elucidating the origins of the U.S./Israel war against Hamas.

Films:

Shaheen, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (2006)

Bacevich, *The Oil War* (2020)

Schei, *Praying for Armageddon* (2023)

Amirani, *Coup 53* (2019)

Ayella, *American Coup* (2010)

Curtis, *The Power of Nightmares* (2004)

On the U.S. Invasion of Iraq in particular:

Christopher J. Coyne and Abigail R. Hall, *Manufacturing Militarism: U.S. Government Propaganda in the War on Terror* (Stanford University Press, 2021).

Jane K. Cramer and A. Trevor Thrall, eds., *Why Did the United States Invade Iraq?* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

Robert Draper, *To Start a War: How the Bush Administration Took America into Iraq* (Penguin Books, 2021).

Amy Gershkoff and Shana Kushner, "Shaping Public Opinion: The 9/11-Iraq Connection in the Bush Administration's Rhetoric," *Perspectives on Politics*, 3:3 (2005), 525-537.

Chaim Kaufmann, "Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas: The Selling of the Iraq War," *International Security*, vol. 29, no. 1 (Summer 2004), pp. 548.

Call for Nominations

2025 Walter LaFeber-Molly Wood Prize for Distinguished Teaching

This award recognizes distinguished teaching by a SHAFR member in the field of foreign relations. Award recipients will be chosen based on their full record as a teacher, including teaching at all levels. The committee particularly encourages applications from faculty in teaching-centered positions, however applications from faculty with research-intensive appointments are also welcomed. Nominations may come from any member of SHAFR, including self-nominations.

Applications should include

- An abbreviated cv highlighting the applicant's teaching experience and any awards, conference presentations, service, publications, or other professional work related to teaching;
- A personal statement on teaching;
- Two professional letters of reference from persons knowledgeable about applicant's teaching; and
- Any additional materials or evidence of teaching excellence, including letters of support from current or former students and course materials and/or assignments.
- The total submission packet should not exceed 50 pages.

Complete application packets should be submitted as a single pdf to Justin Hart (justin.hart@ttu.edu), Chair of the Teaching Award Subcommittee, by **February 1, 2025**.

SHAFR Council Minutes
Friday, September 20, 2024, 11am-1pm (U.S. Eastern) via Zoom

Council members present: Mitch Lerner (chair), Megan Black, Jessica Gienow-Hecht, Mary Ann Heiss, Chris Hulshof, Melani McAlister, Sarah Miller-Davenport, Vanessa Walker, Kelsey Zavelo
Others attending: Amy Sayward (ex officio), Faith Bagley, Richard Immerman, Kaete O'Connell, Lauren Turek

Introductory matters:
President Mitch Lerner opened the meeting with a welcome and expression of thanks because he was chairing his last meeting of Council. He reviewed Council's accomplishments of the year, including establishing a teaching award, completing the searches for SHAFR's next executive director and *Passport* editor, as well as hosting a complex but successful conference in Toronto. He was also happy to announce that Kaete O'Connell has decided to stay on as conference coordinator with a broader scope of responsibilities in the new year.

Financial issues:
Lauren Turek, co-chair of SHAFR's Development Committee, joined the meeting to discuss the gift from Mel and Phyllis Leffler as well as the overall focus of the Development Committee. Lerner thanked Turek and the Development Committee for their work in securing this gift. He explained that a "thank-you" communication to the membership was forthcoming; it would also encourage others to donate. Turek updated Council on the work of the Development Committee, including setting up the new donor platform (DonorBox), which is much quicker and more streamlined than making donations through the website. It also allows recurring donations. The committee has already used this platform to launch the campaign to raise money for the new teaching award, which was doing pretty well. She highlighted that the Leffler gift was exceptional in being unrestricted, with the exception of a request to top off the LaFeber-Wood Teaching Prize. She sought, on behalf of the committee, Council's input on projects that might attract donors. Council discussion highlighted enhancing the endowment and funding support for graduate students, contingent faculty, and foreign nationals (especially students and early professionals).

Lerner moved to use funds from the Leffler gift to top off the LaFeber-Woods Teaching Prize; Chris Hulshof seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. In terms of deciding what to do with the remainder of the gift, a consensus developed in support of Lerner appointing a task force, which would contain at least one graduate student, to make a recommendation to Council based on the above options and others it might suggest, including restoring funds to projects initially funded by the *Diplomatic History* contract windfall but subsequently defunded or making a one-time investment in a project or component of SHAFR that will help ensure that it thrives. The Leffler gift will be deposited in the endowment so that it can earn interest and dividends while the task force deliberates. Council expressed its thanks to Turek for her superb work as co-chair and for the changes the Development Committee has instituted. The committee will make efforts in the future to promote estate giving and student gifts in honor of mentors who have passed.

