

# PASSPORT

THE SOCIETY FOR HISTORIANS OF AMERICAN FOREIGN RELATIONS REVIEW

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## IN THIS ISSUE

Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Relations

Two Views on Foreign Policy in Obama's Second Term

A Roundtable Discussion on Thomas Borstelmann's *The 1970s*

# PASSPORT

THE SOCIETY FOR HISTORIANS OF AMERICAN FOREIGN RELATIONS REVIEW



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# A Roundtable on Thomas Borstelmann's *The 1970s: A New Global History from Civil Rights to Economic Inequality*

Laura A. Belmonte, Daniel J. Sargent, Rebecca de Schweinitz, T. Christopher Jespersen, Scott Kaufman, Thomas "Tim" Borstelmann

## Introduction to the Roundtable on Thomas Borstelmann's *The 1970s: A New Global History From Civil Rights to Economic Inequality*

Laura A. Belmonte

Recent years have witnessed an explosion of new scholarship on the 1970s that is transforming our understanding of this formerly caricatured era. At the same time, another emerging literature places the history of the United States within broader geographic, chronological, and thematic frames. In his brilliant new book, Thomas Borstelmann synthesizes both bodies of scholarship with often stunning results.

As someone in the latter stages of co-authoring a textbook on the transnational history of the United States,<sup>1</sup> I can attest to the difficulty of using this approach with the inclusivity, nuance, and scope that Borstelmann displays. *The 1970s* is, in many ways, a terrific model of transnational U.S. history. While Borstelmann could perhaps have explicated his aims more clearly in the introduction, I find it a bit unfair that some reviewers have taken him to task for failing to write an international or global history of the 1970s. The misleading subtitle about "a new global history" notwithstanding, the book's inclusion in a series called "America in the World" signals that it will be grounded largely in U.S. history. And while the reviewers levy many apt criticisms about the elasticity of Borstelmann's chronological parameters, insufficient attention to foreign popular culture, and limited examination of grassroots actors, I think the book succeeds admirably in tracing the evolution of American political culture of the era and situating it in a global context.

It is less successful, however, in demonstrating the impact of other nations on U.S. policies, culture, and movements. How, for example, did the British punk rock and glam music scenes shape American music? What sort of transnational dialogues existed among U.S. feminists and their counterparts elsewhere? How were American doctors, scientists, and technology experts affected by the work of their foreign colleagues? The inclusion of a few examples of such multinational flows of knowledge, trends, and ideas would have softened the edges of "Americentrism" that Scott Kaufman laments.

My major quibble with *The 1970s* is its overly sanguine portrait of egalitarianism. While Borstelmann certainly never suggests that the United States has achieved full equality as a result of events set in motion during the 1970s, he also does not adequately explain why other nations have

come closer to that goal over the same time frame. Why, for example, is the United States not among the eleven nations that have legalized same-sex marriage since 2000? Why do many nations, all affected by the rise of the free market Borstelmann so skillfully describes, retain higher average wages and more generous policies on sick leave, vacation, and parental leave than those in the United States? One also longs for closer attention to the ways in which U.S. policies have contributed to the *restriction* of equal rights abroad.

These criticisms aside, *The 1970s* is a superb book that bristles with new insights and fascinating details. It deserves a wide audience and unquestionably raises the bar for those of us engaged in the sometimes maddening but always fascinating work of linking America to the world and the world to America.

Note:

1. Maria E. Montoya, Steve Hackel, Lon Kurashige, Carl Guarneri, Laura A. Belmonte, and Ellen Hartigan O'Connor, *Global Americans* (Cengage, forthcoming 2014).

## Bringing the Seventies into Focus: Reflections on Tim Borstelmann's *The 1970s*

Daniel J. Sargent

Historians, Tim Borstelmann tells us, have avoided ascribing coherent meaning to the 1970s. They have instead treated the decade as an interregnum between the 1960s and 1980s, decades for which Civil Rights and the rightward shift under Reagan constitute imposing interpretative frameworks. As Borstelmann sees it, the decade's predicament is akin to that of North Carolina: "a valley of humility between two mountains of conceit" (3). This geography is due for an overhaul. With *The 1970s*, Borstelmann attempts to fracture this familiar landscape and, in doing so, to remake the historiographical topography of the postwar era. The project is an ambitious one, but the author substantially achieves it.

What is Borstelmann's argument? Like the history it traverses, the book is complex. Borstelmann traces the fissures and fractures of the 1970s across cultural, social, and political terrains in multiple national contexts. One overarching theme emerges, and it goes something like this. The seventies closed a distinctive era in world history in which the consolidation of national projects, the expansion of public sector economies, and the narrowing of social inequality had been the predominant themes. New trends

arose in the 1970s, however, and disrupted old patterns. Individualism began to displace communitarianism, expressed in both the rise of human rights and the market's ascendancy. For some people, the seventies brought emancipation. This was especially true for groups like gays and lesbians for whom the social conformism of the prior era had been stifling (105–8). For societies at large, however, the dividends of the seventies varied. Liberatory in some ways, the decade nonetheless began to strip citizens of economic and social protections, leaving them, in Borstelmann's felicitous phrase, both "more equal and less equal" than before (134).

Borstelmann's hypothesis brings overarching coherence to a decade that has attracted a flurry of historical writing in recent years. Historians of the American domestic experience have traced the rightward shifts in cultural and political life, as do Bruce Schulman in *The Seventies* and Laura Kalman in *Right Star Rising*.<sup>1</sup> Sam Moyn, on the other hand, sees the seventies as the crucible for the politics of transnational human rights.<sup>2</sup> Among the decade's themes, the recasting of capitalism and political economy have attracted special attention. Recent monographs from Judith Stein, Jefferson Cowie, and Bethany Moreton, among others, have explored the deindustrialization of the United States, the crisis of the working class, and the rise of new and distinctive forms of service-sector capitalism.<sup>3</sup> International historians have also begun to turn their attention to 1970s-era topics, including the rise and fall of East-West détente, the intrusion of human rights upon Cold War politics, and the breakdown of the Bretton Woods international economic order.<sup>4</sup> (Full disclosure: this reviewer is completing a monograph that explores the efforts of American policymakers to accommodate the kinds of transformation that Borstelmann reconstructs.)

Borstelmann's contribution to the extant historiography is not a research monograph but an interpretative synthesis. Insofar as *The 1970s* eschews linear narrative for thematic chapters, the panorama may be initially disorienting, especially for readers unfamiliar with the decade. The returns more than offset the costs, however. In chapters that interlock neatly, Borstelmann explains how the seventies brought new gains for formal equality, especially among the genders; how market fundamentalism trumped regulated capitalism; how the rise of individualist human rights followed the eclipse of colonialism; and how some people resisted market-oriented individualism in the names of environmentalism and religious fundamentalisms. As with the decade itself, there is much diversity in *The 1970s*, but a coherent analytical framework holds the strands and fragments together. Over the course of the book, Borstelmann's central argument—that the seventies constituted not an interregnum but a decisive historical turning point—is more than sustained.

Questions nonetheless abound. Borstelmann has intervened in a nascent historiography, not a mature field. This makes it all the more important to engage the big issues that he raises. Here, then, are three. First, where are the distinctions between national, international, and global histories to be drawn and with what consequences? Second, how does the selection of cases affect Borstelmann's argument, and on what grounds might it be defended? Third, how contingent was the trajectory that Borstelmann traces? Did structural developments make a "more equal and less equal" future inevitable, or should we credit (or blame) specific historical actors for producing it? What, in other words, were the alternative futures that might have followed the 1970s, and how plausible should we adjudge them to have been?

First among the points that demand elaboration is the distinction between national, international, and global historical scales. *The 1970s* bills itself as a "new global history," but the book in fact operates at multiple levels.

One is national history, especially U.S. national history. A great deal of the book is devoted to themes and events that fall within the domestic history of the United States. While Borstelmann makes striking transnational comparisons—between the rise of the Christian Right in the United States and Jewish revivalism in Israel in the 1970s, for example (258–263)—American history is the unambiguous priority among the national histories that *The 1970s* engages.

National history rendered in a comparative context is not all that Borstelmann offers, however. There is also a great deal of international history in *The 1970s*. Borstelmann engages some of the central themes in the international relations of the 1970s, including the travails of American power in the aftermath of Vietnam, the corrosive effects of imperial misadventures and transnational human rights activism on the Soviet Union, and the historical apex of decolonization, which came with the unraveling of Portugal's empire. The dynamism of Borstelmann's international history is commendable; the basic structures of world politics in the 1970s as he renders them are fluid, not static. The game of international relations itself was changing, Borstelmann shows, as processes of globalization reordered world politics and challenged the powers of the nation-state.

Although Borstelmann situates his national and international histories within a clear concept of global change, it may be the global history of the 1970s that receives the shortest shrift. What, then, do I mean by "global history," and how should we distinguish it from "international" history? There are various ways to differentiate between them. One approach, following Bruce Mazlish, would be to see global history as the history of the processes by which the regions and countries of the world have, over time, grown integrated and interdependent; this approach is close, if not tantamount, to the history of globalization.<sup>5</sup> Another approach would take global history as the history of developments and processes that affect the entire world. Whether Borstelmann's book conforms to either definition of global history and creates a history of the 1970s that is truly global may, however, be open to debate. There are sections that reveal processes unfolding upon a global scale, as in Borstelmann's discussion of globalization (137–144), but we for the most part see the shadows of global changes flicker upon the experiences of nation-states and international relations.

Sharper distinctions among the national, international, and global scales of analysis might help us to think critically about the linkages and connections between them. Consider the book's central argument. Borstelmann tells us that the spread of formal equality and the rise of market values were the two defining developments of the 1970s, but his conclusions reflect mainly the experiences of nation-states. In what ways, then, were these global phenomena? Causation may offer one way to make the case. Did global developments prefigure or produce the changes that Borstelmann describes in national societies and politics, for example, or in the arena of international relations? Borstelmann tells us that economic globalization in the 1970s circumscribed the ability of governments to achieve redistributive outcomes, making societies less equal than before. The rise of a global human rights movement, conversely, may have helped to propel forward legal equality. Insofar as a global perspective is necessary to comprehend the national consequences of these developments, could it be that the vectors of causation—rather than the scale of analysis—are what make this global history? Still, the point could benefit from some elucidation or even theorization.

A related question has to do with the selection of cases. Who partook in the shift towards the market and social egalitarianism during the 1970s? To make his case, Borstelmann draws mainly on the advanced capitalist

countries, upon the Anglophone world in particular, and, above all, on the United States. That is not to say that he ignores the developing countries; they are in general given substantive treatment, as in the discussion of Latin American encounters with market-oriented reform (218–20). The question is whether focusing on a different set of core cases might have yielded different conclusions. Had Borstelmann substituted the Soviet Union for the United States as his major case and India for China as a corroborating case, would the book's overarching argument have been so easily sustained? Perhaps not.

What, then, justifies the focus on the United States and other nations that followed similar trend lines? The key, I infer, is in the paragraph that begins, "The United States in the 1970s did not stand apart from the rest of the world but fit into the broader tale of global history" (175). "In retrospect," Borstelmann continues, "it is now possible to see that the 1970s American story of moving simultaneously toward greater egalitarianism and toward greater faith in the free market fit with a similar pattern taking shape around the world." The American story, in other words, jibes with larger global patterns. Still, this leaves Borstelmann's analysis open to the accusation that he has gotten the global shift wrong. After all, there is a circularity to the logic: a global model is derived from a mainly American experience, which is then held to adhere to the global model. Skeptics may challenge Borstelmann's analysis on the grounds that different cases might have yielded different trends, perhaps rendering the American experience exceptional rather than representative.

Might it then be possible to construct a more robust defense of Borstelmann's approach? What if the American experience were conceived not as representative of global trends in the 1970s but rather as the vanguard of them? If it were the vanguard of such trends the meaning and definition of "global" might have to be rethought. The term connotes the planetary scale, but there are alternative ways to define it. Fernand Braudel, for example, defines the "world-economy" in terms of the actual economic relations that constitute it.<sup>6</sup> Applied to the 1970s, this concept might be used to circumscribe the advanced economies, along with the developing countries that were closely entwined with them, as a distinctive unit of analysis. "The global," in other words, could be redefined so as to exclude some of the cases that do not fit the model. Over time, however, its scope can expand to incorporate additional countries and regions.

Indeed, Borstelmann himself hints at this possibility. We learn, for example, that Vietnam began to participate in a U.S.-led international trading system in the early twenty-first century (304). A country that stood in radical opposition to the market's ascendancy in the 1970s thus came, some thirty years later, to embrace it. Similar trajectories could be sketched for other societies, including Russia and India. Would redefining the scope of "the global" enable us to better historicize the evolution of the patterns that Borstelmann identifies with the 1970s? Might it enable Borstelmann's analysis to encompass a broader range of national and regional experiences? Defining the United States itself as a historical vanguard for larger global patterns—growing formal equality and diminishing economic equality—provides a clear rationale for prioritizing the nation in the global history of the 1970s.

Finally, the question of agency deserves attention, and with it the question of accountability. Here it is worth pointing out that Borstelmann's analysis is—from a normative standpoint—rather equivocal. He does not lament the transformations that the seventies brought so much as he explains them. Where other historians have berated the rise of the market and what is often called "neoliberalism," the fury that Howard Beale mustered in 1976's *Network* ("I'm mad as hell, and I'm not going to take

it any more") is absent here. Borstelmann's objectivity is laudable. Wrapped up in the issue of objectivity, however, are questions of causation. Neoliberalism's critics (along with some of its trumpeters) tend to see conservative political leaders of the 1970s—Reagan, Thatcher, Volcker, and so on—as the architects of a market-oriented shift that could otherwise have been avoided. Borstelmann, by contrast, takes a more resigned line; although he recognizes the damage that economic inequality has done to the social fabric, he offers no easy scapegoats or alternatives. The implication, rather, is that structural forces—especially globalization—were the cause.

The divide over causation may, as it turns out, be the schism upon which the historiography of the 1970s divides. The decade, as Borstelmann shows, produced "greater inclusiveness and formal equality" on the one hand and "growing distrust of government and the rise of market values" on the other (280). For the United States, the seventies marked the end of the public sector's expansion and the passage to a new and somewhat harsher kind of political economy. That much historians for the most part now accept. But how to explain the shift? Should we credit the Leninists of the right, who seized control of the state and used it to implement a kind of a conservative counter-revolution? Or did the crisis of the public sector stem from structural causes: the accumulation of deficits and inflation, for example, or the corrosive impact of globalization upon public sector economies? On this question hinges a vital counterfactual: did the seventies have to happen as they did, or could the world that preceded them—a relatively egalitarian world, albeit one whose social conformism was sometimes claustrophobic—have been sustained? As I read *The 1970s*, Borstelmann inclines towards a deterministic perspective; there are few easy counterfactuals here, and the conclusions are wry, nuanced, and ironic rather than angry and accusatory. Still, the question that historians of the United States in the global 1970s will struggle to answer is essentially the same question that vexes historians of the late Soviet Union: did the 1970s have to lead to the 1980s, or could the old order have endured for at least a few decades longer?

Notes:

1. Laura Kalman, *Right Star Rising: A New Politics, 1974–1980* (New York, 2010); and Bruce Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (New York, 2001).
2. Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA, 2010).
3. Jefferson Cowie, *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (New York, 2010); Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* (Cambridge, MA, 2009); and Judith Stein, *Pivotal Decade: How the United States Traded Factories for Finance in the Seventies* (New Haven, 2011).
4. For an overview, see Niall Ferguson et al., eds., *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective* (Cambridge, MA, 2010). On the Cold War's intersection with human rights activism, see Sarah Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network* (New York, 2011).
5. Bruce Mazlish, *The New Global History* (New York, 2006).
6. Fernand Braudel, *The Perspective of the World* (New York, 1984), 22.

### A Review of Thomas Borstelmann's *The 1970s: A New Global History From Civil Rights to Economic Inequality*

Rebecca de Schweinitz

Invoking the popular cartoon strip *Doonesbury*, Thomas Borstelmann reflects on popular conceptions of the 1970s as "a kidney stone of a decade." Pitted between two others with "clear story lines," it has generally been portrayed by analysts, he says, as a "decade of ill repute," strange, incoherent, and contradictory—a largely "depressing and forgettable" period (1–3).

Borstelmann may be exaggerating the decade's negative reputation among both scholars and the American public. Indeed, synthetic books like Bruce Schulman's *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (New York, 2001) and Edward Berkowitz's *Something Happened: A Political and Cultural Overview of the Seventies* (New York, 2006) have already suggested that the decade constituted more than a chronological link between the more studied (and more obviously significant) 1960s and 1980s. Moreover, Borstelmann's book would not have been possible without the recent work of many scholars (especially scholars of modern conservatism) who have deeply complicated our understanding of the seventies, showing it to be vitally important to the trajectory of American social, political, economic, and religious history.

Rather than fashioning a fresh assessment of the decade, Borstelmann is thus contributing to a growing historiographic consensus. But if he is not the first to characterize the 1970s as "a crucial period of change and adjustment," and his analysis admittedly relies on the painstaking research of other scholars, his book does offer a broad and quite satisfying interpretative framework for this still oft-misunderstood and underappreciated decade (3). Noting that the trends he describes were neither monolithic nor complete and that they represented long-term historical themes instead of altogether new values, Borstelmann identifies a commitment to formal equality and to free market economics as the currents underwriting the changes and significance of the decade. Using this framework, Borstelmann not only makes sense of what happened during the 1970s, he explores why what happened in the 1970s matters in the scheme of the nation's past and present and positions the prominent features of 1970s America in the context of global history.

Borstelmann suggests that the rising "spirit of egalitarianism and inclusiveness" of the period fit better with the trajectory of twentieth-century American history than did the nation's embrace of unfettered capitalism (3). And he makes it clear that the two dominant trends of the 1970s were in many ways antagonistic; the turn to free market values legitimated remaining inequalities and actually led directly to unprecedented economic disparities.