Executive Director Amy Sayward gave Council a budget update at this point in the fiscal year. It reflected some adjustments to expenditures based on Council's decisions at the June meeting and does not yet include the final numbers from the conference at the University of Toronto. Nonetheless, there is a projected income surplus (not including the Leffler gift), which is sufficient to cover the projected deficit for the upcoming fiscal year and the AV proposal for the upcoming conference.

Mary Ann Heiss, Chair of the Ways & Means Committee, then presented the initial recommendations from that committee's meeting earlier in the week. It had endorsed the reformulation of the SHAFR investment strategy, which removed some specific restrictions, and updated information on SHAFR's draw rate from the endowment. Additionally, the committee recommended giving TIAA 2-3 years to be more successful with these revisions before a Council evaluation of its performance. The vote to affirm this committee recommendation was 9 in favor and 1 abstaining.

The Ways & Means Committee had also endorsed Sayward's recommendation to continue printing SHAFR's publications with Sheridan and the AV conference recommendation from O'Connell. Discussion of these items appears later in these minutes.

National Coalition on History
Lerner noted that the National Coalition on History had voted to dissolve, which may mean that SHAFR should consider membership in another advocacy organization. Richard Immerman, incoming Executive Director, requested, and was granted, authorization to reach out to the National Humanities Alliance to get more acquainted with its work. He identified the most salient questions as whether the discipline of History is a priority for the Alliance, whether it is likely to support the archival and declassification work that has been central to SHAFR's advocacy, and consequently, whether it warrants SHAFR's support in the future.

Publication matters
Lerner gave an overview on the *Passport* search committee's recommendation, which supported the application of Kennesaw State University's Brian Etheridge and Silke Zoller. The committee very much liked the idea of co-editors, which ensures stability, and in this case Etheridge and Zoller bring different skill sets to the task. The proposal was particularly strong and innovative in terms of its digital components. Kennesaw State also offered significant support, including travel money and course reductions for the co-editors, as well as the possibility of bringing student workers from the honors program into the production process. Jessica Gienow-Hecht noted that both editors have academic expertise in Europe; Sayward suggested that they might therefore seek members of their editorial board with complementary strengths in other geographic areas. The Council vote to support the search committee's recommendation was unanimous 10-0-0. Discussion then turned to the financial elements of the transition and the new editors' agreement, which will need further elaboration in line with the current budget and identified needs of the new co-editors. The

Council tasked Lerner with negotiation with Etheridge and Zoller.

Sayward provided Council with an update on efforts to secure a variety of bids to print *Diplomatic History*. Despite reaching out to many different people, organizations, and printing firms, Sayward reported that Sheridan seems to be the primary printer for most, if not all, journals. A late bid from the printing office at Ohio State University was only marginally different. Sayward recommended that SHAFR continue to work with Sheridan through the upcoming calendar year, while continuing to seek ways to reduce printing costs which should include reducing the number of mailings, the size of *Passport* (both recommendations supported by the Ways & Means Committee), and the number of SHAFR print subscribers (via communications with those subscribers ahead of the dispatch of renewal notices on November 1st). Sayward suggested that Council reconsider the question of donations to cover the cost of print issues again in June to see if the donations and price reductions were sufficient to make this financially sustainable or if further steps prove necessary. Council expressed consensus to move forward in this way.

Conference matters
O'Connell joined to discuss conference matters. She recapped her report on the Toronto conference, which—as an international conference—meant that most exhibitors could not sell books on-site; that some exhibitors encountered significant difficulties in transporting their exhibits through international customs; and that fewer graduate students attended. She also noted a couple of challenges posed by this conference as a campus conference: a significant number of the sponsorships pledged in the proposal did not ultimately materialize; having events in different buildings made the conference less walkable than those conferences where all events occur in a single building; the delays in finalizing room assignments due to campus events; and the absolute need to have a point person on campus—in this case, Sanjhana Dore (an administrative professional at the University of Toronto) was absolutely essential to the 2024 conference's success. Sayward highlighted the recommendations about contingent faculty and conference attendees outside of academia made in O'Connell's report. Lerner suggested that these be forwarded to the Conference Committee for a January report.

O'Connell then moved to a discussion of the 2025 conference. She highlighted that SHAFR has been able to secure an additional room bloc at the Holiday Inn (down the street from the Arlington Renaissance), which would be valuable because the Renaissance conference room bloc always sells out. She also pointed out that these rooms are a bit less expensive and include an airport shuttle. O'Connell then detailed her efforts to identify AV companies that might be able to offer quality equipment and service at the Arlington Renaissance with the goal of equipping not only the two lunch talks but also all rooms with mics and podiums as well as three rooms with projection abilities. O'Connell stated that she intended to start by seeing if the Renaissance would match the external bids already solicited. The initial estimate from the Renaissance for AV services was $47,000. There was consensus from Council to authorize O'Connell to seek the best possible AV at the best possible price.