To explain the contours and limits of the nation's dedication to equality, as well as the country's "major shift" away from public life and a positive view of political leadership, government regulation, and redistributive social policies, Borstelmann begins by laying out the crises of the decade (40). Significant in themselves, these events, he argues, effectively disoriented the country and set the stage for the ascendance of conservatism. With "certain longstanding foundations of American society" (racial, gender, and age hierarchies) already "knocked loose" by the tumult of the 1960s, Americans became even less certain about how to deal with Vietnam, Watergate, inflation, the oil crisis, unemployment, international terrorism, and the other myriad economic, political, environmental, and military problems that unfolded "as a series of jolts" in the seventies (21, 7). Their "familiar world" disintegrating because of these multiple and overlapping crises, many Americans—understandably, Borstelmann suggests—wanted something new (7). And in his narrative, conservatism, especially the strain of free market capitalism that came to dominate American politics, represented something new—a historically specific reform impulse that became popular in the tumultuous 1970s precisely because it was at odds with the overarching predilections of the century.

Other reform impulses of the decade are the subject of chapter 2. Detailing the gains made by women, African Americans, Native Americans, and other traditionally underprivileged groups, he argues that the turn toward greater freedom and inclusion in American law, politics,

and culture marked an important and enduring legacy of the 1970s. Any book that failed to take into account the wide scope of egalitarian improvements of the decade would be duly criticized. Borstelmann is suitably inclusive; his analysis incorporates the majority of modern rights-seekers—women, African Americans, Hispanics, immigrants, the disabled, homosexuals, the elderly, and youth—as well as considering animal issues. He also identifies important political initiatives such as campaign reforms that helped to "democratize the landscape of political influence" (108). And while appropriately celebrating the achievements of the decade, he explains that formal equality and a cultural reorientation that changed "the ethics of daily life" and gave greater respect to distinctive groups did not spell the end of private prejudices or inequalities (120). Just as important, Borstelmann links the decade's democratic advances and shortcomings to their larger historical context, observing, for instance, that structural shifts in the economy (and not just the rise of feminist principles) encouraged more women to enter the labor force, while other structural shifts, unique to or escalating in the seventies, hindered the economic and educational progress of African Americans—just as opportunities once reserved for white men became available to them.

But Borstelmann's attention to the "many frontiers of equality" is sometimes cursory (96). How these usually hard-won egalitarian advances came to be is not part of his story. For instance, mirroring traditional narratives of the black freedom struggle that ignore or skim over the grassroots organizational work that the struggle required (and the fact that an organized movement for racial justice continued long after the legislative victories of the mid-1960s), his account holds nothing about the ongoing efforts of groups like the NAACP, the SCLC, the Children's Defense Fund, or black power advocates to address racial problems, to accommodate and influence modern liberalism, and to challenge the rising forces of conservatism.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, throughout the book, abstract ideas, Congress, the Supreme Court, and a few elite politicians, writers, and intellectuals do most of the acting.

Especially noticeable is Borstelmann's treatment of youth rights (full disclosure: my current book project focuses on 1970s youth history and in particular the youth vote movement). His partial paragraph on the expansion of youth rights briefly mentions the 26th Amendment, which lowered the voting age to eighteen in 1971; it then jumps to the 1977 Supreme Court case that affirmed the rights of minors to contraceptives and ends with a few sentences on federal protections for the elderly and the educational rights of disabled children. To be sure, his passing treatment of young people is partly restricted by the extant scholarship. Even Alexander Keyssar's prize-winning study of the history of American voting rights, for instance, allocates only a few pages to the youth franchise.<sup>2</sup> Yet Borstelmann might have expanded his analysis by drawing from the work of scholars such as Joseph Hawes and Steven Mintz, who have described a "children's rights revolution" that emerged in the late 1960s and had important repercussions for the 1970s and beyond.<sup>3</sup> Notably, historians of childhood and youth have also described how the shifting family demographics, economic anxieties, and other socio-cultural changes of the period sparked a panic over childhood, not unlike the complex and historically contingent backlash resistance (or "reform") movements that Borstelmann shows accompanied and mediated the other egalitarian gains of the decade.<sup>4</sup>

For Borstelmann, the democratic developments of the 1970s were in step with the arc of twentieth-century history and represent its positive legacy. The rise of free market values, on the other hand, requires explanation, especially since those values proved detrimental to the nation's well-being and the interests of most Americans, including

social conservatives. Chapter 3 continues that explanation, repeating but also expanding on points established in the introduction and first chapter. The nation might have had a long history of “the idea of government as corruption,” but for most of the twentieth century Americans regarded big corporations as the “greatest threats to individual freedom” and favored an active federal government that regulated business and the economy and provided essential protections and benefits to the nation’s citizens (36, 40). It took the “traumas” of the decade (especially inflation and unemployment), “long term structural changes in the U.S. economy [that] accelerated in the 1970s,” and an increasingly globalized economy to shake America’s faith in government and usher in a “sea change of principles” (123, 126). It also required the complicity of Democrats, who Borstelmann notes retained their commitment to cultural liberalism and equal rights but, themselves stunned by the exigencies of the decade, backed deregulation efforts and adopted fiscally conservative policies. The “intellectual counterrevolution” of the 1970s that privileged unregulated free market capitalism, he suggests, is best understood as a bipartisan reform effort made possible by the events of the decade in which it emerged.

It was also not a uniquely American phenomenon. What makes Borstelmann’s narrative especially compelling are his efforts, put forth expressly in chapter 4, to place what was happening in America in the context of global trends and world history. True, he says, the United States stood out among industrialized nations for its limited social welfare provisions, and “after 1975 that gap widened further,” yet the country’s turn to free market capitalism and to greater egalitarianism reflected world-wide patterns (147).

Manifest in a nearly complete “retreat of Empires” and a growing concern for human rights in domestic and foreign policies, egalitarian principles reshaped both America and the world in the 1970s. Their professed commitment to self-determination notwithstanding, Americans did not always like or recognize this development. As Borstelmann explains, at the time it was hard to see embargos, oil nationalizations, the election of left-leaning leaders in the Southern Hemisphere, and Arab resistance to the expansion of Israel as expressions of national autonomy. A corresponding “retreat of the state” and expansion of free market capitalism unfolding across the globe also proved difficult to discern. But indeed, even as Americans in the 1970s worried about the seemingly evident failures of their own country and the extension of communism, China instituted capitalist reforms and the Soviet sphere began to crumble—largely, as it turns out, because the rising international prominence of human rights values and activism delegitimized “all empires” and “opened new space for political dissent” in communist-controlled countries (196, 176). It comes across as no small irony that while neoconservatives pushed to enhance the nation’s military capabilities and recast the country as a tough warrior “for justice and decency,” actual principles of justice and decency proved decisive factors in the global spread of capitalism.

Ironies abound in the story Borstelmann tells about the 1970s, especially as he explores resistance to and the repercussions of the rise of egalitarian and market values in his last two chapters. Ecological perspectives provided one “subversive critique” (229). The free market, environmentalists pointed out, was not so free after all—as 1970s calamities like Love Canal made plain. And a “burst of legislative and administrative initiatives on environmental and health matters” in the 1970s marked a significant “last advance before the broader retreat” from state regulation and civic-mindedness (240). Meanwhile, Christian activism took a rightward turn in the decade as evangelicals protested what Joseph Crespino calls the “pervasive and indiscriminate egalitarianism in

modern America.”<sup>5</sup> Paradoxically, Christian conservatives proved more accommodating to the hyper-individualism that developed along with unrestrained capitalism, even though that individualism fostered a “coarser,” less communitarian culture that stood in opposition to traditional religious values, and even as evangelicals demanded more government control of personal moral behavior.<sup>6</sup> Borstelmann also calls attention to the striking correlation between the rise of religious fundamentalism at home and a politicized religious resurgence in the Middle East and Asia; Americans (at least in some ways) were more like the Islamic fundamentalists than the increasingly secular Europeans.

Borstelmann’s discussion of the trend toward deregulation and individualism fits with recent scholarship on the history of childhood and youth. Scholars, for instance, note that the removal of government controls in children’s advertising and the growth of marketing in schools and on the internet has produced a progressively commercialized childhood.<sup>7</sup> And despite anxiety in the 1970s about the “competitive requirements of a now manifestly globalized economy” and, for some, about the changes brought on by the new egalitarianism, since that time parents have been increasingly left to their own resources to “guard, promote, and channel their children.”<sup>8</sup> The 1970s marked a decided shift away from federal responsibility for a protected childhood. One tragic effect of this shift, which supports Borstelmann’s key point about the consequences of economic conservatism, is perhaps best represented “by the fact that a rural Mississippi community [in the wealthiest nation on earth] qualifies for aid from a Dutch foundation working to end child poverty.”<sup>9</sup>

That, for Borstelmann and historians of childhood alike, the 1970s constituted a time of significant change and that it was thirty to forty years ago, not at the nation’s founding, when America committed itself to free market values and unrestrained individualism, makes it a decade—especially in our current state of crisis—worth remembering in all its complexity.

#### Notes:

1. See, for instance, Devin Fergus, *Liberalism, Black Power, and the Making of American Politics* (Athens, GA, 2009); Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, eds., *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940–1980* (New York, 2001).
2. See Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* (New York, 2000).
3. See Joseph Hawes, *The Children’s Rights Movement: A History of Advocacy and Protection* (New York, 1991) and Steven Mintz, *Huck’s Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge, MA, 2004), 329 and chapters 15–17.
4. See Mintz, *Huck’s Raft*, chapter 16. Not yet published at the time Borstelmann was writing, various essays in Paula S. Fass and Michael Grossberg, eds., *Reinventing Childhood After World War II* (Philadelphia, 2012), also address related themes. It strikes me that Borstelmann’s book might be read as a way to gauge the status of particular historical subjects or narratives in the larger profession.
5. Borstelmann quotes Crespino on page 250. One of the decided strengths of Borstelmann’s book is his incorporation of the recent outstanding literature, including the work on 1970s conservatism.
6. His analysis helps to make sense of some of the current frustrations of the religious right that are described, for instance, in Jonathan Merritt, “The Religious Right Turns 33: What Have We Learned,” *The Atlantic Monthly* (June 8, 2012) <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2012/06/the-religious-right-turns-33-what-have-we-learned/258204/#.T9VOIGP6gOo.facebook>. Accessed June 10, 2012.
7. Steven Mintz, “The Changing Face of Children’s Culture,” in Fass and Grossberg, eds., *The Reinvention of Childhood*, 46–50.
8. Paula Fass, “The Child-Centered Family: New Rules,” in Fass and Grossberg, eds., *The Reinvention of Childhood*, 15.
9. Kriste Lindenmeyer, “Children, the State, and the American Dream,” in Fass and Grossberg, eds., *The Reinvention of Childhood*, 106.

Review of Thomas Borstelmann, *The 1970s: A New Global History from Civil Rights to Economic Inequality*

T. Christopher Jespersen

**T**he 1970s is an ambitious book in more ways than one. In addition to tackling more than a decade's worth of historical events, trends, and individuals (and much more than that in certain instances) in an effort to make sense of a critical time in international and domestic history for the United States, Tim Borstelmann also tackles the genre itself. That is, he brings into focus a different way of looking at a decade's worth of history by concentrating on his twin sub-themes, or undercurrents, as he labels them, of egalitarianism and inclusiveness, on the one hand, and free-market economics and increasing income inequality on the other. The scope and ambition of this project are impressive, as are some, but not all, of the results.

Beginning with Frederick Allen's *Only Yesterday* and continuing with Douglas Miller's and Marion Nowak's *The Fifties* and Todd Gitlin's *The Sixties*, this genre of writing about decades in the nation's history has come as naturally to historians as learning to count to ten does to toddlers.<sup>1</sup> Although the demarcation of time into ten-year intervals is arbitrary and often unhelpful for historical purposes, it is commonplace; and dividing the past, particularly the recent past, into such segments for ease of reference has become almost a required technique of historical analysis. The use of such demarcations is not particularly surprising, as people tend to identify themselves as having grown up or "come of age" during a particular decade, and thus their tendency to associate with that time period becomes quite powerful as they age and nostalgia impacts memory.

Many decades in American history have been extensively reviewed and studied for the way they represented turning points or marked major changes from the past: the "gay nineties," the "roaring twenties," the fifties, the sixties, and so on. The 1970s are no different. "The decade turns out to be a crucial period of change and adjustment that reshaped the contours of American history and indeed global history ever since," Borstelmann writes (3). He curtails the decade to focus on the years 1973–1979 and adds a significant and engaging new way of looking at the period covered first by Peter Carroll in 1982 and much more recently by the British journalist and historian Dominic Sandbrook.<sup>2</sup> But Borstelmann is not satisfied to revisit the craziness of bellbottoms, disco, gas lines, and the like; he is not nostalgic, eager to reminisce about the time period and its culture. His approach is to take the dominant themes of the decade and stretch them like so much taffy, ever longer and thinner, taking them back to previous decades, even centuries, to consider their antecedents or bringing them forward into the twenty-first century to see how they ultimately developed over time. The results are breathtaking when the author hits his stride, and they provide panoramic historical context for considering the two critical "powerful undercurrents" he refers to repeatedly.

The first undercurrent is the way egalitarianism spread politically, socially, and culturally on both the left and the right. The decade turned out to be "an unprecedented opportunity to press for reform and improvement of American society" (14). Fewer Americans smoked cigarettes, and personal fitness and self-improvement became more popular. Nike was founded in 1972; Patagonia unveiled its first line of outdoor activewear in 1973; Trek began to produce bicycles in 1976; and *Outside* magazine debuted in 1978 (68–70). Greater numbers of women entered the professions of law, medicine, and engineering as more of them went to college and on to graduate school (83–85). Congress passed Title IX, which mandated equal treatment

of women at institutions of higher education receiving federal assistance, and the Supreme Court extended birth control rights to single women in *Eisenstadt v. Baird* (86–93). According to Borstelmann, the Supreme Court decision in 1973 to legalize abortion must be seen in this larger context, as must the effort to pass an Equal Rights Amendment; and all these reforms must be viewed within the larger trend of women challenging traditional gender roles.

While women were working to alter longstanding attitudes about what they could do, religious groups found in the new egalitarianism and freedom of action both the changes to traditional society they found deeply disturbing and the opportunity to organize against those developments and effect political revolution. Anger over social changes—among them abortion, a purportedly increasingly permissive and salacious culture, and perceived attacks against religious institutions, as in the 1978 IRS ruling about the tax-exempt status of the "white-flight" private schools created in the wake of the 1954 Supreme Court order desegregating the public schools—led conservatives and Republicans to fight back. Obviously, some of this resistance to change was expressed at the ballot box, but it also manifested itself in other ways and was especially evident in the religious resurgence Borstelmann traces. "The 1970s," he writes, "witnessed an extraordinary and unprecedented spiritual resurgence across the great monotheistic faiths, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam" (247).

At the same time that these opportunities led to increasing egalitarianism and competition among ideas, they also created greater inequalities in income and wealth distribution. The collectivism of the 1930s was replaced by individualism: Milton Friedman instead of John Maynard Keynes. The Heritage Foundation, the Cato Institute, and the Manhattan Institute were all founded in the 1970s, and it was a bipartisan political consensus that oversaw the considerable deregulation of the airline, banking, energy, and communications industries between 1975 and 1980 (128–30, 148–9).

Borstelmann's book shines in connecting historical trends with events and specific developments in the 1970s. In certain instances, however, the narrative overreaches, and the results are less than convincing. In his discussion of the 1977 Tenerife air disaster, for example, when two Boeing 747s collided in the Canary Islands and killed nearly six hundred people, Borstelmann emphasizes the limits of globalization generally and in this specific instance the "insufficient diffusion of English" as contributing significantly to the worst crash in aviation history. The accents of the air traffic controllers and pilots were not the issue, however; as the brothers Ori and Rom Brafman carefully explain in their slender but highly engaging book, *Sway*, the air disaster was really the result of other factors.<sup>3</sup> KLM's Captain Jacob Van Zanten took off without tower clearance, not because he could not understand the air traffic controllers at Tenerife but because he fell prey to the pressure of "loss aversion" and, as the Brafmans make very clear, tried to avoid the cascading effect of an additional delay. Other factors contributed to the crash—fog, Van Zanten's decision to refuel his plane, and so forth—but this was a disaster arising from problems other than those Borstelmann emphasizes.

Similarly, the discussion of sport in American society in the 1970s is both engaging and perplexing. Borstelmann's discussion of baseball is effective; he briefly but carefully outlines the key elements of Curt Flood's challenge to the reserve clause in Major League Baseball and explains how his legal success opened the doors to free agency. The Flood case fits nicely into the book's emphasis on individualism, deregulation, and increasing inequality. That inequality took two forms in baseball: first, successful major league baseball players began to make enormous sums of money; and second, without the kind of revenue-sharing structure

that some of the other major league sports had put in place, baseball began to see greater and greater division between big-city versus small-market teams around the country in terms of the talent they could attract through free agency.

By contrast, Borstelmann's brief discussion of basketball completely fails to address the sport in the decade of the book's title. The 1970s are relegated to being a precursor to the arrival of Magic Johnson, Larry Bird, and Michael Jordan (even though the first two were drafted in the late 1970s) and the popularity these three helped bring to basketball in the eighties. Borstelmann throws in a reference to Yao Ming as the sport later expanded to Asia. He stretches his focus too far and fails to appreciate what did or did not happen in the decade. His time would have been better spent examining the origins of the ABA, its free-wheeling style, and its merger with the NBA in 1976. He could also have looked at the drug problems that plagued the NBA during the decade and seriously undercut its popularity and threatened its future. Bird and Johnson did come along at an opportune time, and their rivalry helped enormously in reviving the sport and catapulting it to global prominence. But their backgrounds also spoke to historical factors of race and region that go unexplored.

Finally, in the discussion about the Ford presidency, Borstelmann asserts that "Gerald Ford could not overcome his status as an appointed president to get elected in his own right." Later he discusses other shortcomings of the Ford presidency and mentions the damage done to Ford's image by Chevy Chase's lampooning of him on *Saturday Night Live*. While what he says is certainly true enough, he fails to appreciate the critical factor that undermined Ford's reelection bid in 1976: his decision to pardon Richard Nixon shortly after taking office in August 1974. Ford's action smacked of a backroom deal. As Peter Carroll sums up the situation, the president undercut the anger and frustration felt by those who believed Nixon had betrayed the nation and committed criminal acts as president. These people would never see justice served; there would be no national catharsis through impeachment and a trial. "For his complicity in this failure," Carroll writes, "Ford's popularity rating collapsed overnight from 72 to 49 percent."<sup>4</sup>

In stretching the 1970s to include so much from previous and succeeding decades, Tim Borstelmann does an extraordinary job of contextualizing key events and critical developments. That some of the specifics miss their mark does not suggest that the overall achievement of this book is any less significant or laudable.

#### Notes:

1. Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920s* (New York, 1931); Douglas T. Miller and Marion Nowak, *The Fifties: The Way We Really Were* (Garden City, New York, 1975); Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York, 1987).

2. Peter N. Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened: The Tragedy and Promise of America in the 1970s* (New York, 1982); Dominic Sandbrook, *Mad as Hell: The Crisis of the 1970s and the Rise of the Populist Right* (New York, 2011).

3. Ori Brafman and Rom Brafman, *Sway: The Irresistible Pull of Irrational Behavior* (New York, 2008), 10–24.

4. Carroll, 162.

### Review of Thomas Borstelmann, *The 1970s: A New Global History from Civil Rights to Economic Inequality*

Scott Kaufman

Until recently, the 1970s had suffered the same fate as the Korean War. With World War II and the Vietnam War serving as bookends that drew far more scholarly attention, the Korean conflict became known as the "forgotten war." Likewise, one could refer to the 1970s

as the "forgotten decade." Academics and non-academics alike found the 1960s and 1980s far more interesting than the 1970s. Indeed, there was virtually no treatment of the decade until 2000, when David Frum's *The 1970s* appeared in print.<sup>1</sup>

Since the publication of Frum's work there has been a flurry of monographs on the 1970s, to which Thomas Borstelmann has made a significant contribution.<sup>2</sup> Borstelmann sees two themes that came out of the 1970s and continue to have an effect in the present: egalitarianism and the free market. He defines egalitarianism in two ways. One is Americentric and describes a United States where discrimination gave way to an acceptance of diversity. Minorities in the country, whether women, African Americans, Hispanics, young people, Jews, Native Americans, or homosexuals, found greater equality and opportunity. At the same time each group sought to carve out its own identity within American society. Egalitarianism was also a transnational phenomenon. Human rights received more emphasis than before, authoritarianism in nations such as Portugal and Spain gave way to democracy, and dissidents in the Soviet bloc found a greater voice. All the while, imperialism continued its precipitous decline, particularly in Africa.

The acceptance of free market ideals was also transnational. In the United States, deregulation did not mean simply proscribing government supervision of business activity. It also augured an end to the liberal welfare state. Concluding that collective methods of solving national ills (as embodied in New Deal and Great Society programs) had failed, Americans turned toward conservatism, personified by Jimmy Carter and, to an even greater extent, Ronald Reagan. Simultaneously, individualism gained new vigor: the military draft gave way to an armed forces made up of volunteers; new laws allowed people to spend as much as they wanted when seeking public office; restrictions on abortion and birth control declined; gambling became legal in New Jersey; and there was "greater acceptance of sex as important for personal happiness." Individualism also demanded acceptance of the idea that those who broke the law did so of their own accord, necessitating punishment rather than rehabilitation.

Outside of the United States, Great Britain moved down the road toward conservatism; the countries of the Southern Cone of Latin America, such as Chile, rejected socialist programs; and even communist China began to implement capitalist reforms. Globalization also encouraged change. English became the language of international commerce, Americans had an ever greater choice of goods, and American culture penetrated a larger portion of the world. Yet globalization also permitted the spread of disease and cost governments "some of their leverage in controlling their own national economies" (138, 163).

The "hyper-individualism" of the 1970s (4) did not eradicate liberalism, though. Most notably, environmentalists charged that the free market was a key cause of pollution and global warming. Forming or joining national and international organizations, they pushed through anti-pollution laws in the United States and Japan, helped establish the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and made their influence felt in the United Nations.

Borstelmann finds that the trends established in the 1970s continued well beyond the decade, some of them to the present. Topics that Americans had considered private prior to the 1970s, such as personal behavior, language, or faith, became public. Indeed, though conservatives railed against "big government," they called for expanding government power to enforce what they regarded as acceptable moral behavior. Meanwhile, once-public subjects, such as taxes and welfare programs, "were increasingly privatized or shrunken." Though Democrats and Republicans "shared

more common ground . . . than they like to admit . . . each party evolved to focus on one [issue] above all." Democrats stressed equality. "Republicans, for their part, carried the real torch for free markets" (315, 316). Abroad, China continued the march down the path of capitalism, South Africa rejected apartheid, and communism collapsed in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

To his credit, the author realizes that the trends he cites were not universal. The growing power of Islamic fundamentalism served to reverse what had been indications of increasing equality for women in Iran. Israel refused to give up its control of the Occupied Territories, thereby "directly bucking the international trend toward self-determination" (208-9). Cuba remained wedded to socialism. But in general, the author describes a planet moving in the direction of equality and economic openness.

Because his work is a synthesis, some of Borstelmann's findings will not surprise readers. The author appears particularly impressed by Frum and Bruce J. Schulman. Both Frum and Schulman—the former in rather proselytizing language—find that Americans lost faith in both their government and liberalism during the 1970s and headed instead toward conservatism, the free market, and self-fulfillment. Schulman gives a significant amount of attention to the acceptance of diversity and the desire of individual groups within the United States to develop a sense of identity. Borstelmann, however, goes beyond his predecessors in two important respects. First, he places greater emphasis than they do upon the impact of egalitarianism. Second, and more important, he takes what had been themes relegated to an American context and effectively demonstrates their transnational nature. There has been some work done on how the 1970s affected Great Britain, and a recent series of essays edited by Niall Ferguson, Charles Maier, Erez Manela, and Daniel Sargent seeks to demonstrate the worldwide impact of the decade. Yet the monographs on Great Britain do not attempt to make detailed comparisons with the United States, while the contributors to Ferguson et al. are primarily interested in the effect of globalization upon the world. The essays in the Ferguson volume also tend to be Americentric in nature.<sup>3</sup>

*The 1970s* does have its weaknesses. The first is a very minor one. Borstelmann makes use of an enormous number of sources, and the fifty pages of endnotes are chock-full of references to books, journal articles, contemporary newspapers, and magazines, but unfortunately, there is no bibliography. A more significant flaw, which it shares with the Ferguson volume, is its Americentrism. Borstelmann goes much further than previous scholars in demonstrating the transnational impact of the 1970s, particularly where egalitarianism and the free market are concerned. But of the six chapters, only chapters 4 and 5 can be considered truly international in context. Borstelmann spends far more time providing background to and demonstrating the significance of the 1970s for Americans than is the case for the rest of world. It is unfortunate that his conclusion is wholly Americentric, for readers may forget Borstelmann's larger purpose in writing his book.

This criticism is tied to another. Because he is tackling an enormous topic in just over 300 pages of text, Borstelmann at times misses nuance. An example is his failure to make a clear distinction between self-determination and egalitarianism. He sees the two as "similar." Yet later he comments that "one major trend of world history in the 1970s was the promotion of egalitarianism through the ending of empires" (175, 214). Certainly there is less equality between an imperialist nation and one of its colonies than there is between two independent states. However, specialists on North-South relations and dependency theorists would likely take issue with the assertion that self-determination

promoted egalitarianism.

Likewise, some women's historians might question how much egalitarianism existed within any developing country. Borstelmann notes that women's path toward equality was blocked by religion in the Middle East, but to what extent might women have lacked power throughout the Third World? Scholars who ascribe to the "women in international development" school of thought argue that economic development was a central cause of the loss of status for women in the Third World.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps they are right: if so, then to what extent might economic factors help to explain the failure of women, not just in the Middle East but elsewhere in the developing world, to enhance their social or political status?

Covering such a large topic also forced Borstelmann to devote less attention to culture than he might. He demonstrates how movies like *Star Wars*, *Jaws*, *Blazing Saddles*, *Deep Throat*, and *The Poseidon Adventure*, television programs such *Soap* and *Roots*, and the music of Jimmy Buffett and Bruce Springsteen reflected the hopes and fears of Americans during the decade as well as their changing attitudes toward such matters as race, sex, and sexual orientation. He could have added others to that list, among them *Wonder Woman*, *All in the Family*, *Good Times*, *The Jeffersons*, and *The Bionic Woman*. Moreover, with the exception of the Monty Python spoof *Life of Brian*, Borstelmann gives little consideration to how popular culture in other countries echoed those concerns during the decade. He could have drawn upon the movies, TV shows, and music of those nations. For example, the programs *Fawlty Towers*, *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, and *Till Death Do Us Part* (which inspired *All in the Family*) offer insight into British opinion regarding such topics as immigration, politics, and sex.<sup>5</sup> Chuong-Dai Hong Vo points out that a number of "well-known films" produced in Vietnam during "the 1970s and 1980s paint Vietnamese subjects as victims of foreign aggression unwilling to relent."<sup>6</sup> In Japan the importance of environmentalism is stressed in manga and anime as well as in movies such as the horrible *Godzilla v. the Smog Monster*. (Even I found it nearly impossible to watch, and I am an unabashed *Godzilla* fan.)

A final criticism is one which could apply to most any historical work, save maybe biographies: starting and ending points. Borstelmann's focus is on the period between 1973 and 1979. He realizes he could have chosen other years, but he selected them because "a series of jolts hit Americans in 1973" (7), including the OPEC oil embargo, Watergate, and the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam, while the year 1979 had its own set of crises, among them the Iran hostage crisis and the meltdown at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant. But this choice again makes for a rather Americentric treatment of what is to be a global history of the 1970s. Might other years have been more appropriate? The year 1968 saw the *Pueblo* crisis, the Tet Offensive, the Prague Spring, the opening of negotiations to end the Vietnam War, the refusal of nearly three dozen African nations to attend the Olympics in Mexico City, and Richard Nixon's election. Borstelmann could have placed these events within the context of egalitarianism and free market ideals. One could argue that 1979 is a good ending point, but the events of 1981—among them the inauguration of Ronald Reagan, the end of the Iran hostage crisis, and the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat—had important implications of their own.

Despite these criticisms, Borstelmann has written an important contribution to the historiography of the 1970s. His emphasis on the transnational nature of egalitarianism and the free market is important to an understanding of the true global significance of what until recently was a forgotten decade.

#### Notes:

1. David Frum, *How We Got Here: The 1970s, the Decade that Brought You Modern Life (for Better or Worse)* (New York, 2000). Christopher Booker's *The Seventies: The Decade that Changed the Future* (London, 1981) is a series of reprinted newspaper articles and profiles of major figures and has little to contribute to the existing historiography. Elsebeth Hurup's edited volume, *The Lost Decade: America in the Seventies* (Oakville, CT, 1996) is more important. However, it did not draw nearly the same level of scholarly attention as Frum's book.
2. A short list includes Bruce J. Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (New York, 2001); Beth Bailey and David Farber, eds., *America in the Seventies* (Lawrence, KS, 2004); Edward D. Berkowitz, *Something Happened: A Political and Cultural Overview of the Seventies* (New York, 2006); Philip Jenkins, *Decade of Nightmares: The End of the Sixties and the Making of Eighties America* (New York, 2006); Bruce J. Schulman and Julian Zelizer, eds., *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s* (Cambridge, MA, 2008); Niall Ferguson et al., *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective* (Cambridge, MA, 2010).
3. Andy Beckett, *When the Lights Went Out: Britain in the Seventies* (London, 2009); Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Great Britain, 1970-74* (London, 2010); Ferguson et al., eds., *Shock of the Global*.
4. See Emily Rosenberg, "Gender," *Journal of American History* 77 (1990): 121-22.
5. On this subject scholars should consult *Don't Look Now: British Cinema in the 1970s*, ed. Paul Newland (Chicago, 2010).
6. Chong-Dai Hong Vo, "Vietnamese Cinema in the Era of Market Liberalization," in *Political Regimes and the Media in Asia*, eds. Krishna Sen and Terence Lee (New York, 2008), 73.

## U.S. History and Beyond

Thomas "Tim" Borstelmann

Nearly all readers who have persisted to this point in our roundtable discussion understand the depth of commitment required to write serious book-length history and recognize that most of us are nonetheless likely to reach very small audiences. Such disjuncture between effort and result suggests something about historians—doggedness, perhaps, or other less positive qualities that many of those with whom we live might offer up in an honest moment (mulishness, obsessiveness, irrelevance). Indeed, we seem to be almost the last scholarly discipline that writes mostly books. But this disjuncture also helps explain the scale of my gratitude for receiving such careful readings and critiques of my book from four serious scholars whose work I admire. I thank them each for their time, their generosity, and their insights.

The reviewers use phrases such as "does an extraordinary service" (Christopher Jespersen), "does offer a broad, and quite satisfying, interpretive framework" (Rebecca de Schweinitz), "has made a significant contribution" using "an enormous number of sources" (Scott Kaufman), and offers "an ambitious project . . . that he substantially achieves" (Daniel Sargent). I am tempted to fold my cards, collect my earnings, tip my hat, and head for home. No such luck, reader: the reviewers, as expected, also offer criticisms and suggestions, and these deserve to be engaged. So let me sharpen up my knives and see if I can carve into this particular feast of history and ideas in a useful manner.

Writing a book encompassing both the history of the United States and the history of the world across a decade practically guarantees that attentive readers will find information missing or interpretations shaded in ways they dislike. The canvas is simply too large for unanimity. Editor Andy Johns deserves credit for assembling a roundtable of historians with such a diversity of research interests. Christopher Jespersen and Rebecca de Schweinitz seem primarily concerned about issues on the domestic side of

the story, while Scott Kaufman and Daniel Sargent lean more to issues on the international and global side. It is tempting to invoke the old adage that if one is making people unhappy on every side of an issue, one must be doing something right. This is not quite the case here, but the range and diversity of the reviewers' concerns do highlight some of the challenges of trying to write history on this scale.

Jespersen likes "the scope and ambition of the project" but wants more analysis of the Tenerife air disaster in the Azores, more discussion of professional basketball, and more emphasis on Gerald Ford's pardon of Richard Nixon. De Schweinitz wishes for more childhood history and more social history of race reformers. Kaufman hopes for more popular culture, including American television, and more British history, including more Monty Python, but less "Americentrism." Sargent contemplates more Russian and Indian history. The difficulty of writing this kind of history persuasively for all readers should be crystal clear by now. One is tempted, almost, to dive back into one's own small scholarly foxhole and settle back down into the safer confines of knowing too much about too little. Instead, I am taking careful notes for any future editions of *The 1970s*.

But I cannot resist a few brief annotations. First, Tenerife. I mention the accident in one sentence in a long paragraph of diverse examples of globalization's unfinished business. I might have used other examples of limits of the spread of English as a global language, I suppose (perhaps the sign in the Paris hotel elevator reading "Please leave your values at the front desk"), rather than relying on David Crystal's Cambridge University Press book for this point. Still, Tenerife hardly seems to qualify as a central target of critique, particularly since clarity and standardization of English language use were indeed one of the recommended measures for air traffic controllers worldwide that resulted specifically from the accident.

Second, professional basketball. It pains me to note that it just was not that popular yet in the 1970s, nor that important as an industry. For what it's worth, I grew up practically in the shadow of Duke University's Cameron Indoor Stadium, nearly obsessed with playing, watching, and analyzing basketball. I went to ABA games in Raleigh's Dorton Arena with my father and talked courtside, starry-eyed, with his former student, all-star guard Bob Verga. Anyone who knew me in that decade could attest that the relative lack of emphasis on basketball in *The 1970s* demonstrates serious restraint in the face of temptation. I will, however, be among the first to order a good book on 1970s basketball when it comes out.

Third, Ford's pardon of Nixon: clearly important but unwittingly omitted—point taken for the next edition.<sup>1</sup> Fourth, previous literature? I admire Bruce Schulman's work on this decade, but I am no fan of David Frum's intemperate and tendentious book. As for the social history of race reformers, my graduate school mentors—all distinguished social historians of movements for racial justice—would surely be cringing at the idea that I did not provide enough on that topic, though my students would not likely wish for a still-longer book to read. Those same students, however, surely would have enjoyed still more American television content, although *All In The Family*, I must note, does actually make two appearances (115, 145). More Monty Python: who could disagree? The next edition will provide. But Americentrism, Russia, and India . . . now, I believe, we are getting to the central challenge.

In simplest form, the goal of *The 1970s* was to explain the development of American political culture during that decade, particularly as expressed in popular ideas and public policies, and place that development within a larger global context. The values and ideas that shaped American politics and culture were changing in crucial ways in this decade, and similar changes were visible far beyond U.S.

borders. To say that the book “suffers from Americentrism” (Kaufman), then, is really to say that it does what it set out to do. Guilty as charged. But Daniel Sargent will not let me off so easily, and anyone reading his review will have no trouble seeing why the Berkeley History Department swept him up swiftly a few years back. He notes that “*The 1970s* bills itself as a ‘new global history,’ but the book in fact operates at multiple levels” and that “American history is the unambiguous priority among the national histories that *The 1970s* engages.”