Discussion then turned to exploring options for the 2027 conference as well as how this might affect SHAFR's current contract with the Arlington Renaissance. Council authorized Sayward, Immerman, and O'Connell to continue to explore options and to make a recommendation to Council in January or June.

Council and committee matters
Council affirmed the vote via email approving the minutes of the June 2024 Council meeting. Vice President/President-Elect Melani McAlister then stated her preference for three Council meetings per year, with the dates set in advance. There was a general sense among Council members that this would be a good idea.

Hulshof provided updates on the work of the Graduate Student Committee. Targeted emails seem to have increased student memberships and engagement with SHAFR, with 71 new memberships since the start of the campaigns. Council expressed its delight and gratitude to Hulshof. Council suggested including American Studies programs in future outreach as well. He also discussed the two programs for the fall. The first one—on writing a successful grant application for the SHAFR fall fellowships—had about thirty people registered, half of whom attended the virtual session. The next one will be in October about forming a successful SHAFR conference panel. He noted that these events are open to the public, not just SHAFR members. Immerman suggested also utilizing H-Diplo to advertise these events. Hulshof also proposed expanding the graduate committee to allow it to place graduate students on other, appropriate, standing committees. He clarified that he was not requesting a change in the by-laws but was suggesting the President make efforts to put graduate students on committees. He intends to have a draft proposal for consideration at the January meeting.

The SHAFR Council meeting adjourned at 1:00pm US-EDT.

Call for Papers:
2025 UCSB/GWU/LSE International Graduate Student Conference on the Cold War

The Center for Cold War Studies and International History (CCWS) of the University of California at Santa Barbara, the George Washington University Cold War Group (GWCW), and the LSE Cold War Studies Project (CWSP) of the London School of Economics and Political Science are pleased to announce their 2025 International Graduate Student Conference on the Cold War, to take place at the University of California, Santa Barbara, from May 8 to May 10, 2025.

The conference is an excellent opportunity for graduate students to present papers and receive critical feedback from peers and experts in the field. We encourage submissions by graduate students working on any aspect of the Cold War, broadly defined. Of particular interest are papers that employ newly available primary sources or nontraditional methodologies. To be considered, each prospective participant should submit a two-page proposal and a brief academic c.v. (in Word or pdf format) to Salim Yaqub at syaqub@ucsb.edu by **Monday, February 3, 2025**. Notification of acceptance will occur by Friday, February 28. Successful applicants will be expected to email their papers (no longer than 25 pages) by Friday, April 4. The author of the strongest paper will be awarded the Saki Ruth Dockrill Memorial Prize of £100 to be spent on books in any form. The winner will also have an opportunity to publish the paper as an article in the journal *Cold War History*. For further information, please contact Salim Yaqub at the aforementioned email address.

Students should *not* apply to the conference unless they are prepared, if admitted, to attend the conference for its full substantive duration. The event will begin with a welcoming reception at 6 pm on Thursday, May 8, and continue until the early evening of Saturday, May 10. If travel schedules necessitate missing the Thursday evening reception, this is permissible. But student participants must be present all day Friday and Saturday.

The chairs and commentators of the conference sessions will be prominent faculty members from UCSB, GWU, LSE, and elsewhere. UCSB will cover the accommodation costs of admitted student participants for the duration of the conference, but students will need to cover the costs of their travel to Santa Barbara.

In 2003, UCSB and GWU first joined their separate spring conferences, and two years later LSE became a co-sponsor. The three cold war centers now hold a jointly sponsored conference each year, alternating among the three campuses. For more information about our three programs, you may visit their respective web sites at:

http://www.history.ucsb.edu/ccws/for CCWS
https://ieres.elliott.gwu.edu/programs/gw-cold-war-group/for GWCW
https://www.lse.ac.uk/International-History/ColdWarStudies for CWSP

Virginia Military Institute
Lexington, Virginia
JOHN A. ADAMS '71 CENTER FOR MILITARY HISTORY & STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

2025 Dissertation Grant

The John A. Adams '71 Center for Military History & Strategic Analysis at the Virginia Military Institute will award a $5,000 grant to a graduate student in history or a related field working on a doctoral dissertation in Cold War military history, broadly defined. The award promotes innovative scholarship on Cold War topics (for a list of past recipients/projects, see below). The Adams Center invites proposals in all subject areas—including international security affairs, military history, and strategic analysis. All periods of Cold War history are welcome. The prize is made possible through the generous support of John A. Adams and George J. Collins, Jr.

To be considered, graduate students must submit a brief proposal (prospectus) describing their doctoral research, a project timeline, and a curriculum vitae with a list of references. Applications should be delivered, electronically, to the Adams Center at adamscenter@vmi.edu by 4:00 p.m. Eastern, Friday, March 14, 2025.

Deadline for submissions: March 14, 2025
Send submissions to: adamscenter@vmi.edu

Questions? Contact: Joel C. Christenson, Ph.D. Associate Professor Director, John A. Adams '71 Center for Military History & Strategic Analysis, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, VA 24450, christensonjc@vmi.edu, 540-464-7689

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Contact Info:
Phone 540-464-7689
adamscenter@vmi.edu

Past Dissertation Grant Recipients:

Meghan Ashley Vance, "Cold War Soldiering: The U.S. Army in Germany, 1945–1958," Texas A&M University.

Heather M. Haley, "Unsuitable and Incompatible: Ensign Vernon 'Copy' Berg, Bisexuality, and the Cold War U.S. Navy," Auburn University.

Eric Perinovic, "Ex Machina: The F-104G Starfighter, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the Origins of the Modern European Military Aviation Sector," Temple University.

Hosub Shim, "The Forgotten Army: A History of the Republic of Korea Forces in the Vietnam War, 1965–1973," University of Kansas.

Kate Tietzen, "Iraq in the Cold War and beyond the fall of the Soviet Union, 1968–2003," Kansas State University.

Susan Colbourn, "Defining Détente: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Struggle for Identity, 1975–1983," University of Toronto, Canada.

Kuan-jen Chen, "U.S. Maritime Policy in East Asia during the Cold War era, 1945–1979," University of Cambridge, UK.

Nathaniel R. Weber, "U.S. Military Assistance and Advisory Groups, 1945–1965," Texas A&M University.

Brett M. Reilly, "International Military Advising and the Armed Forces of the State of Vietnam and Republic of Vietnam, 1948–1975," University of Wisconsin.

Fatih Tokatli, "Turkish-American Military Cooperation and Transformation of Turkish Military in the Cold War, 1947–1954," Bilkent University, Turkey.

Johanne Marie Skov, "Britain Rising like a Phoenix from the Ashes: How Britain Landed the 1985 Al Yamamah Arms Deal with Saudi Arabia in the Context of Cold War Western Intra-Bloc Rivalry, 1979-1985," Lancaster University, UK.

Thao Nguyen, "The Vietnamese Women in the Black Market of South Vietnam," University of Michigan.

Yuki Minami, "The Zainichi Volunteers in the Korean War," Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

Errata

In the September 2024 issue of *Passport*, Giles Scott-Smith's name was misspelled in the author credit in the "Seven Question on...Public Diplomacy" feature. *Passport* apologizes and regrets the error.

SHAFR By-Laws

(last amended October 2024)

ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Any person interested in furthering the objects of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations as set forth in the Certificate of Incorporation shall become a member upon submitting an acceptable application and paying the dues herein provided.

Section 2: The following are the classes of membership in the Society: Regular, Student, Life, and Institutional. The specific qualifications of each class of membership shall be established by the Council.

Section 3: Annual dues for Regular, Student, and Institutional members shall be established by the Council.

Section 4:

(a) All members in good standing, except institutional members, shall have the right to attend, participate in, and vote

in all of the Society's meetings and to vote in its elections. Each member shall be supplied without additional charge one copy of each issue of *Diplomatic History* and the newsletter while a member, and shall have such other privileges as may be prescribed by the Council.

(b) Membership in good standing is defined as paid membership certified by the Executive Director at least thirty days before participating in an election or in a Membership Meeting.

Section 5: Any member whose dues become three months in arrears shall be automatically suspended.

Section 6: Dues are payable in advance of the first day of each year. New membership shall become effective at the beginning of the calendar year in which application is received and dues are paid except that dues paid after August 31 shall be applied for the following year.

ARTICLE II: OFFICERS, ELECTIONS, AND TERMS OF OFFICE

Section 1: The officers of the Society shall consist of a President, a Vice President/President-Elect, and an Executive Director.

Section 2: The President and Vice President/President-Elect shall be elected for terms of one year each, beginning on November 1. The Vice President/President-Elect shall be an automatic nominee for the office of President the following year, although contesting nominees may be offered in accordance with provisions of the By Laws.

Section 3 :The Executive Director shall be appointed by the Council to serve at the pleasure of the Council.

Section 4: In the event of the death, resignation or disability of the President, the last to be determined by a majority vote of the Council, the Vice President/President-Elect shall succeed to the Presidency until the following November 1. Since the office of Vice President/President-Elect will then be vacant, the Council by majority vote may designate one of its own members to act as chair of meetings in the President's absence. A Vice President/President-Elect who succeeds to the Presidency under the provisions of this section shall still be an automatic nominee for the next year's Presidency. If the Presidency, while filled by the elected Vice President/President-Elect under the terms of this section, shall again become vacant, the Council, by majority vote, shall designate a President ad interim to act until the office is filled by an annual election.