Here I must plead failure: failure to win a vigorous debate with Princeton University Press, which insisted on the use of “global history” in the title as a way to signal the international scope of the book’s analysis. I preferred other titles, particularly “More Equal, Less Equal: A New History of the 1970s,” which telegraphed more directly, I thought, the thrust of the book’s argument. The staff at the press demurred, citing other titles on their list with similar words and believing that such a title would be more difficult to promote. This is not (really) a complaint on my part: Princeton is an excellent press with which I am quite happy, and its staff is superb. But a publisher is out to sell books, appropriately enough, and in this case the title wound up being reshaped by concerns about marketing. I, however, ultimately signed off on the final title, so if it is misleading that is finally, alas, my responsibility.

The core issue is methodological. What am I trying to examine and explain, and how can I best do so? This is a problem across our diverse field, a problem that is reflected in its proliferating names: U.S. diplomatic history, U.S. foreign relations history, U.S. international history, transnational history, global history, the “U.S. and the world,” and the “U.S. in the world.” The last is the most awkward and seems increasingly the most commonly used. Such awkwardness is not, to my mind, a negative indicator, but rather an illustration of just how large and complicated our field has become. There is not yet a brief, felicitous term for the study of all the ways in which the most powerful modern nation has interacted with the rest of the world.

My own intellectual commitments, from the beginning of my career, have included the intimate connection of U.S. domestic history to U.S. foreign relations—the inward swing of the “U.S. in the world” barroom door—and have increasingly come to include as well the connection between U.S. history and world history—part of the outward swing of that door.<sup>2</sup> An emphasis on the place of the United States in world history requires that we think comparatively about the American past and how it shares with and differs from the pasts of other nations, regions, and processes. Most contemporary American political dialogue and far too much U.S. historical writing reflexively assume a degree of American exceptionalism or distinctiveness, regardless of the politics of the speaker or writer. Historians in our field, more than anyone else, must avoid that assumption until it is demonstrated evidentially.

Sargent accords *The 1970s* credit for including “a great deal of international history” as well as U.S. and world history. At the same time, he suggests that, subtitle notwithstanding, there is relatively less actual global history in the book, and that developments at a global level, such as economic integration or human rights activism, might be granted somewhat greater causal agency than I have allowed them in explaining events within the United States and other nations in this decade.<sup>3</sup> This is a persuasive criticism, as the developing historiography increasingly reveals.<sup>4</sup>

I am less persuaded by Sargent’s questioning of the selection of cases in this decade. Certainly, focusing on the Soviet Union, with some attention to India, would yield different results than focusing on the United States, with some attention to China, but then the very subject would be different: Soviet/Russian history, rather than U.S. history,

in international perspective. He raises the question of whether “a global model is derived from a mainly American experience, which is then held to cohere to the global model,” and suggests that “different cases might have” rendered “the American experience exceptional rather than representative.” The weight of the evidence, particularly in chapter 4, tilts sharply toward representation rather than exceptionalism. Indeed, as Sargent then goes on to suggest in his evenhanded fashion, the United States and the other “advanced economies” might best be seen as a vanguard for economic and political processes that would eventually sweep through most of the rest of the world. The Soviet story in this decade, as *The 1970s* does point out, proved to be far more the temporary exception to the larger pattern of increasing formal equality and shrinking economic equality. But I grant that the amount of attention paid in the book to developments in South Asia, like those in the Soviet Union, is less than ideal—regardless of those students who appreciate a less lengthy book. “Pattern,” for what it’s worth, seems a more useful term in this analysis than “model,” as the historical analysis in *The 1970s* shares little of the social scientific predilection for theoretical postulation.

Sargent raises one final issue: the problem of agency and accountability for this decade’s turn away from public sector expansion and toward “a new, rather harsher, kind of political economy.” Was this momentous shift a result of structural causes, along the lines of global economic integration, or did it stem primarily from the actions of individuals, “Leninists of the right”? As he suggests, how we answer this question as the historiography of this decade develops will reveal our sense of what else might have been, including whether the old order might have been extended “at least a few decades longer.” Chapter 5 does trace the major dissenters, whom I see ultimately as gaining relatively meager political traction. While I have little personal fondness for the results of this new political economy, I do tend to see the structural causes, particularly of technological and financial innovation, as powerfully determinative—thus the slight note of resignation in the book, as Sargent observes. But structures must be manned, and real people devoted their lives to midwifing our new, market-driven order. The ideologues, intellectuals, politicians, media spokespersons, and organizational activists who herded the United States and most of the world into our current condition will face the judgment of future generations for the peculiar combination of wealth creation and maldistribution that they worked so hard to create.

#### Notes:

1. For unusual insight into this event, see Peter H. Wood, “The Pardoner’s Tale: The Personal Theme of ‘Domestic Tranquility’ in Gerald Ford’s Pardon of Richard Nixon,” *Prospects* 11 (October 1986): 491–539.
2. Thomas Borstelmann, “Connelly Roundtable,” *Passport* 42 (September 2011): 10–11.
3. For a discussion of these terminological distinctions, see my essay, “A Worldly Tale: Global Influences on the Historiography of U.S. Foreign Relations,” in *America in the World: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations since 1941*, ed. Michael J. Hogan and Frank Costigliola, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York, forthcoming).
4. On globalization, see Sargent’s *A Superpower Transformed: History, Strategy, and American Foreign Policy in the 1970s* (New York, forthcoming). On human rights, see Sarah B. Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network* (New York, 2011); Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA, 2010); and Michael Cotey Morgan, “The Seventies and the Rebirth of Human Rights,” in *The Shock of the Global: The International History of the 1970s*, ed. Niall Ferguson, Charles Maier, Erez Manela, and Daniel Sargent (Cambridge, MA, 2010), 237–50.

# Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Relations: A Historiographical Review

Sarah B. Snyder

Human rights has finally arrived. Shortly, a new edition of *America in the World: The Historiography of U.S. Foreign Relations since 1941* will be released, and for the first time it will include an essay examining scholarship on human rights.<sup>1</sup> Such recognition is further proof, beyond the evidence I found in past programs of SHAFR annual meetings and issues of *Diplomatic History*, that scholars of U.S. foreign relations are increasingly focused on human rights. Until recently, solicitation of this essay would have been unlikely. The literature on human rights was limited, and *Passport*, like other important arbiters of our field, could have overlooked what was at best a minor concern to historians. Now, however, human rights has become a diverse and thriving subfield.<sup>2</sup>

What has prompted this burgeoning interest? Logically, it must be linked to the growing availability of records from the 1970s, when the issue became more prominent in U.S. foreign relations. In addition, human rights violations have increasingly captured public attention in our post-Cold War world, and it makes sense that this would prompt investigations of this problem from a historical perspective.<sup>3</sup> Finally, I think we can attribute growing scholarly concern to the greater diversification of our field.<sup>4</sup>

Early writing on human rights by historians of U.S. foreign relations focused on the 1940s, when the issue first seemed to garner greater international attention. The key works emphasized foundational texts such as the Atlantic Charter and the United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), as well as critical institutions such as the UN. The two significant books in this respect are Elizabeth Borgwardt's *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* and Mary Ann Glendon's *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.<sup>5</sup> As their titles make clear, Borgwardt and Glendon very much see the documents they study as ushering in a new era in international relations. Borgwardt argues that the Atlantic Charter, signed by President Franklin Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill in 1941, marked the beginning of U.S. efforts to spread human rights internationally.<sup>6</sup> Glendon's history describes the drafting of the UDHR and the challenges its authors faced as they sought to balance different definitions of human rights; she sees Eleanor Roosevelt as playing an essential role in maintaining U.S. support for the project.<sup>7</sup> Ultimately, Glendon believes, the UDHR's influence was stymied by the development of the Cold War, the use of human rights as propaganda weapons, and North-South tensions framed around race and decolonization.<sup>8</sup> Borgwardt's and Glendon's works both focus on hopes and aspirations for the postwar period, the struggle to define human rights, and the challenges that proponents of greater protection for human rights faced in subsequent years.

Complementing this attention to the flowering of interest in human rights are works seeking to clarify why, in the United States at least, such concern was not sustained. A number of scholars, including Natalie

Hevener Kaufman and David Whiteman, have examined the Bricker Amendment to explain why the United States long delayed ratifying human rights covenants and treaties. The legislation, which was first introduced in September 1951 by Senator John Bricker (R-OH), responded to concerns that the president might commit the United States to international treaties that would contravene the Constitution. Bricker and his supporters particularly feared that human rights treaties could supersede existing domestic law and undermine states' rights.<sup>9</sup>

Scholars continue to differ about the balance between international and domestic factors in shaping support for the Bricker Amendment. Kaufman and Whiteman see that support as firmly rooted in Cold War politics and trepidation about the civil rights struggle, whereas Duane Tananbaum attributes greater significance to concerns about the United Nations Charter and international human rights agreements rather than domestic factors.<sup>10</sup> In a longer treatment, Kaufman sees the Bricker Amendment controversy as having a long-lasting influence on debates in the Senate about ratifying human rights treaties, which continued to be seen through a Cold War, anticommunist lens.<sup>11</sup>

Carol Anderson has also written about the lost promise of the 1940s. In her study of the postwar struggle for African Americans human rights, she explains that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) wanted to focus attention on human rights, including social and economic rights, as a means of alleviating the problems faced by African Americans in the United States.<sup>12</sup> Efforts to press for human rights, however, were complicated and ultimately ended by the emerging Cold War and anticommunist hysteria.<sup>13</sup> Opponents successfully painted the United Nations and international approaches more generally as communist-dominated. The NAACP was targeted as a "communist front," forcing the organization to choose between continuing to press for human rights, which it had determined was the only way to rectify years of discrimination, or shifting to a more limited emphasis on civil rights, such as equal access to public facilities. The result was what Anderson calls a "retreat from the struggle for human rights."<sup>14</sup> "The Cold War had obviously transformed human rights into an ideological battlefield between the Soviet Union and the United States," she writes, and that shift "engulfed the struggle for black equality," leaving a long and disastrous legacy.<sup>15</sup> Anderson's work highlights the extent to which definitions of human rights were politically contested.<sup>16</sup>

A different cluster of early works has evaluated President Jimmy Carter's emphasis on human rights in his foreign policy. Given that this was the president who declared in his inaugural address that "our commitment to human rights must be absolute," such attention was to be expected.<sup>17</sup> Contemporary critics like Jeane Kirkpatrick, the future U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, characterized Carter's focus on human rights as inconsistent and

potentially dangerous to U.S. interests.<sup>18</sup> However, those concerned with human rights from a scholarly perspective have been part of a reappraisal of Carter's foreign policy record. For example, in his 1996 Bernath Lecture, Douglas Brinkley praised Carter's commitment to human rights and democracy.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, David F. Schmitz and Vanessa Walker dispute the criticism that Carter's emphasis on human rights in foreign policy was pure rhetoric or that it was naive. They question critics who suggest that the president's commitment to human rights wavered, instead arguing that records at the Carter Library demonstrate that the president's approach was consistent and absolute.<sup>20</sup> More recently, William Michael Schmidli has echoed this sympathetic appraisal in his assessment of Carter's policy toward Argentina.<sup>21</sup>

Similarly, Jason Colby evaluates Carter's policy positively, arguing that the "U.S. calls for reform and cutoff of military aid helped draw international attention to Guatemala's human rights catastrophe. True, Carter failed to halt the violence, but the repression might have been worse without his human rights initiative."<sup>22</sup> During the Carter years, the United States considered Guatemala to have the most egregious human rights record in Latin America. The administration and Congress acted on their concerns by cutting military funding to that country.<sup>23</sup> Colby argues that "by inserting human rights into its policymaking process, the Carter administration had initiated an important shift in U.S. policy toward Guatemala."<sup>24</sup>

The subject of Carter's foreign policy, however, has remained contentious. Continuing debate has been fueled by the expansion of scholarship into more varied corners of the world. For example, Kenton Clymer has been highly critical of U.S. inattention to human rights violations in Cambodia during the Carter years. He argues that "human-rights considerations hardly entered into the administration's foreign-policy calculus" when it was formulating policy toward the Khmer Rouge.<sup>25</sup> In his view, the United States privileged its new relationship with China, the Khmer Rouge's ally, over concerns about genocide in Cambodia.<sup>26</sup> In a particularly damning conclusion, he writes that "[f]rom time to time and place to place, the defense of human rights was a significant feature of Jimmy Carter's foreign policy. But it was not a primary consideration for National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, and, to the extent that Carter allowed Brzezinski to formulate foreign policy, the defense of human rights faded as a central administration concern. Nowhere was this more clearly seen than in Cambodia."<sup>27</sup>

Clymer's work is one of a number of new criticisms of Carter's policy from the left. Bradley R. Simpson has critically examined the Carter administration's prioritization of the rights of political prisoners in Indonesia over the right to self-determination of the East Timorese. The Carter administration did work to encourage the release of 30,000 Indonesian political prisoners.<sup>28</sup> Yet in Simpson's telling, even as the East Timorese were being subjected to the "mass killing of civilians; forced resettlement and migration; mass arrests and detention; enforced sterilization of women; and torture," the United States was increasing its military assistance to Suharto's government.<sup>29</sup> Simon Stevens' work also complicates positive appraisals of Carter's policy by showing the Carter administration as surprisingly cautious about pressing the South African government on apartheid, despite agreement among Carter's principal foreign policy aides—Brzezinski, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, and the

U.S. ambassador to the UN, Andrew Young—on the issue.<sup>30</sup> According to Stevens, Carter's approach to South African leaders was shaped by his experience in the South during struggles over civil rights and his view that a "constructive rather than confrontational relationship" was the key to affecting change and that real reform would only come if South African leaders could maintain their dignity. Interestingly, Stevens suggests that Carter's policy served as the foundation for Reagan's much-criticized policy of "constructive engagement" toward South Africa.<sup>31</sup> The work of Clymer, Simpson, and Stevens demonstrates that even for the Carter years there is still fruitful ground to be examined.

Even as Carter's policy continues to draw considerable attention, scholars are increasingly moving beyond the 1970s to examine the Reagan years. Gregory Domber argues that the Reagan administration successfully used rhetoric on human rights to build consensus among Western nations on the Polish situation.<sup>32</sup> Others moving their chronological scope forward include Andrew Preston, who explores the intersection between religious and human rights activism as well as concerns about religious discrimination during the Reagan years.<sup>33</sup> My own work analyzes the Reagan administration's early efforts to downgrade human rights as a policy priority and shows how activism by members of Congress and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) forced them to shift course.<sup>34</sup> I also assess the reasons behind and effectiveness of Reagan's and Secretary of State George Shultz's plan to press human rights in their relationship with the Soviet Union.<sup>35</sup>

Greg Grandin's work considers American involvement in the Guatemalan civil war (1981–1996), during which the army killed more than 100,000 Mayans and destroyed 400 communities, as well as in earlier periods of violence there.<sup>36</sup> In his account, which is highly critical of American intervention, he describes the United States' focus on stemming the spread of communism as leading it to support reactionary and violent regimes. "The United States inevitably sided with reactionary civilian and military forces as a bulwark against communism," Grandin writes. "That Washington was not solely responsible for the coups and atrocities carried out by their agendas, and at times had no involvement at all, matters less than the fact that it did little to discourage them."<sup>37</sup> The work of Morris Morley and Chris McGillion, among others, demonstrates how complicated assessing Reagan's record on human rights is, given its inconsistency across time and place.<sup>38</sup> Their work, along with that of David Schmitz, highlights the extent to which Reagan's approach to human rights was not universal but was always seen through the lens of his anticommunism.<sup>39</sup>

Assessing U.S. human rights policy in the post-Cold War years has remained largely the purview of political scientists and journalists given the practical constraint of classified records.<sup>40</sup> Thus far there has been only limited historical scholarship on attention to human rights in the George H. W. Bush years.<sup>41</sup> Increasing access to Bush I-era records, however, as well as those of subsequent presidencies will enable us to evaluate questions of continuity and discontinuity in U.S. foreign policy and, in particular, what the end of the Cold War meant for U.S. attention to human rights.

Although there has been a trend in existing scholarship to highlight two human rights "booms"—one in the late

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1940s and one in the 1970s—research is increasingly focusing on the intervening years as well.<sup>42</sup> Releases from the U.S. government's Chile Declassification Project as well as the efforts of the National Security Archive have revealed American complicity in human rights abuses during Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford's presidencies. Not surprisingly, the resulting body of literature has been very critical of National Security Adviser and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.<sup>43</sup> Scholars continue to mine U.S. records for typically skeptical quotations by Kissinger. Many also recognize that concern for human rights did not begin with Nixon's implementation of *realpolitik*, rejecting the narrative that the years 1953 to 1974 marked a uniform period of United States "neglect" for human rights.<sup>44</sup>

Ryan Irwin's new book is an example of this changing focus. He explores the muddled U.S. response to anti-apartheid activism at the United Nations in the 1960s and shows American policymakers as torn between increasing calls for racial justice at the UN and long-term strategic interests in South Africa.<sup>45</sup> At the same time that human rights claims were increasingly being pressed internationally, the 1965 invasion of the Dominican Republic and the war in Vietnam was prompting a growing number of questions about the wisdom of United States foreign policy, including its inattention to human rights.<sup>46</sup> Barbara Keys identifies the 1967 Greek coup as captivating liberals disillusioned with American policy, and she sees human rights activism in the wake of the coup as "lay[ing] the groundwork for the worldwide 'human rights boom' of the 1970s."<sup>47</sup> Similarly, Greg Grandin highlights the negative consequences of American assistance to Guatemala in intelligence and counter insurgency tactics in the 1960s.<sup>48</sup>

A further trend in literature on human rights and United States foreign policy has focused on the influence of non-state actors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In an important early contribution, Kenneth Cmiel looked at how innovations in information technology fueled human rights activism in the 1970s.<sup>49</sup> He also identified a significant role for philanthropic foundations in aiding human rights organizations' efforts.<sup>50</sup> Scholars adopting a more transnational approach have been inspired by Akira Iriye's *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World*, which regards the growing influence of international organizations and NGOs as one of the most important developments of the twentieth century.<sup>51</sup> In Iriye's view, such organizations became as influential and even at times more influential than states after the 1970s.<sup>52</sup> Related to this trend was the "growing influence of the vocabulary of human rights in the discussion of international relations."<sup>53</sup>

In the years that followed Cmiel and Iriye's work, historians interested in human rights devoted greater attention to low-level non-state actors and their role in pressing the United States government to curb human rights violations. One important example of this work is James Green's study of U.S. attention to Brazilian human rights violations. He focuses on a "small group of dedicated church and left-wing activists" who publicized abuses by the Brazilian military regime and played "an important role in introducing the issue of human rights in Latin American into national political debates."<sup>54</sup> Green draws attention to activism by the North American Congress on Latin America, which "opposed U.S. intervention in Latin America," and he underlines the significance of its detailed newsletter in disseminating information.<sup>55</sup> Significantly, he also sees Brazil as a model for subsequent human rights campaigns in Latin America.

More recently, diplomatic historians have been evaluating the influence of other U.S.-based organizations such as Freedom House, Helsinki Watch, Amnesty International USA and the International League for the

Rights of Man, as well as transnational networks of scientists and activists for East Timorese independence.<sup>56</sup> Carl Bon Tempo's work on Freedom House shows that human rights politics were not the sole purview of liberals; conservatives, who identified the Soviet Union as the greatest threat to liberty, were also actively involved in human rights activism in the 1970s and 1980s. Bon Tempo focuses in particular on Freedom House's unsuccessful efforts to reverse the Reagan administration's decision to withdraw from the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, demonstrating the limits of the NGO's influence with an administration that had seemed to welcome its view of human rights.<sup>57</sup> My own research has demonstrated that Helsinki Watch, which began as a small organization designed to assess implementation of the Helsinki Final Act in advance in connection with a review meeting beginning in 1980, exerted pressure on the White House and State Department to take the promises made in the Helsinki Final Act seriously and to integrate a commitment to the agreement's realization into U.S. foreign policy. Helsinki Watch went on to become the most influential Western human rights organization focused on the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and served as the foundation for a global human rights organization—Human Rights Watch.<sup>58</sup>

Other actors figuring significantly in recent scholarship include members of Congress, who often pushed the White House and executive branch to take human rights violations more seriously.<sup>59</sup> An important work on congressional activism is Robert David Johnson's *Congress and the Cold War*, which identifies what he sees as a new group emerging within Congress that tried to advance a different vision for United States foreign policy during the Cold War. These "new internationalists," most of whom were liberal Democrats, wanted to formulate a more moral foreign policy. They believed that the United States was supporting anticommunism at the expense of American ideals and values, that it had been too willing to support rightwing dictators and assist rightwing regimes, and that it had become overly reliant on military solutions.<sup>60</sup> Barbara Keys also highlights the centrality of liberal Democrats in and out of Congress to raising the profile of human rights abuses in the American conscience.<sup>61</sup> On the other side were legislators known as "Jackson Democrats" for their support of Senator Henry Jackson's interest in human rights violations in communist countries.<sup>62</sup> Keys argues that Kissinger's intransigence on human rights forced Congress to pass increasingly stringent legislation to compel the State Department to address the issue.<sup>63</sup> Individually, Jackson, Representative Millicent Fenwick (R-NJ), Representative Dante Fascell (D-FL), and Representative Donald Fraser (D-MN) played important roles in this effort. They chaired committees and subcommittees that held influential hearings or produced significant reports.<sup>64</sup>

As more records become available, historians are also turning to institutional or bureaucratic efforts to take account of human rights in U.S. foreign policy.<sup>65</sup> Keys has recently examined the early years of the State Department's Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs and asserts that under Kissinger the bureau had "virtually no authority."<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, she argues, during his tenure it "performed an important educative function, inculcating a new mindset, establishing new diplomatic precedents and procedures, and setting in motion the process through which human rights became a normal part of foreign policy considerations."<sup>67</sup> The bureau's establishment helped to institutionalize human rights as a priority in U.S. foreign relations, which is a question of interest to William Michael Schmidli as well. In a recent *Diplomatic History* article he examines why U.S. policy toward Argentina changed when Jimmy Carter became president. He focuses particularly

on the influence of Carter's assistant secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs, Patricia Derian.<sup>68</sup>

Many historians working on human rights activism have been influenced by political scientists specializing in transnational advocacy networks and social movements. Donatella della Porta's and Sidney Tarrow's work on how social movements have become transnationalized has been important, and constructivist accounts emphasizing the power of human rights norms have also shaped the literature.<sup>69</sup> Most influential have been Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink. In *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*, they define transnational advocacy networks as "[n]etworks of activists, distinguishable largely by the centrality of principled ideas or values in motivating their formation."<sup>70</sup> They describe sets of circumstances that lead to the rise of transnational advocacy networks: one is characterized by the "boomerang" pattern, when "domestic NGOs bypass their state and directly search out international allies to try to bring pressure on their states from outside"; another involves the influence of "political entrepreneurs" who build networks to advance their programs.<sup>71</sup> They look at how transnational advocacy networks persuade others of their agenda through "information politics," which includes the collection and distribution of relevant information; "symbolic politics," which includes the use of symbols to make situations seem more immediate to distant observers; "leverage politics," which involves drawing upon influential figures to champion the network's agenda when it has less influence; and finally, "accountability politics," which entails holding leaders responsible for upholding the policies to which they commit themselves.<sup>72</sup> Keck and Sikkink argue that to be successful, transnational advocacy networks must gain partners, convince others of their values, and combat their opponents.<sup>73</sup> In their discussion of the United States as an ally to human rights activists they note that "[d]omestic human rights organizations in repressive countries learned that they could indirectly pressure their governments to change practices by providing information on abuses to human rights officers in U.S. embassies for inclusion in the U.S. annual country reports."<sup>74</sup>

Expanding on her earlier work with Keck, Sikkink has undertaken a review of U.S. human rights policy in Latin America. In *Mixed Signals: U.S. Human Rights Policy in Latin America* she argues that over the last generation the United States has sent conflicting signals on human rights. She calls anticommunism, as practiced in Latin America, a "national security ideology"; its central tenet is that a country is "engaged in permanent warfare" and that "this war is total in scope." Countries that believed they were fighting communism used this national security ideology to justify political and military actions. Sikkink examines "how broader U.S. diplomacy and military training framed a worldview in which certain kinds of responses to political crisis seemed possible or desirable"; in her view, Latin American governments believed the United States supported them in their efforts.<sup>75</sup> She argues that in the cases of Argentina and Chile, high-level United States policymakers "gave verbal assurances that were understood as giving a green light to human rights violations."<sup>76</sup> Although a political scientist, Sikkink does considerable research in primary sources, and her book should not be overlooked by historians.<sup>77</sup>

Given the vast expansion of the literature over the last decade, what does the future hold for scholarship on human rights and United States foreign relations? Inevitably, as more recent records are released, the chronological focus of such works will move forward. I predict the increasing use of transnational approaches as well as the continuing expansion of historians' geographic focus. For example, U.S. relationships with and involvement in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and other Central American countries certainly

deserves scrutiny. Similarly, we should build upon scholarship that examines new types of rights and employs more expansive definitions that encompass elements such as nutrition, self-determination, women's rights, and rights during times of war.<sup>78</sup>

We also need greater integration of human rights into broader histories of regions and periods in the Cold War. Some scholars such as Bradley R. Simpson and Gregg Brazinsky have produced works that incorporate discussions of human rights into broader accounts of U.S. policy. For example, Simpson situates the "enthusiastic" American response to Suharto's 1965 crackdown on the Indonesian Communist Party within a longer history of U.S. commitment to modernizing Indonesia and keeping it free from communist influence.<sup>79</sup> Gregg Brazinsky outlines the tradeoffs the U.S. government had to make to ensure an anticommunist South Korea, potentially at the expense of a fully democratic system.<sup>80</sup> These examples suggest that human rights are increasingly being considered outside of specialist literature.

We are at the beginning of attempts to bring together these diverse strands, most notably with Clair Apodaca's *Understanding U.S. Human Rights Policy: A Paradoxical Legacy*.<sup>81</sup> Synthesis is an important step for this still nascent subfield, but more pressing is continuing empirical research into new rights, new actors, and new areas of the world in which human rights remain unexamined. The range of papers delivered at recent SHAFR meetings suggests more scholarship in these areas is on the way. As those interested in human rights in U.S. foreign relations dig deeper, they will invariably adopt a more complicated and less teleological approach to the issue. I expect that human rights activists and their organizations will be more critically evaluated and that increasing efforts will be undertaken to untangle the at times murky relations between non-state and governmental actors.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, I hope that attention to human rights will increasingly be incorporated into broader narratives of the Cold War, United States foreign relations, and the international history of the twentieth century.

#### Notes:

The author expresses her appreciation to Ryan M. Irwin, William Michael Schmidli, Daniel Fine, and Andy Johns for their helpful feedback on this article.

1. Brad Simpson, "Bringing the Non-State Back In: Human Rights and Terrorism since 1945," in *America in the World: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations since 1945*, eds. Michael Hogan and Frank Costigliola, rev. ed. (Cambridge, UK, forthcoming). *The Cambridge History of the Cold War* also included a chapter on human rights. See Rosemary Foot, "The Cold War and Human Rights," in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, vol. 3, *Endings*, eds. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge, UK, 2010).

2. The field has recently exploded to such an extent that this essay will only examine literature related to United States foreign relations. For an overview of recent scholarship on human rights more broadly, see Samuel Moyn, "Substance, Scale, and Salience: The Recent Historiography of Human Rights," *Annual Review of Law and Social Sciences* (forthcoming, 2012). Similarly, this piece does not address the history of humanitarianism, about which there is much fine new work, including, to cite only two examples, Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca, NY, 2011); and Alexander Poster, "The Gentle War: Famine Relief, Politics, and Privatization in Ethiopia, 1983–1986," *Diplomatic History* 36:2 (April 2012): 399–425.

3. Samuel Moyn contends that people increasingly turned to human rights in response to their frustration with the Cold War. Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA, 2010), 2–3, 130.

4. Samuel Moyn suggests increased attention may also have been fueled by professional needs, pointing out that this increased interest in human rights happened "in an era in which diplomatic historians rebranded themselves as international historians." Moyn, "Substance, Scale, and Salience," 16.

5. Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge, MA, 2005); and Mary Ann Glendon, *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (New York, 2001). See also Mark Mazower, "The Strange Triumph of Human Rights, 1933–1950," *The Historical Journal* 47:2 (2004): 391–8.
6. Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World*, 1–11.
7. Glendon, *A World Made New*, 42–3, 206. For a different perspective on the centrality of Roosevelt's role, see Jay Winter, *Dreams of Peace and Freedom: Utopian Moments in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, 2006), 99–120.
8. Glendon, *A World Made New*, 203, 213, 217.
9. Bricker supporters feared international human rights treaties would force an elevation of the rights and status of African Americans. For a more recent take on the Bricker Amendment controversy, see Elizabeth Borgwardt, "Constitutionalizing Human Rights: The Rise and Rise of the Nuremberg Principles," in *The Human Rights Revolution: An International History*, eds. Akira Iriye, Petra Goedde and William I. Hitchcock (Oxford, UK, 2012), 73–83. See also Natalie Hevener Kaufman, *Human Rights Treaties and the Senate: A History of Opposition* (Chapel Hill, 1990), 24; and Mazower, "The Strange Triumph of Human Rights, 1933–1950," 392.
10. Natalie Hevener Kaufman and David Whiteman, "Opposition to Human Rights Treaties in the United States Senate: The Legacy of the Bricker Amendment," *Human Rights Quarterly* 10 (1988): 310; and Duane A. Tananbaum, "The Bricker Amendment Controversy: Its Origins and Eisenhower's Role," *Diplomatic History* 9:1 (1985): 75, 79.
11. Kaufman, *Human Rights Treaties and the Senate*, 2, 9. The failed Bricker Amendment resonated for many years, and it was not until the end of the Reagan administration that the United States ratified the Genocide Convention.
12. Carol Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944–1955* (Cambridge, UK, 2003), 2. Those interested might also look at Greg Robinson's work on the wartime internment of Japanese-Americans. See, for example, Greg Robinson, *By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans* (Cambridge, MA, 2001).
13. Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize*, 5.
14. *Ibid.*, 6, 160.
15. *Ibid.*, 271, 276.
16. Examining a later period, Thomas F. Jackson argues that Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. saw explicit links between a global human rights movement and the United States civil rights movement. Thomas F. Jackson, *From Civil Rights to Human Rights: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Struggle for Economic Justice* (Philadelphia, 2007), 244.
17. Jimmy Carter, "Inaugural Address," January 20, 1977, at Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=6575> (accessed August 17, 2012). Samuel Moyn has argued that Carter's inauguration set human rights "in front of the viewing public for the first time in American history." Moyn, *The Last Utopia*, 155.
18. Jeane Kirkpatrick, "Dictators and Double Standards," *Commentary* (1979): 34–45. Other critical appraisals include Burton Ira Kaufman, *The Presidency of James Earl Carter, Jr.* (Lawrence, KS, 1993), 40; A. Glenn Mower, *Human Rights and American Foreign Policy: The Carter and Reagan Experiences* (New York, 1987); and Joshua Muravchik, *The Uncertain Crusade: Jimmy Carter and the Dilemmas of Human Rights* (Lanham, MD, 1986).
19. Douglas Brinkley, "The Rising Stock of Jimmy Carter: The 'Hands on' Legacy of Our Thirty-Ninth President," *Diplomatic History* 20 (Fall 1996): 518, 521.
20. David F. Schmitz, and Vanessa Walker, "Jimmy Carter and the Foreign Policy of Human Rights: The Development of a Post-Cold War Foreign Policy," *Diplomatic History* 28 (January 2004): 117.
21. William Michael Schmidli, "Institutionalizing Human Rights in U.S. Foreign Policy: U.S.-Argentine Relations, 1976–1980," *Diplomatic History* 35:2 (April 2011): 351–78.
22. Jason M. Colby, "A Chasm of Values and Outlook: The Carter Administration's Human Rights Policy in Guatemala," *Peace & Change* 35:4 (October 2010): 583.
23. In 1979 the House Foreign Affairs Committee voted to stop funding for military training in Guatemala. In response, the Guatemalan government declared that it did not require U.S. military assistance. *Ibid.*, 572, 564, 576.
24. *Ibid.*, 582.
25. Kenton Clymer, "Jimmy Carter, Human Rights, and Cambodia," *Diplomatic History* 27:2 (April 2003): 246.
26. *Ibid.*, 255–6, 258.
27. *Ibid.*, 278.
28. Bradley R. Simpson, "Denying the 'First Right': The United States, Indonesia, and the Ranking of Human Rights by the Carter Administration, 1976–1980," *The International History Review* 31: 4 (December 2009): 800.
29. *Ibid.*, 798–9.
30. Simon Stevens, "'From the Viewpoint of a Southern Governor': The Carter Administration and Apartheid, 1977–81," *Diplomatic History* 36:5 (November 2012): 843–80.
31. For other works that demonstrate continuity between Carter and Reagan on human rights, see David Carleton and Michael Stohl, "The Foreign Policy of Human Rights: Rhetoric and Reality from Jimmy Carter to Ronald Reagan," *Human Rights Quarterly* 7:2 (May 1985): 218; and Sarah B. Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network* (Cambridge, UK, 2011), 11–12.
32. Greg Domber, "Trans-Atlantic Relations, Human Rights, and Power Politics," in *European Detente, Transatlantic Relations, and the Cold War*, eds. Odd Arne Westad and Poul Villaume (Copenhagen, 2010), 195–214.
33. Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York, 2012), 587–98.
34. Sarah B. Snyder, "The Defeat of Ernest Lefever's Nomination: Keeping Human Rights on the United States Foreign Policy Agenda," in *Challenging U.S. Foreign Policy: America and the World in the Long Twentieth Century*, eds. Bevan Sewell and Scott Lucas (Basingstoke, UK, 2011), 136–61.
35. Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War*, 135–216. See also Anatoly Adamishin and Richard Schifter, *Human Rights, Perestroika, and the End of the Cold War* (Washington, DC, 2009).
36. Greg Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* (Chicago, 2004), 3.
37. *Ibid.*, 188.
38. Morris Morley and Chris McGillion, "Soldiering On: The Reagan Administration and Redemocratisation in Chile, 1983–1986," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 25:1 (2006): 1–22.
39. David F. Schmitz, *The United States and Right-Wing Dictatorships, 1965–1989* (Cambridge, UK, 2006), 194–240.
40. See for example, John W. Dietrich, "U.S. Human Rights Policy in the Post-Cold War Era," *Political Science Quarterly* 121:2 (Summer 2006): 269–94; Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (New York, 2002); Jon Western, "U.S. Policy and Human Rights in Bosnia: The Transformation of Strategic Interests," in *Implementing U.S. Human Rights Policy*, ed. Debra Liang-Fenton (Washington, DC, 2004), 217–244; Alan J. Kuperman, *The Limits of Humanitarian Intervention: Genocide in Rwanda* (Washington, DC, 2001); and Jane Mayer, *The Dark Side: The Inside Story of How the War on Terror Turned into a War on American Ideals* (New York, 2008).
41. Two notable examples include Jeffrey A. Engel, "Bush in China: The Making of a Global President," in *The China Diary of George H.W. Bush: The Making of a Global President*, ed. Jeffrey A. Engel (Princeton, 2008), 452–61; and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Strait Talk: United States-Taiwan Relations and the Crisis with China* (Cambridge, MA, 2009), 169–70.
42. See, for example, Barbara Keys, "Anti-Torture Politics: Amnesia International, the Greek Junta, and the Origins of the Human Rights 'Boom' in the United States," in *The Human Rights Revolution*, Iriye, Goedde, and Hitchcock, 201–21; Kenneth Cmiel, "The Emergence of Human Rights Politics in the United States," *The Journal of American History* 86:3 (December 1999): 1231–1250; Mark Philip Bradley, "Approaching the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," in *The Human Rights Revolution*, eds. Iriye, Goedde, and Hitchcock, 327–43; Kirsten Sellars, *The Rise and Rise of Human Rights* (London, 2002), 113; and Moyn, *The Last Utopia*.
43. John Dinges, *The Condor Years: How Pinochet and His Allies Brought Terrorism to Three Continents* (London, 2004); Peter Kornbluh, ed., *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability* (New York, 2003); Lubna Z. Qureshi, *Nixon, Kissinger, and Allende: U.S. Involvement in the 1973 Coup in Chile* (Plymouth, MA, 2009); Tanya Harmer, *Allende's Chile and the Inter-American Cold War* (Chapel Hill, 2011); and William Michael Schmidli, "Human Rights and the Cold War: The Campaign to Halt the Argentine 'Dirty War,'" *Cold War History* 12:2 (May 2012): 345–65.
44. David P. Forsythe, "Human Rights in U.S. Foreign Policy: Retrospect and Prospect," *Political Science Quarterly* 105:3 (Autumn 1990): 436–41. For other examinations of Nixon, Kissinger, and Ford's policy on human rights, see Barbara Keys, "Congress, Kiss-