Section 5:

(a) Elections shall be held annually by mail or electronic ballot. The candidate for each office who receives the highest number of votes is elected. When more than two nominees are slated for a particular office and no candidate receives a majority vote, a run-off election will be held between the candidates with the two highest vote totals.

(b) The Nominating Committee shall present the name of the outgoing Vice President/President-Elect as an automatic nominee for the office of President.

(c) The Nominating Committee shall also present a slate of two candidates for each of the following offices: Vice President/President-Elect, members of the Council, graduate student member of Council (in appropriate years), teaching-centered member of Council (in appropriate years), and member of the Nominating Committee.

(d) Additional nominees for any office shall be placed on the ballot when proposed by petition signed by twenty-five members in good standing; but such additional nominations, to be placed on the ballot, must reach the Chair of the Nominating Committee by July 1.

(e) The Chair of the Nominating Committee shall certify the names to be placed on the ballot to the Executive Director by July 15. The Executive Director shall mail the completed election ballot to the membership not later than August 15 for return by September 30. The election results, certified by the Nominating Committee, shall be announced as expeditiously as possible. In the event of a tie, the current Council, with the exception of the President, will vote to elect one of the candidates. This vote will take place by electronic means, by secret ballot, and within one week of the conclusion of the regular election.

(f) If a SHAFR member is nominated and placed on the ballot, but fails to win election, that member shall wait one year before being nominated again for the same or a different office.

(g) Following the expiration of their tenure, Council members must wait three years before seeking nomination again.

(h) The President and Vice President/President-Elect shall not submit nominations while holding office. SHAFR officers should not sit in on Nominating Committee meetings or have contact with Nominating Committee members regarding nominees.

(i) The authority for administering the election rests with the Nominating Committee. In addition to soliciting nominations and constructing the ballot, the Nominating Committee shall acquire from the candidates statements and biographical data; enforce all election guidelines; respond to all questions; work with the SHAFR Business Office to circulate the ballot, reminders, and other notifications; receive from the webmaster the electronic results; and transmit the results to the SHAFR Business Office. The Nominating Committee shall refer all disputes to the Council.

(j) SHAFR endows the Nominating Committee with full responsibility and authority for constructing the ballot and both the nominating and election process.

ARTICLE III: POWERS AND DUTIES

Section 1: The President shall supervise the work of all committees, formulate policies for presentation to the Council, and execute its decisions. The President shall appoint the members of the Program Committee and of special committees, commissions, and boards. The President shall sign all documents requiring official certification. The President shall be ex officio a member of the Council and shall preside at all Membership and Council meetings at which the President is present. A retiring President shall retain membership on the Council for two years after the expiration of the term of Office as President. The President and Vice President/President-Elect shall be limited to one term in office.

Section 2: The Vice President/President-Elect shall preside at Membership and Council meetings in the absence of the President and shall perform other duties as assigned by the Council. The Vice President/President-Elect shall be ex officio a member of the Council.

Section 3: The Executive Director shall have charge of all Society correspondence, and shall give notice of all Council meetings. The Executive Director shall keep accurate minutes of all such meetings, using recording devices when deemed necessary. The Executive Director shall keep an accurate and up to date roll of the members of the Society in good standing and shall issue a notification of membership to each new member; shall see that the By Laws are printed periodically in the newsletter; and shall submit all mail ballots to the membership and shall tabulate the results. The Executive Director shall retain those ballots, for possible inspection, for a period of one month. The Executive Director shall give instructions of the Council to the new members of committees when necessary. Under the direction of the Council, the Executive Director shall manage all funds and securities in the name of the Society; shall submit bills for dues to the members and deliver an itemized financial report annually to the membership; shall have custody of all records and documents pertaining to the Society and be responsible for their preservation; and shall prepare an annual budget for approval by the Council. The Executive Director shall be ex officio a member of the Council, but without vote.

Article IV: THE COUNCIL

Section 1: The Council of the Society shall consist of

(a) those officers or former officers of the Society who, in accordance with Article III of the By Laws, serve ex officio as members of the Council;

(b) seven members (three year terms) elected by the members of the Society;

(c) two graduate student members (three year terms) elected by the members of the Society; and

(d) one member (three year term) in a teaching-centered position, elected by the members of the Society.

(e) Additionally, at least one member of Council, including the President and Vice President/President-Elect, shall reside outside of the United States (at time of election), thereby requiring the Nominating Committee to put forth a pair of qualifying Council candidates if necessary to meet this minimum number.

In the event of a vacancy on the Council caused by death or resignation, the vacancy shall be filled at the next annual election.

Section 2: The Council shall have power to employ and pay necessary staff members; to accept and oversee funds donated to the Society for any of the objects of the Society stated in the Certificate of Incorporation; to appoint the Executive Director; to arrange for meetings of the Society; to create, in addition to committees named in the By Laws, as many standing or ad hoc committees as it deems necessary to fulfill its responsibilities; and to transact other business normally assigned to such a body.

Section 3: The Council may reach decisions either at meetings or through correspondence filed with the Executive Director, provided that such decisions have the concurrence of two thirds of the voting members of the Council.

ARTICLE V: COMMITTEES

Section 1: The Nominating Committee shall consist of three members in good standing who hold no other office in the Society and shall be elected for a term of three years. The Chair shall be held by the member with the longest years of service, except that when two or more members have equal length of service the President shall designate which of them shall serve as Chair. If a post on the Nominating Committee becomes vacant through death, resignation, or ineligibility through acceptance of an office in the Society, the President shall appoint a member to fill the post until the next annual election, when a replacement shall be chosen for the unexpired term. Additionally, at least one member of the Committee shall reside outside of the United States (at the time of election), thereby requiring the Nominating Committee to put forth a pair of qualifying Nominating Committee members if necessary to meet this minimum number.

Section 2 The Program Committee shall consist of members in good standing appointed by the President for a term of one year. The Program Committee may include the Local Arrangements Chair (but not as chair or co-chair).

Section 3 The Ways & Means Committee shall have responsibility for (1) recommending investment management and policy to Council; (2) serving as SHAFR's advisory board to the investment management firm approved by Council; (3) monitoring the endowment investments; (4) reporting regularly (at least twice a year) to Council on the status of the endowment investments; (5) monitoring and evaluating all ongoing programs; (6) soliciting and assessing proposals for new programs; (7) making recommendations to Council regarding funding and programs; and (8) consulting with the SHAFR accountant

as necessary. The membership of the Committee will consist of the immediate past president (chair), the President, the Vice President/President-Elect, and two members-at-large. The President shall appoint the two at-large members to reflect the breadth of the Society's interests and membership, and they shall serve staggered, three-year terms. The Endowment Liaison and the Executive Director shall serve ex officio.

ARTICLE VI: *DIPLOMATIC HISTORY*

Section 1 The Editor of *Diplomatic History* shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Council for a term of at least three years and not exceeding five years.

Section 2 The Editorial Board shall consist of the Editor and nine members nominated by the Editor and appointed by the Council. Members shall serve three years except that for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a regular rotation members may be appointed for a term of shorter than three years.

ARTICLE VII: AMENDMENT

Section 1 Amendments to the By Laws may be proposed by twenty-five members in good standing or by any member of the Council.

Section 2 Once proposed, amendments must be approved by a majority vote of Council and a concurring majority vote of those participating in a mail ballot.

ARTICLE VIII: MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Section 1 Council shall schedule a Membership Meeting, to be held during the SHAFR annual conference, upon presentation of an appropriate petition signed by at least 25 members of SHAFR in good standing. Notice of the final time, place, and agenda of the Membership Meeting shall be mailed by the Executive Director to each member of the Society at least six months prior to that meeting.

Section 2 Resolutions tentatively approved at a Membership Meeting shall be submitted by the Executive Director directly to the full membership of the Society by mail ballot for final approval.

ARTICLE IX: ADVOCACY

Section 1: This Section establishes two methods by which SHAFR may take a public stand on an issue:

SHAFR's membership may take a public stand on an issue by following these steps:

First, a petition proposing a resolution must be signed by ten members in good standing;

Second, such a resolution must be submitted by SHAFR by electronic means to the full SHAFR membership;

Third, the resolution must be voted on by at least 30% of the SHAFR membership within seven calendar days following an electronic announcement to the membership that voting has begun;

Fourth, the resolution must receive a majority of the votes cast;

Fifth, the resolution must then be submitted to the SHAFR Council. Council may pass the resolution through a 2/3 vote, with 80% of Council Members voting.

Alternatively, SHAFR Council may take a public stand on an issue by following these steps:

If Council votes unanimously on a motion with no abstentions and at least 80% of Council members present, then SHAFR may take a public stand.

If the Council vote is not unanimous, but Council approves a resolution by a 2/3 vote of the Council members, with 80% of Council Members voting, then

- such a resolution must be submitted by SHAFR by electronic means to the full SHAFR membership;
- then the resolution must be voted on by at least 30% of the SHAFR membership within seven calendar days following an electronic announcement to the membership that voting has begun; and
- the resolution must receive a simple majority of the votes cast for SHAFR to take a public stand.

Section 2: SHAFR's President is authorized to speak publicly on issues of vital interest to the organization in her/his capacity as SHAFR President without broader consultation of the Council or membership, but not as representing the opinions of the members of the organization.