- inger, and the Origins of Human Rights Diplomacy," *Diplomatic History* 34:5 (November 2010): 823–51; Umberto Tulli, "Whose Rights are Human Rights?: The Ambiguous Emergence of Human Rights and the Demise of the Kissingerism," *Cold War History* (forthcoming); and Jussi Hanhimäki, "They Can Write It in Swahili: Kissinger, The Soviets, and the Helsinki Accords, 1973–1975," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 1:1 (2003): 37–58.
45. Ryan M. Irwin, *Gordian Knot: Apartheid and the Unmaking of the Liberal World Order* (Oxford, UK, 2012), 6–8.
46. Kathryn Sikkink, *Mixed Signals: U.S. Human Rights Policy and Latin America* (Ithaca, NY, 2004), 49; Sarah B. Snyder, "A Call for U.S. Leadership: Congressional Activism on Human Rights," *Diplomatic History* (forthcoming); and Foot, "The Cold War and Human Rights," 457.
47. Keys, "Anti-Torture Politics," 201.
48. Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre*, 94–101.
49. Cmiel, "The Emergence of Human Rights Politics in the United States," 1235–6; and Michael Cotey Morgan, "The Seventies and the Rebirth of Human Rights," in *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective*, eds. Niall Ferguson et al. (Cambridge, MA, 2010), 240–1.
50. Cmiel, "The Emergence of Human Rights Politics in the United States," 1244. A more recent book by Inderjeet Parmar has looked at the attitudes of American foundations toward human rights, arguing that they considered Latin American academics facing repression to be "assets" in whom the foundations had invested and that this idea framed their response to military coups in the Southern Cone. Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power* (New York, 2012), 212–4.
51. Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley, 2002), 1.
52. *Ibid.*, 129.
53. *Ibid.*, 111.
54. James N. Green, "Clerics, Exiles, and Academics: Opposition to the Brazilian Military Dictatorship in the United States, 1969–1974," *Latin American Politics and Society* 45:1 (Spring 2003): 88–9. See also *Latin American Perspectives* 36:3 (2009), and particularly Margaret Power and Julie A. Charlip's introduction to the issue, "On Solidarity," *Latin American Perspectives* 36:3 (2009): 3–9.
55. Green, "Clerics, Exiles, and Academics," 93–4.
56. For example, see Paul Rubinson, "For Our Soviet Colleagues: Scientific Internationalism, Human Rights, and the Cold War," in *The Human Rights Revolution*, eds. Iriye, Goedde, and Hitchcock, 245–64; and Brad Simpson, "Solidarity in an Age of Globalization: The Transnational Movement for East Timor and U.S. Foreign Policy," *Peace & Change* 29: 3&4 (July 2004): 453–82. This recent work by human rights activist Aryeh Neier might also be of interest: Aryeh Neier, *The International Human Rights Movement: A History* (Princeton, 2012).
57. Carl J. Bon Tempo, "From the Center-Right: Freedom House and Human Rights in the 1970s and 1980s," in *The Human Rights Revolution*, eds. Iriye, Goedde, and Hitchcock, 223–44.
58. Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War*, 115–34.
59. Historians pursuing this avenue of inquiry have often benefited from David Forsythe's earlier work. David P. Forsythe, *Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Policy: Congress Reconsidered* (Gainesville, FL, 1988); and Forsythe, "Human Rights in U.S. Foreign Policy," 435–54.
60. Robert David Johnson, *Congress and the Cold War* (Cambridge, UK, 2006), xiv, xix.
61. Keys, "Anti-Torture Politics," 212.
62. Sikkink, *Mixed Signals*, 52–3.
63. Barbara Keys, "Congress, Kissinger, and the Origins of Human Rights Diplomacy," *Diplomatic History* 34: 5 (November 2010): 825.
64. Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War*, 38–52; Robert G. Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson: A Life in Politics* (Seattle, 2000), 4–5; John Dumbrell, *The Carter Presidency: A Re-evaluation* (New York, 1993), 117; Snyder, "A Call for U.S. Leadership"; Hauke Hartmann, "U.S. Human Rights Policy Under Carter and Reagan, 1977–1981," *Human Rights Quarterly* 23 (2001): 404; Clair Apodaca, *Understanding U.S. Human Rights Policy: A Paradoxical Legacy* (New York, 2006), 31–4; Lars Schoultz, *Human Rights and United States Policy toward Latin America* (Princeton, 1981), 150 n34.
65. See *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume E–3, Documents on Global Issues, 1973–1976* (Washington, DC, 2009).
66. Keys, "Congress, Kissinger, and the Origins of Human Rights Diplomacy," 833.
67. *Ibid.*, 825.
68. Schmidli, "Institutionalizing Human Rights in U.S. Foreign Policy."
69. Donatella della Porta and Sidney Tarrow, "Transnational Processes and Social Activism: An Introduction," in *Transnational Protest and Global Activism*, eds. Donatella della Porta and Sidney Tarrow (Lanham, MD, 2005), 2–3; Audie Klotz, "Norms Reconstituting Interests: Global Racial Equality and U.S. Sanctions Against South Africa," *International Organization* 49:3 (Summer 1995): 451–78; and Daniel C. Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism* (Princeton, 2001).
70. Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY, 1998), 1.
71. *Ibid.*, 12, 14.
72. *Ibid.*, 16.
73. *Ibid.*, 74.
74. *Ibid.*, 103.
75. *Ibid.*, 95.
76. *Ibid.*, 107. See also Schmidli, "Institutionalizing Human Rights in U.S. Foreign Policy," 363.
77. Sikkink, *Mixed Signals*, xiv.
78. Atina Grossman, "Grams, Calories, and Food: Languages of Victimization, Entitlement, and Human Rights in Occupied Germany, 1945–1949," in *The Human Rights Revolution*, eds. Iriye, Goedde, and Hitchcock, 113–32; Bradley R. Simpson, "Denying the 'First Right,'" 815; Brad Simpson, "The United States and the Curious History of Self-Determination," *Diplomatic History* 36:4 (September 2012): 675–94; William I. Hitchcock, "Human Rights and the Laws of War: The Geneva Conventions of 1949," in *The Human Rights Revolution*, eds. Iriye, Goedde, and Hitchcock, 93–112; Allida Black, "Are Women 'Human?': The UN and the Struggle to Recognize Women's Rights and Human Rights," in *The Human Rights Revolution*, eds. Iriye, Goedde, and Hitchcock, 133–55; and Kelly J. Shannon, "The Right to Bodily Integrity: Women's Rights and Human Rights and the International Movement to End Female Genital Mutilation, 1970s–1990s," in *The Human Rights Revolution*, eds. Iriye, Goedde, and Hitchcock, 285–310.
79. Bradley R. Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S.-Indonesian Relations, 1960–1968* (Stanford, 2008), 1–5, 184–9.
80. Gregg Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy* (Chapel Hill, 2009), 13, 57. See also Tucker, *Strait Talk*, 5, 95, 113, 162, 196–7.
81. Apodaca, *Understanding U.S. Human Rights Policy*.
82. One early effort in this direction is Barbara Keys, "Amnesty International's Campaign against Torture," (paper presented at "A New Global Morality?: The Politics of Human Rights and Humanitarianism in the 1970s," workshop at the Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies, June 2010).

# 2013 SHAFR Conference

Arlington, Virginia June 20-22, 2013

The 2013 SHAFR meeting, “America and the World – the World and America,” will be held from June 20-22 at the Renaissance Arlington Capital View in Arlington, Virginia. We hope you will join us there!

The conference will kick off with the first panel session at 1pm on Thursday June 20, followed by a welcome reception, open to all registrants, and an evening plenary session. The plenary session, titled “America and the World – the World and America: Writing American Diplomatic History in the Longue Durée,” will put leading scholars of eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century American diplomatic history in conversation with one another. John W. Hall (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Jay Sexton (Oxford University), Kristin L. Hoganson (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) and Paul A. Kramer (Vanderbilt University) will launch the roundtable, while Erez Manela (Harvard University) and Anne L. Foster (Indiana State University) will respond, and George C. Herring (University of Kentucky) will chair.

Luncheon speakers will be SHAFR president Mark Philip Bradley, the Bernadotte E. Schmitt Professor of International History and the College at the University of Chicago, and Timothy J. Naftali. Naftali, former director of the Nixon Presidential Library and Senior Research Fellow in the National Security Studies Program at the New American Foundation, will speak on “Legacy vs. Access? The Challenges of Researching Presidential History.” Luncheon tickets will be sold separately at \$50 standard or \$25 for students, adjunct faculty, and K-12 teachers. Once again, the reduced-price luncheon tickets are available for both Friday and Saturday, but please limit to one per person total.

This year’s social event will be a dinner dance at Top of the Town, a venue that features sweeping views of Washington landmarks across the Potomac River. The event, to be held on Friday June 21, will feature a full meal and a complimentary beer/wine/soda bar. Tickets will be \$50 standard or \$30 for students, adjunct faculty, and K-12 teachers. Top of the Town is located within walking distance of the Rosslyn Metro (blue and orange lines). Round-trip chartered bus tickets will also be available for separate purchase. Space is limited so plan ahead. Dust off your dancing shoes, and if you have suggestions for our playlist, please tweet them to @SHAFRConference or email [conference@shafr.org](mailto:conference@shafr.org).

The LEED-certified Renaissance Arlington Capital View is located at 2800 South Potomac Avenue, two miles from Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport (airport code DCA). There is complimentary hotel shuttle service every 20 minutes between 7 am and 11 pm to DCA and the Crystal City Metro (blue and yellow lines). The stretch of Crystal Drive between the hotel and the Metro features a number of restaurants, bars, and retail establishments, ranging from Good Stuff Eatery or Cusi to McCormick and Schmick’s steakhouse or Jaleo Spanish Tapas & Bar. In the Renaissance Arlington Capital View Lobby, SOCCi Urban Italian Kitchen and Bar serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner, while Espressamente illy Coffee House serves coffee and light fare during the day. A 24-hour fitness center and heated indoor pool are also available on site, and there is complimentary wi-fi access in the lobby.

Conference room rates are \$139/night, single or double occupancy, plus tax. Hotel guests will receive complimentary high speed internet access in their rooms. On-site self parking is available for the reduced rate of \$18 per day for guests, or \$6/hour in-and-out or \$22/day for visitors.

Hotel reservations can be made by calling Renaissance Hotels toll-free at 1-800-HOTELS1 and asking for the SHAFR room block, or by going online to <http://bit.ly/UvsuMn>, where the group code, shashaa, has already been entered in the reservation box.

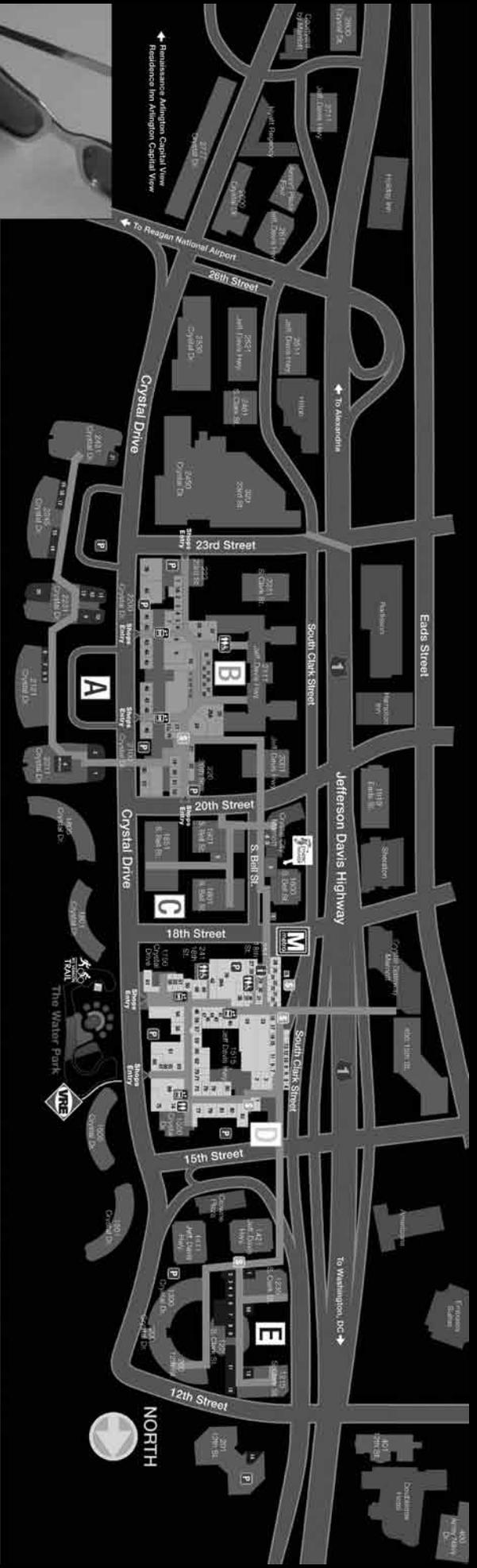
Printed program booklets and registration forms will be mailed out to all SHAFR members with a current domestic U.S. address in April. Online registration, including luncheon and dinner dance tickets, will be available in early April. Registration fees for the 2013 conference will be:

\$80 standard  
\$30 adjunct faculty or K-12 teacher  
\$30 student

Please note that there is a surcharge after June 1, 2013.

For more details about conference arrangements, visit <http://www.shafr.org/conferences/2013-annual-meeting/> or follow us on Twitter @SHAFRConference. For questions about registration and other conference logistics, please contact Jennifer Walton, the Conference Coordinator, at [conference@shafr.org](mailto:conference@shafr.org).