Recent Books of Interest

Al-Bulushi, Samar. *War-Making as Worldmaking: Kenya, the United States, and the War on Terror.* (Stanford, 2024).

Allen, Thomas B. *1789: George Washington and the Founders Create America.* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2024).

Asselin, Pierre. *Vietnam's American War: A New History, Second Edition*. (Cambridge, 2024).

Bakich, Spencer D. *The Gulf War: George H.W. Bush and American Grand Strategy in the Post-Cold War Era.* (Kansas, 2024).

Bhagavan, Manu, ed. *India and the Cold War.* (UNC, 2024).

Bechtol, Jr., Bruce E. *Rogue Allies: The Strategic Partnership Between Iran and North Korea.* (Kentucky, 2025).

Bradley, Curtis A. *Historical Gloss and Foreign Affairs: Constitutional Authority in Practice.* (Harvard, 2024).

Brady, Steven J. *Chained to History: Slavery and U.S. Foreign Relations to 1865.* (Cornell, 2024).

Brewer, Susan A. *The Best Land: Four Hundred Years of Love and Betrayal on Oneida Territory.* (Cornell, 2024).

Brewer, Susan A., Richard H. Immerman, and Douglas Little, eds. *Thinking Otherwise: How Walter LaFeber Explained the History of U.S. Foreign Relations.* (Cornell, 2024).

Bridges, Mary. *Dollars and Dominion: US Bankers and the Making of a Superpower.* (Princeton, 2024).

Brown, Nicole M. *We Are Each Other's Business: Black Women's Intersectional Political Consumerism During the Chicago Welfare Rights Movement.* (Columbia, 2024).

Burke, David Allen. *Atomic Testing in Mississippi: Project Dribble and the Quest for Nuclear Weapons Treaty Verification in the Cold War Era.* (LSU, 2024).

Chung, Duck-Koo and Byung-Se Yun, eds. *Korea-US-China Trilateral Relations in the Xi Jinping Era: Complexity, Conflict, and Interdependence.* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2024).

Crosbie, Thomas. *The Political Army: How the U.S. Military Learned to Manage the Media and Public Opinion.* (Columbia, 2024).

Cobble, Dorothy Sue. *For the Many: American Feminists and the Global Fight for Democratic Equality.* (Princeton, 2024).

De Santis, Hugh. *The Right to Rule: American Exceptionalism and the Coming of the Multipolar World Order.* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2024).

Dixon, Bradley J. *Republic of Indians: Empires of Indigenous Law in the Early American South.* (Penn Press, 2024).

Fakhro, Elham. *The Abraham Accords: The Gulf States, Israel, and the Limits of Normalization.* (Columbia, 2024).

Hayward, Matthew and Maebh Long. *The Rise of Pacific Literature: Decolonization, Radical Campuses, and Modernism.* (Columbia, 2024).

Jarquín, Mateo. *The Sandinista Revolution: A Global Latin American History.* (UNC, 2024).

Johnson, Timothy D. *The Mexican-American War Experiences of Twelve Civil War Generals.* (LSU, 2024).

Kidder, William L. *Defending Fort Stanwix: A Story of the New York Frontier in the American Revolution.* (Cornell, 2024).

Kisseloff, Jeff. *Rewriting Hisstory: A Fifty-Year Journey to Uncover the Truth About Alger Hiss.* (Kansas, 2024).

Lantis, Jeffrey S. *Staying in the Fight: How War on Terror Veterans in Congress Are Shaping U.S. Defense Policy.* (Kentucky, 2024).

Lawrence, Mark Atwood. *The End of Ambition: The United States and the Third World in the Vietnam Era.* (Princeton, 2024).

Luhrssen, David. *The Vietnam War on Film.* (Bloomsbury, 2024).

Martínez-Matsuda, Verónica. *Migrant Citizenship: Race, Rights, and Reform in the U.S. Farm Labor Camp Program.* (Penn Press, 2024).

Materson, Lisa G. *Radical Solidarity: Ruth Reynolds, Political Allyship, and the Battle for Puerto Rico's Independence.* (UNC, 2024).

MacDonnell, Francis. *Policing Show Business: J. Edgar Hoover, the Hollywood Blacklist, and Cold War Movies.* (Kansas, 2024).

Maurini, Alessandro. *The Missed Revolution at the Origins of the United States.* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2024).

Mclean, Iain. *Thomas Jefferson's Enlightenment: English, Scottish and French Influences on the Third U.S. President.* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2024).

Meza, Philip E. *The San Francisco Nexus in World War II: Freedoms Found, Liberties Lost, and the Atomic Bomb.* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2024).

Michel, Gregg L. *Spying on Students: The FBI, Red Squads, and Student Activists in the 1960s South.* (LSU, 2024).

Morris, Michael P. *Cherokee Odyssey: The Journey from Sovereign to "Civilized."*(Rowman & Littlefield, 2024).

Muller, James W., ed. *Great Contemporaries: Churchill Reflects on FDR, Hitler, Kipling, Chaplin, Balfour, and Other Giants of His Age.* (Bloomsbury, 2024).

Muller, James W., ed. *Thoughts and Adventures: Churchill Reflects on Spies, Cartoons, Flying and the Future.* (Bloomsbury, 2024).

Nguyen, Phi-Van. *A Displaced Nation: The 1954 Evacuation and Its Political Impact on the Vietnam Wars.* (Cornell, 2024).

Peck, Gunther. *Race Traffic: Antislavery and the Origins of White Victimhood, 1619-1819.* (UNC, 2024).

Peri, Alexis. *Dear Unknown Friend: The Remarkable Correspondence between American and Soviet Women.* (Harvard, 2024).

Prentice, David L. *Unwilling to Quit: The Long Unwinding of American Involvement in Vietnam.* (Kentucky, 2024).

Richotte, Jr., Keith. *The Worst Trickster Story Ever Told: Native America, the Supreme Court, and the U.S. Constitution.* (Stanford, 2025).

Robins, Glenn. *A Debt of Gratitude: How Jimmy Carter Put Vietnam Veterans' Issues on the National Agenda.* (Kansas, 2024).

Rodriguez, Sarah K. M. *One National Family: Texas, Mexico, and the Making of the Modern United States, 1820-1867.* (John Hopkins, 2024).

Rosner, David and Gerald Markowitz, ed. *Building the Worlds That Kill Us: Disease, Death, and Inequality in American History.* (Columbia, 2024).

Saba, Roberto. *American Mirror: The United States and Brazil in the Age of Emancipation.* (Princeton, 2024).

Schaufelbuehl, Janick Marina. *Crusading for Globalization: US Multinationals and their Opponents Since 1945.* (Penn Press, 2024).

Scribner, Vaughn. *Under Alien Skies: Environment, Suffering, and the Defeat of the British Military in Revolutionary America.* (UNC, 2024).

Shaw, Jenny. *The Women of Rendezvous: A Transatlantic Story of Family and Slavery.* (UNC, 2024).

Smith, Tom. *Word Across the Water: American Protestant Missionaries, Pacific Worlds, and the Making of Imperial Histories.* (Cornell, 2024).

Stock, Catherine McNicol. *Nuclear Country: The Origins of the Rural New Right.* (Penn Press, 2024).

Watson, Blake Andrew. *Kansas and Kansans in World War I: Service at Home and Abroad.* (Kansas, 2024).

White, Mark. *Icon, Libertine, Leader: The Life and Presidency of John F. Kennedy.* (Bloomsbury, 2024).

Williams, Robert F. *The Airborne Mafia: The Paratroopers Who Shaped America's Cold War Army.* (Cornell, 2024).

Wright, Rebecca K. *Moral Energy in America: From the Progressive Era to the Atomic Bomb.* (John Hopkins, 2025).

Yasutake, Rumi. *The Feminist Pacific: International Women's Networks in Hawai'i, 1820-1940.* (Columbia, 2024).

Zinman, Donald A. *America's First Wartime Election: James Madison, Dewitt Clinton, and the War of 1812.* (Kansas, 2024).

DISPATCHES

Bemis Research Grant Report

Thanks to generous support from the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations in the form of a Bemis Research Grant, as well as a Research Grant from the Rothermere American Institute I was able to undertake a 10-day research trip to Washington D.C. to conduct archival research towards the completion of my doctorate in history.

I conducted research at the National Archives and Records Administration as well as the Library of Congress where I reviewed papers from numerous government agencies as well as prominent individuals involved in the relationship between the United States and the League of Nations. The largest section of records originated in the Department of State and concerned relations between the United States and the Middle East between 1920-1939. These records supplement archival research that I had previously conducted in the United States as well as in Britain, and offer a very detailed look at American interests in the League of Nations mandates, including how the U.S. government leveraged mandatory status to modify policies in these regions. During the brief periods when the archives were closed, I was able to visit some of the Smithsonian Museums and several war memorials along the National Mall, including the often-forgotten First World War Memorial which has direct relevance to my research.

This trip helped to reveal key figures within the American government and intellectual community that influenced the changes to colonialism and U.S. foreign policy that my research explores and has opened my thinking to new directions of research that I had not previously considered. It is thanks to the benefaction of SHAFR and the RAI that I was able to conduct this trip which has already proven enormously valuable to me in completing my doctoral research and I wish to sincerely thank the generous donors who have made this possible.

Benjamin Gladstone

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