# Map of Crystal City in Arlington, VA



## Legend

- A Shops at Crystal Park
- B Shops at 2100 Crystal Drive
- C Shops at the Mall
- D Shops at 1750 Crystal Drive
- E Shops at the Gateway
- Hotel Accommodations
- Interior Pedestrian Concourse
- ▲ Entrance/Exit
- 11 Restroom
- 12 Accessible Restroom
- 13 ATM
- 14 Elevators
- 15 Kiosk
- 16 Information
- 17 Parking

- RESTAURANTS**
- B-50 Bailey's Pub & Grill 416-0462
  - D-69 Hamburger Hamlet 413-0422
  - B-39 Jaleo Spanish Tapas & Bar 413-8181
  - D-50 King Street Blues 415-8116
  - B-40 Kor Restaurant 571-431-7890
  - B-51 McCormick & Schmick's 413-6400
  - D-54 Morton's The Steakhouse 418-1444
  - B-45 Naramita Trail 413-8886
  - A-20 Rudi's Chef Steak House 979-7275
  - D-42 San Antonio Bar & Grill 415-0176
  - B-41 Teca's Montana Grill 416-8337
- FOOD SPECIALTY**
- D-18 Auntie Anne's Pretzels 413-6408
  - B-24 Au Bon Pain 418-0715
  - D-51 Caffe Lanna 415-0061
  - A-15 Caffe Manna 418-0361
  - B-48 Carbon Cakes 414-0980
  - B-44 Chick-It-A 415-2815
  - A-10 Onigiri Mexican Grill 920-6779
  - B-42 Odd Stone Creamery 418-2223
  - B-43 Corner Bakery Cafe 412-0131
  - A-2 Così 521-1904
  - B-26 Dal Woks 415-1515
  - E-4 Dickey's Frozen Custard 416-2700
  - D-25 Dunkin' Donuts 412-8912
  - A-9 FroZen Yo 571-431-6103
  - B-46 Good Stuff Emery 416-4663
  - E-10 Jolly's Cakes 414-3788
  - D-23 Larry's Cookies 418-2100
  - D-34 Market Basket & Grocery 412-3770
  - B-10 McDonald's 418-0215
  - A-1 Noodles & Company 979-1525
- JEWELRY & ACCESSORIES**
- D-5 Great Fine Jewelry & Gifts 412-1198
  - D-10 Hair Time Center 412-1142
  - B-22 Knotty Knots Fine Jewellers 418-1704
  - B-15 L.A. Jewels 415-4444
  - D-41 Real Jewellers 413-7117
  - D-28 Signature Leather & Travelware 413-4171
  - B-7 Time Zone 413-0990
  - D-56 Women in Motion 412-6086
- FASHION**
- B-35 Crystal Boutique 415-1400
  - D-57 Coastal Boutique 413-5441
  - D-55 Daniel's Boutique 412-1121
  - D-61 Dress Barn Woman 412-6086
  - D-44 D.C. Men's Wear 413-3434
  - B-35 Crystal Boutique 415-1400
  - D-57 Coastal Boutique 413-5441
  - D-55 Daniel's Boutique 412-1121
  - D-61 Dress Barn Woman 412-6086
- RESTAURANTS**
- A-18 The Perfect Fit 412-9440
  - D-22 The Perfect Fit 418-6656
  - D-38 Philadelphia Mike's 416-6640
  - B-9 Piza D'Amore 414-3861
  - D-63 Robbery Sandwich Works 415-0003
  - E-13 Quatro's 415-0900
  - D-27 Sapore Italian Buffet 413-8244
  - B-8 Slice N' Dice 418-4444
  - E-11 Sprock & Market 415-1301
  - A-11 Starbucks Coffee 413-6226
  - D-46 Starbucks Coffee 418-0226
  - B-33 Suvany 413-2233
  - D-39A Suvany Fall 2012
  - D-30 Sush Garden 413-5477
- RESTAURANTS**
- D-36 Garden Fantasy 413-5008
  - B-28 L.A. Woks 415-0500
  - D-59 Possessions 415-7339
  - D-62 Shoes By Lana 416-4182
- ELECTRONICS & PHOTOGRAPHY**
- D-13 Cellular & Personal Safety 415-0189
  - D-12 Express DVD Kiosk 412-2698
  - D-43 Metro Digital Photo Center 413-6529
  - D-47 Radio Shack 413-2233
  - D-31 Sprint 413-4500
- HEALTH & BEAUTY**
- D-21 Avon Beauty Center 418-1962
  - D-78 Beauty Encounters 413-4247
  - D-73 Body Raps Tanning & Massage 412-1148
  - E-7 Crystal Gateway Sport & Health 416-4900
  - A-14 Crystal Peak Sport & Health 486-5380
  - C-4 Daniel's Barber 413-7994
  - D-37 General Nutrition Center 413-8223
  - C-3 Hair Cutters 413-6289
  - C-3 Innap Hairdresser 413-6550
  - D-71 Le-O' Hair & Skin Care 413-6913
  - B-29 Mand Your Body Oasis Fall 2012
  - B-36 Mand Your Body Oasis 416-7721
  - E-6 One Salon 415-4740
  - B-32 Over the Rainbow Hair & Skin 415-0388
  - D-8 Perfect Eyeglasses 571-2161-5524
  - D-49 Perfect Paradise 412-5022
  - D-11 Redaction Station 412-0888
- HOTELS**
- Americana 979-3772
  - Courtyard by Marriott 549-3464
  - Crown Plaza 416-1800
  - Crystal Gateway Marriott 920-3230
  - Crystal City Marriott 413-5500
  - Doubletree Hotel 416-4100
  - Embassy Suites 979-9799
  - Hampton Inn 418-8181
  - Hilton 418-6900
  - Holiday Inn 684-7200
  - Hyatt Regency 418-1234
  - Renaissance Arlington Capital View 413-1300
  - Renaissance Arlington Capital View 413-1300
  - Residence Inn Arlington 415-1300
  - Capital View 413-6600
  - Residence Inn by Marriott 415-5000
  - Ritz Carlton 415-5000
  - Sheraton 486-1111
- NEWS & VARIETY**
- D-26 Crystal City News 413-6699
  - C-5 Crystal Mall Convenience 416-0967
  - A-8 Crystal Park Sundries 271-2710
  - E-1 Gateway Sundries 417-1500
  - E-14 Korn's Lobby Shop 416-1111
  - B-23 Plaza News 413-6537
  - D-33 Rite Aid 413-5430
- SERVICES**
- D-38 BRAC Transition Center 228-0865
  - C-5 Bright Horizons 416-0767
  - B-11 Buchanan Stone Repair 418-3636
  - D-65 The Commuter Store 413-4267
  - D-9 Crystal Alterations & Formal Wear 413-2217
  - B-38 Crystal Cleaners 418-0090
  - B-1 Crystal Custom Tailor 418-1144
  - E-5 Crystal Cleaners 416-0489
  - D-75 FedEx Office 413-9011
  - B-4 Millennium Press 419-1700
  - A-19 Park Crystal Valet 414-3333
  - A-4 Power Space 682-8800
  - B-32 Revolution Optical/City Hub 415-4590
  - D-2 Shopping Center Mfg. Office 413-4380
  - E-15 Sparkles Child Care 571-312-1052
  - D-82 Spirit Cleaners 899-8338
  - D-66 Underground Cleaners 413-6015
  - D-19 Underground Shine 413-4111
  - B-3 University of Oklahoma 418-4800
  - D-53 U.S. Postal Service 416-0471
  - D-15 Village Outdoor 412-8881
- MEDICAL SERVICES**
- C-1 Alfred L. LeBlanc, MD 413-1400
  - B-18 Ais Behlke & Chiropractic 418-0460
  - D-67 Crystal Dry Dental/Art Center Summer 2012
  - D-48 Crystal Eye Care 413-9001
  - D-61 Danner Carroll, MD - Family Practice & Weight Management 418-1670
  - B-20 Fiano W. Neer, DDS 415-0555
  - D-79 Henry Oskender, PhD 323-8556
  - D-77 Heistic Point at Crystal City 413-0688
  - D-48 Jeff Chik, MD 413-9001
  - C-1 Northern Virginia Doctors of Ophthalmology 413-1400
  - D-80 Richard D. Grantz, DDS 412-1122
  - C-1 Theodore Vachon, MD 413-1400
  - A-13 William K. Goff, DDS 892-0883
- BANKS**
- B-18 BBKAT 415-0312
  - B-18 Capital One 418-3995
  - D-1 Heavy Federal Credit Union ATM 414-7855
  - D-5L Wells Fargo (on street level) 413-0941
- SECURITY/LOST & FOUND/PARKING**
- D-74 Crystal City Security 413-0150
  - B-20 Crystal City Parking Office 414-5971
  - D-21 Heavy Federal Credit Union ATM 414-7855
- All restaurants at 1750 Crystal Drive unless otherwise noted.

# A Roundtable Discussion on Ryan M. Irwin's *Gordian Knot: Apartheid and the Unmaking of the Liberal World Order*

*James H. Meriwether, Eric J. Morgan, Philip Muehlenbeck, Leslie Hadfield, Kate Burlingham,  
and Ryan M. Irwin*

## Introduction

*James H. Meriwether*

The wind of change is blowing through this continent, and whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact," declared British prime minister Harold Macmillan before South Africa's Parliament on an early February morning in 1960. "We must all accept it as a fact, and our national policies must take account of it." Macmillan, speaking to the decolonization sweeping through Africa in this oft-quoted passage, counseled his listeners that all "must come to terms" with this reality.

As he continued talking that day, Macmillan framed the "wind of change" in the broader Cold War context of the "struggle for the minds of men." Bringing together, as did many at the time, two of the great forces of the mid-twentieth century, he voiced his belief that nothing less than "our way of life" was at stake. His listeners undoubtedly agreed with that sentiment. The ensuing response by the South African government to those seeking change, however, most assuredly was not what Macmillan had in mind when he sat back down that morning. Just weeks later sixty-nine South African protestors lay dead at Sharpeville, the African National Congress and Pan-Africanist Congress were banned, and black South African leaders such as Nelson Mandela were on the run.

Over the next decade the situation in South Africa became a matter of international attention—from the capitals of newly independent African states, to the corridors of power in Washington D.C., to the halls of the United Nations. This international story plays out in new and interesting ways on the pages of Ryan Irwin's book, *Gordian Knot*. Irwin makes a case for Africa—and in this instance the international interaction with apartheid South Africa—being important to understanding the evolution of post-World War II international institutions and unfolding world history. The Cold War, colonialism and decolonization, and issues of race were central to the global system in this era, and all these merged in Africa.

Historians and other scholars are devoting more attention to just how these and other forces came together and what that conjunction of forces meant. The roundtable that follows is another step in the historical consideration of the African continent, and it shows how such interest opens more avenues for our understanding of the world of the twentieth century. In the pages of these thoughtful reviews,

one sees what a few years ago might have been hard to pull together: a wealth of talented scholars wrestling with the United States and Africa in an international context. They agree that there is much to be gained by reading Irwin's work even as they do not all agree on his interpretations. Those differences are themselves a reminder of how much there still is waiting to be explored.

## A Lost Struggle, a Lost World

*Eric J. Morgan*

As I am finalizing this roundtable review of Ryan Irwin's outstanding and groundbreaking debut book, *Gordian Knot*, I am also preparing to depart for South Africa, where I will be leading a travel course of fifteen students to Cape Town for sixteen days. My proposal for this course was so popular that, unfortunately, I had to turn away many students. I was surprised—but also delighted—with the positive response to South Africa as a potential destination of interest, particularly given several other attractive options. Yet my courses on the history of South Africa routinely garner waitlists. For some reason South Africa has always had a strong appeal for my students here in the snowy Packerland of northeastern Wisconsin. They are fascinated by it even now, nearly twenty years after Nelson Mandela's inauguration as the nation's first black president in 1994. Ryan Irwin is right that South Africa was and still is an enigma: its complicated past and refusal to submit to international norms fascinates us, and its history is so strikingly similar to that of the United States that we cannot help but be drawn to it.

*Gordian Knot* adeptly situates South Africa and the complex issue of apartheid within the larger global development of decolonization in the 1960s and offers readers two major arguments about the era. First, Irwin postulates that the postwar independence of various African states was one of the most significant "ruptures" of the twentieth century. What did nation, progress, development, and even race mean in this new epoch following the breakdown of the old order of the world? Second, he argues that the United States' Cold War foreign policy of containment changed rapidly during the 1960s, and by the end of the decade, the nation—which had once been a champion of decolonization—was now an empire despised by much of the newly decolonized world. Apartheid was not the paramount issue of the 1960s, yet it created a divisive arena that brought a variety of actors

from nations and governments large and small from across the globe into a debate over what the world should look like.

To illustrate his two major contentions, Irwin moves chronologically through several intriguing case studies that provide insights into the changing world of the 1960s and the place of South Africa and apartheid in that dynamic global landscape. His initial chapter explores South Africa's development as a "citadel of whiteness" and describes the rise of black African nationalism, articulated by colorful leaders such as Anton Lembede and Robert Sobukwe, which challenged the status quo of white rule. The Sharpeville Massacre of 1960, in which sixty-nine black protesters were shot and killed by police following a mass civil disobedience campaign against the nation's restrictive pass laws, changed South Africa's trajectory and brought the nation and apartheid into international consciousness.

The following chapter develops the competing ideologies of African nationalists and the ruling National Party, as each side attempted to define the debate over apartheid in its own terms after Sharpeville. A chapter on U.S. foreign policy, concentrating on the thoughts and actions of G. Mennen Williams, the assistant secretary of state for African Affairs, moves the story to the United States. The book's final section examines the 1966 International Court of Justice (ICJ) case involving South Africa's occupation of South West Africa (modern Namibia) and then explores the United Nations' African Group and the South African government's efforts to capitalize on the various developments of the 1960s.

What emerges from Irwin's text is a gripping story. The various international institutions created at the end of the Second World War—most specifically the UN and its principal judicial body—materialize in Irwin's narrative as the critical arena for the confrontation of apartheid, even though they were ultimately ineffective. As the leaders of the South African liberation movements were sent to prison or forced into exile in the early 1960s, the focus of the antiapartheid campaign moved from internal struggle to external sanctions (apart from the misguided and remarkably unsuccessful attempts at armed struggle through Umkhonto we Sizwe and Poqo). The United Front, formed in London in 1960 as a collaboration between various liberation organizations in both South Africa and the occupied South West Africa, pushed for sanctions at the international level. The African Group, a collective of African states within the UN itself, took up the mantle of sanctions and won a critical victory when a formal declaration denouncing apartheid passed the General Assembly in 1962. The following year, the Security Council passed a similar declaration—supported by U.S. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson in the strongest condemnation yet by a Western power—that included an arms embargo against South Africa, but not the stiff economic sanctions that the African Group had wished for. A victory to be certain, although, as Irwin sees it, a Pyrrhic one.

At the heart of Irwin's story is the ICJ case on the South West Africa Mandate. The African Group's litigation against South Africa was an attempt to undo the Mandate that entrusted South West Africa to South Africa as part of the peace process following the end of the First World War. As Irwin notes, however, this territory was a Mandate of the League of Nations and not the UN. The South African government rationalized that it was therefore no longer a territory of the international community. The African Group sought to prove that South Africa's occupation was illegitimate. A decision in their favor would have far-

reaching ramifications for the principle of self-government and eventually lead to the end goal of majority rule in South Africa.

In a close ruling, the ICJ decided that it had no legal right to make a decision. That finding "shattered the idea that the Court would act as an agent of transitional justice" (123). Humanitarian interests were extralegal in this case, the court ruled. The ICJ judges rationalized that the battle should proceed in the political rather than the legal arena.

In Irwin's eyes, the ICJ decision was a watershed moment. The ICJ had been the ultimate legal arbiter of the values of the world community and thus represented the ideal of the liberal world order. As he notes, "the outcome of the ICJ case reflected and reinforced" the trends of the 1960s and "became a powerful symbol, dramatizing the limitations of change in the decolonized world and foreshadowing future directions in the struggle against apartheid in southern Africa" (105).

As a result of the ICJ's decision, Irwin argues, the African Group's strategy fractured. The United States subsequently moved closer to the South African government as a supporter of apartheid in its foreign policy, particularly during the Nixon administration. For Irwin, the failure of the United Nations and its court to confront apartheid successfully signaled the end of Woodrow Wilson's vision of liberal internationalism. The African National Congress solidified its position

by the end of the 1960s as the legitimate organization of the liberation struggle (while in exile and largely removed from the South African people). The National Party achieved a monolithic status of its own and continued to consolidate its rule with scant internal opposition. The nation-state, the bane of the world and the cause of tumultuous conflict and suffering for most of the twentieth century, still reigned supreme in the international order. Colonialism remained alive and well after the rousing victories of African peoples in the 1950s and early 1960s over their oppressors. The world, Irwin concludes, turned postmodern, and today we are still dealing with the consequences of the fragmenting of the liberal world order.

*Gordian Knot* has few flaws. It draws on impressive and exhaustive research from archives across three continents, including the little-used papers of the African National Congress. The writing is generally crisp and the stories compelling, though occasionally the author employs too much jargon. I also wish that Irwin had spent slightly more time in his initial chapters developing his thoughts on what the liberal international order actually was meant to be in the context of the postcolonial era. Additionally, if the ICJ had ruled against South Africa's occupation of South West Africa (a single vote would have changed the ruling), would the decision have then reflected the triumph of liberal internationalism? Consequently, would apartheid have ended any sooner than it did? Would Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners have been released from Robben Island, and would a multiracial democracy have been established at the end of the 1960s?

Irwin also slightly underemphasizes the role of citizen activists in the 1960s. He argues that it was not until the 1980s that the global antiapartheid movement truly coalesced and began to have an influence on policymakers, corporations, and other powerful entities throughout the world. Perhaps the antiapartheid struggle beyond the confines of the UN actually legitimated the liberal world order, as the people themselves—in the United States, Great Britain, Sweden, New Zealand, and scores of nations across the world—made the confrontation of apartheid a priority for the world community outside of traditional

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structures of governance, even when the UN and various governments would not do so.

Ultimately, *Gordian Knot* is an exemplary model of what innovative thinking, writing, and research can produce. It is an erudite and important international history that melds intellectual history, diplomacy, and a vast global tapestry of ideas, personalities, and struggle, weaving together a compelling story that situates both South Africa and the United States in the postcolonial world of the 1960s. That world offered much potential and promise at the decade's outset but fell far short of fulfilling the hopes of those who wanted a global order based on equality and self-determination for all peoples.

### Review of Ryan M. Irwin, *Gordian Knot: Apartheid and the Unmaking of the Liberal World Order*

Philip E. Muehlenbeck

The late 1950s/early 1960s were an important time in world history. A wave of African independence saw twenty-four newly independent states admitted into the United Nations between 1960 and 1963. By 1964, the number of nation states in that international body had more than doubled, and the percentage of member states from Africa and Asia had increased from roughly 24 percent to 52 percent. These changing demographics shifted the agenda of the UN toward the issues that African and Asian states cared most about: decolonization and racism. Ryan Irwin's *Gordian Knot: Apartheid and the Unmaking of the Liberal World Order* is a masterful study of how policymakers in the United States, South Africa, and newly independent sub-Saharan Africa responded to this new environment in the international system.

Irwin rightly pinpoints the early 1960s as the high point of African nationalist power. In the late 1950s and early 1960s African states were not inconsequential players on the world stage. Riding high on the winds of change that swept away colonialism from the continent (aside from the notable exceptions in southern Africa), African leaders had more political power in the early 1960s than at any other point in modern history. Irwin refers to African independence as "one of the twentieth century's seminal ruptures" that augured in an era in which the newly independent African states, working together through a united African Group at the UN, challenged previously established views about the "nature of territoriality, race, and economic progress" (9). Opposition to apartheid in South Africa became the focus of the African Group's efforts at the UN and the "center of a larger conversation about the Cold War and decolonization in the postcolonial decade" (40).

In response to such initiatives from the African Group, U.S. policymakers faced a difficult juggling act to figure out how to manage decolonization and respond to international racism as embodied by apartheid without jeopardizing their country's economic and military interests in the Cold War. Washington, in a sense, became trapped in the middle and was forced to serve as a referee between the African Group and the South African government within the UN. According to Irwin, the United States responded to this dilemma in two distinct phases. From 1960 to 1965 Washington sided more heavily with the African Group in confronting South African apartheid. In doing so U.S. officials were responding to the American civil rights movement, but they were also trying to draw the newly independent African states to the West's side in the Cold

War. By the late 1960s, however, the combination of a number of factors—preoccupation with the Vietnam War; the weakening of the civil rights coalition within the United States; a growing realization that the Cold War would not be won or lost in sub-Saharan Africa; and a Nixon administration less sensitive to the immoral nature of racial discrimination—shifted U.S. policy. Not only did the United States begin to support the legitimacy of South African apartheid, it embarked on the "containment of Third World political campaigns" (8).

The government of South Africa began to feel vulnerable at this time not only because of the upswing in the political influence of African nationalism, but also because of changes in the views of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union, all of which began to assert more pressure on Pretoria to abandon its apartheid policies. Irwin should be commended for writing the most nuanced account of this shift in history. South Africa adjusted to the changing environment by spending significant time and money on lobbying and public relations efforts designed to portray itself as steadfastly loyal to the West, fiercely anti-communist, and a citadel of capitalism—while painting the nationalists of sub-Saharan Africa as unpredictable, with loyalties for sale to the highest bidder in the Cold War, and as politically and economically unstable.

After detailing the changes in U.S. politics that impacted American policies toward apartheid, Irwin points to the

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1966 International Court of Justice (ICJ) case against South Africa's occupation of South West Africa (modern day Namibia) as a turning point in the African Group's fight against South African apartheid. He notes that South African officials feared that a ruling against them in the ICJ would lead to severe sanctions or even an armed invasion by the international community, perhaps to evict them from South West Africa or to try to overturn the apartheid system within their own borders. (In fact, some of them had feared such an invasion at least since the Bay of Pigs.) However, the ICJ ruled in Pretoria's favor, and the African Group was forced to shift its strategy from pursuing economic sanctions in the

United Nations and legal action through the ICJ against apartheid to a more broadly based propaganda effort for global human rights. Here Irwin makes a persuasive argument that this change altered the antiapartheid movement; it shifted from being rooted in opposition to racial discrimination and the sovereignty of states in the postcolonial system to being focused more on the universal human rights of the individual.

*Gordian Knot* is a well-written and well-organized book built on the foundation of an impressive collection of archival research spanning three continents (Irwin uses the underutilized records of the United Nations and a wide array of South African sources to best effect). Each theme of the book is vividly framed with effective short vignettes at the beginning of every chapter. Irwin's scholarship is an intellectual tour de force that forces historians to contemplate new methodological and analytical questions.

Yet Irwin's arguments often outrun his evidence, leading to exaggerated claims throughout the book. For example, early on he contends that "the fight against apartheid gave form to the political project known as the Third World" (5). But the formation of the third world owed more to opposition to the Cold War and European colonialism than opposition to apartheid, and the third world would have been little different had apartheid never existed.

Secondly, Irwin overstates how important an issue South African apartheid was for African states. While first-generation African leaders certainly opposed apartheid, it was not likely the issue they cared about most, as Irwin implies. A review of memoranda of conversations between U.S. and African officials in the late 1950s and early 1960s would show that African leaders sought to discuss the situations in the Congo, Angola, and Algeria with their American counterparts more often than they did South African apartheid. The issue that the majority of them were most concerned about was the economic development of their own nations. (Tanzania's Julius Nyerere was a notable exception; for him, self-determination in southern Africa seemed more important than economic aid for his own state.) A litmus test for determining how important the issue of apartheid was for African nationalists is the side they took in the Cold War; few joined the Soviet camp despite Soviet opposition to, and U.S. tacit support for, apartheid South Africa.

Irwin also tends to give too much credit for U.S. African policy to Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs G. Mennen Williams. As I have argued elsewhere, African policy in the Kennedy administration, without a doubt, originated in the White House.<sup>2</sup> In countless oral history interviews American officials attribute the change in U.S. policy towards Africa to the president himself. Kennedy called country desk officers at the State Department to ask specific questions about minute details on issues affecting African nations. He asked his staff to compile reports on Africa for him and then he personally reviewed them. He circumvented the State Department and had direct correspondence with a number of his ambassadors to Africa. No other U.S. president has had as much personal involvement in African affairs. Kennedy not only met with more African heads of state than any other U.S. president, he also, I am sure, met with more ambassadors from African countries than any other occupant of the White House.

Moreover, let us not forget that Kennedy took an interest in Africa and became a public supporter of African nationalism before virtually any other U.S. politician, as is evidenced by his speech on Algeria in 1957. He also became the chairman of the Senate's Foreign Relations African Subcommittee, through which he met with numerous African politicians even before ascending to the presidency.<sup>3</sup> Williams was only in a position to make changes to U.S. African policy because Kennedy selected him for the assistant secretary position and empowered him to do so (tellingly, JFK appointed Williams to that position even before naming a secretary of state). Finally, Kennedy fully supported Williams after his "Africa for the Africans" comments (which Irwin does not discuss), when there was significant pressure (particularly from South Africans and Rhodesians) on him to replace Williams at the State Department. Williams obviously played an important role in setting the U.S. position on apartheid in the early 1960s, but he was not as much of a maverick or an originator of policy as Irwin's account would suggest.

Irwin's central thesis—that African independence and the African Group's fight against apartheid challenged U.S. power and control over international organizations like the United Nations, the World Bank, and the IMF more than any other variable and "not only laid the seeds of détente" but also "marked the unmaking of America's liberal world order"—is a far-reaching and not fully persuasive claim (12). It seems to this reviewer that other factors such as globalization, the Sino-Soviet split, U.S. economic stagnation, and the rise of emerging powers like China, India, Brazil, and Japan were likely more important. Nonetheless, *Gordian Knot* is an impressive scholarly achievement in international history and deserves a wide audience.

Notes:

1. See Philip E. Muehlenbeck, *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy's Courting of African Nationalist Leaders* (New York, 2012), 185.
2. H-Diplo Roundtable Review of Philip E. Muehlenbeck, *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy's Courting of African Nationalist Leaders*. Volume XIV, No. 3 (October 1, 2012).
3. For more on Kennedy's policies towards Africa see Muehlenbeck, *Betting on the Africans*.

## African States and the Complexities of International Anti-apartheid Movements

Leslie Hadfield

In *Gordian Knot*, Ryan M. Irwin opens an important window into the international politics of the 1960s and casts new light on the way the apartheid state and anti-apartheid forces fit into the international arena. The decade was a crucial period in African and South African history. Decolonization swept across much of the continent, and after the Sharpeville massacre South Africa entered a new era. The state cracked down on opposition, beefed up its security establishment, and turned increasingly to extra-legal means to quell resistance, forcing liberation movements underground and into exile. The African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) both established armed organizations. South Africans and the international community were forced to choose sides.

Irwin provides us with a much-needed examination of the international side of the story that gives us a sense for the complex, non-linear history of apartheid and anti-apartheid movements. His in-depth analysis of the decisions and directions different actors took at different times in the 1960s helps explain some of the paradoxical shifts of the decade. He also demonstrates how international and domestic politics in South Africa and the United States converged at a critical juncture, while at the same time extending his analysis beyond just the engagement of the United States and the West. Yet, while he admirably brings out the important role of African forces in international politics, his portrayal of African nations and events raises further questions about the influence of African politics and actors.

Irwin's focus on different moments in the 1960s is a testament to the value of taking a snapshot in time. Not only does he paint vivid pictures of particular incidents (e.g., the assassination of Hendrik Verwoerd or G. Mennen Williams getting hit in the jaw in Lusaka), he also examines the debates, events, and maneuvers that explain political shifts of the decade, when the outcome of the struggle against apartheid was unclear. As Irwin writes, this in-depth analysis shows that South Africa's road to liberation was not inevitable, but "a political contest that ebbed and flowed in various directions as different doors opened and closed on international and domestic stages" (186).

Irwin considers two of these shifts that are particularly valuable to understanding paradoxical international politics of the 1960s. First is the change in American policy towards South Africa from confrontation to "constructive reinvolvement" or support. His detailing of the work of people committed to ending racism abroad through international liberalism in the early 1960s shows that the possibility of concrete U.S. opposition did emerge in an otherwise long narrative of U.S. government support for the apartheid state. He also explains how the pendulum swung in the opposite direction for economic and domestic political reasons, despite the U.S. civil rights movement. Second, Irwin examines the way African nations moved from championing the anti-apartheid cause in the UN to offering merely support to South African liberation movements. At the same time, the South African government began "looking outward" to build relationships with neighboring

states. Looking at these two developments side by side helps us understand why leaders of independent African nations would talk and work with the apartheid government in the late 1960s.

The greatest contribution Irwin makes, however, is the way he links the apartheid debate to African politics in the post-colonial international arena. His analysis of the role the so-called third world played in antiapartheid movements fills a gap in the history of apartheid and antiapartheid movements. At the core of his argument is the observation that newly independent African nations used their sheer numbers to wield enough influence in the UN to bring the apartheid issue to the fore. Working largely through the UN African Group in the early 1960s, they were able to push members of the Security Council to debate apartheid and take a stand on related issues. Irwin adeptly shows how members of the African Group defined decolonization as resulting in racial equality, territorial autonomy, and economic development. They expected the UN to act in support of their vision, and their campaign prompted UN members to reconsider the organization's purposes and reposition themselves within it.

Because Irwin gives African actors at the UN due attention, he helps establish a well-rounded view of international antiapartheid activities and politics. African interactions with the South African state and anti-apartheid movements are an important element of the history of South African liberation and merit in-depth exploration. The interests of activists, archivists, and writers have resulted in a skewed focus on the antiapartheid activities of American and British activists. For example, the seven-part documentary *Have You Heard from Johannesburg* (2006) devotes one entire episode to American activists while attempting to cover all other movements around the world with the rest. The South African Democracy and Education Trust (SADET) Road to Democracy series offers a more balanced view in its third volume focused on international solidarity.<sup>1</sup> SADET's fifth volume will focus on African solidarity, but it has yet to be published. *Gordian Knot* thus provides an important analysis of the crucial role of African states and actors. Moreover, Irwin's approach links South Africa to what was happening on the rest of the continent and thus balances South Africa's exceptionalism with its connections to continental Africa.

That said, I struggled with the tension in the book between acknowledging the influence of African nations in shaping the international debate over apartheid and its trajectory on the one hand, and holding up the United States as the major player on the international scene on the other. The emphasis on the significance of African decolonization and African groups in the UN for international politics in the introduction led me to expect more of an African focus throughout the book. Irwin does provide this focus in some of his critical chapters, such as chapter 2, where he demonstrates how African nationalists and Afrikaner nationalists defined the debate in the UN from 1960 to 1964. Yet he follows that chapter with one (titled "Africa for the Africans") focused entirely on G. Mennen Williams and U.S. foreign policy towards apartheid in the UN. These two chapters put forth seemingly contradictory arguments. In chapter 2, it is African and Afrikaner nationalists defining the debate and reshaping international politics, while in chapter 3, the United States is an "unquestioned hegemon by the early 1960s," shaping global politics and political possibilities. A similar contradiction is repeated in chapters 4 and 5. The contradiction left me questioning what Irwin was really arguing. Who was shaping global politics and the

debate about apartheid—the United States or the African Group?

I came to the conclusion that Irwin was not contradicting himself, but that the answer is both shaped global politics in different ways. And the rest of Irwin's book demonstrates how it was a series of actions and reactions on the part of a number of players that determined the terms of debate and the political possibilities. Yes, African decolonization and African initiatives in the UN changed the intellectual terrain and pushed others to address apartheid, but superpowers like the United States had the political power (e.g., seats on the Security Council) and economic interests to direct outcomes. Perhaps a cleaner chronology and organization of the chapters and narratives of the first part of the book would have cleared up this seeming contradiction. Irwin could also have addressed this tension more explicitly.

Irwin could also have given black Africans more of a face. Except for a few familiar names (such as Kwame Nkrumah, Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda, and the ANC's Oliver Tambo), most Africans appear as vague characters. We get only brief appearances by heads of states and an unnamed Nigerian ambassador (58). By contrast, Irwin examines American and South African diplomats quite closely. He does offer insightful analysis of African continental politics, especially in relation to the International Court of Justice case over South West Africa, the Kitwe conference, and the way that liberation movements interacted with new African states throughout the 1960s. However, questions about the influence of domestic African national politics and the relations between African states remain.

I do not fault Irwin too much for this shortcoming. The book includes the politics of numerous African countries. Conducting research for all of these actors in the same way would have been a monumental task. Furthermore, the kind of rich sources Irwin drew upon for the United States and South African side of the story may not exist in some of the other cases. Yet Irwin shows us how insightful a close examination of the role of particular people can be in the chapter featuring Williams. One wonders how much more could be revealed if the same sort of research and analysis could be done for other actors. I also wondered what impact other major Cold War developments on the continent had on both U.S. and African positions and relations. For example, considering the CIA's involvement in Patrice Lumumba's capture and death, how did Williams perceive the Congo crisis? Did it impact his actions or the dialogue at the UN? There is much work for others to do in investigating the questions that *Gordian Knot* raises. Perhaps the forthcoming SADET volume on African antiapartheid movement solidarity will answer some of them. Those who tackle these questions should be alert to the problems of juxtaposing the entire diverse continent of Africa with a few individual states.

Irwin presents a more balanced portrayal of South African actors—both the apartheid state and liberation movements. Still, more attention to internal politics and developments could have strengthened his analysis. For example, his explanation of the ANC's shift to focusing on building solidarity with non-state international groups is incisive; but other factors could have been considered in explaining ANC changes in the 1960s, such as internal tensions over the turn to violence (see recent debates sparked by Scott Couper's book on Albert Luthuli?) and the impact of state repression. South Africa also saw the growth of above-ground antiapartheid activity in the late 1960s that was linked to international movements beyond formal politics and the ANC. It would be useful to gauge the impact

that student networks and religious organizations like the World Council of Churches (in which South Africans played an active role) had on the ANC and international politics.

All in all, however, *Gordian Knot* accomplishes a great deal. It is an enlightening book that will spark fruitful debates and inspire research that will further our understanding of the apartheid state, antiapartheid movements, and the post-colonial international world order.

Notes:

1. South African Democracy and Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 3: International Solidarity* (Pretoria, 2008).

2. Scott Couper, *Albert Luthuli: Bound by Faith* (Durban, 2010).

## Review of Ryan Irwin, *Gordian Knot: Apartheid and the Unmaking of the Liberal World Order*

Kate Burlingham

Africa's involvement in global politics during the Cold War is usually described as peripheral at best. If African leaders are included in Cold War history, their presence is usually fleeting and hardly essential to the narrative. One often has to refer to more topical monographs for integration of African leaders into global political discussions and for thorough analysis of their motivations. With impressive style and analytical skill, Ryan Irwin has attempted to address this historiographical problem by adding a much-needed chapter to the historiography of Africa in the world. Using an exhaustive array of international sources and approaching the topic from a variety of vantage points, Irwin's fascinating book, *Gordian Knot*, offers new insight into how African decolonization radically altered the global political climate and post-World War II international institutions.

The 1960s was one of the most crucial twentieth-century decades for the African continent. Yet the way African and global leaders interacted with each other during the early 1960s differed radically from the way they engaged each other just ten years later. Why? What occurred in such a short timespan? *Gordian Knot* demonstrates that this change was shaped by one battle in particular: the fight to end South African apartheid. Apartheid was African nationalists' "real-time foil"; it embraced "racial segregation and colonial-style paternalism" at the very moment when much of the world was moving away from colonialism (10, 5). The battle to end apartheid united third world leaders even as it challenged their contention that modernity and economic advancement could not be achieved in a bifurcated racialist system.

The battle against apartheid also offered third world leaders a way to define themselves outside the bipolarity of the Cold War. They used the United Nations and other postwar international institutions as platforms from which to wage the battle. These institutions were created after the Second World War out of a rejection of the racism and imperialism that defined the era of European colonialism. When these same institutions failed to stop and even bolstered the South African government, third world leaders had to reconsider the ways in which they participated in global society. Through his narrative, Irwin demonstrates how the apartheid debate, often relegated to the periphery of Cold War studies, in fact exemplifies many of the key debates of the day while foreshadowing important discussions of the post-Cold War era.

Using South African apartheid as its focus, *Gordian Knot* asks an essential question: "How did the rapid growth of small, non-European nation-states at midcentury affect the international community" (5)? Irwin's answer forms

the two primary arguments of his book. On the one hand, he seeks to expose the centrality of African decolonization to the story of twentieth-century world history. Indeed, it is through decolonization, we are told, that contemporary actors discussed important issues related to "the nature of territoriality, race, and economic progress" (9). Irwin's secondary argument flows from the changes ushered in by African decolonization. Against the backdrop of a rapidly evolving Africa, the United States struggled to react. According to Irwin, these reactions concerned more than Africa; they marked a moment in which "Washington's approach toward the rest of the world—its stance towards global governance—changed fundamentally" (11). As the authors of many of the postwar global institutions, United States officials did not fully calculate how a change in international order, ushered in by decolonization, might challenge their conception of the global power structure. Irwin believes that African decolonization and the "sudden emergence of almost forty non-European states" simultaneously confirmed "America's post-imperial vision of the world" while offering "a direct threat to Washington's continued hegemony" (12).

The United States, it turned out, could not control these new states. At a moment when American leaders were trying to ameliorate domestic race problems and fight a war for the allegiance of the world's decolonizing peoples, African leaders put "questions of race squarely at the center of world affairs . . . [exposing] the prejudices that quietly underpinned America's liberal world order" (12). The importance of this challenge, Irwin tells us, extends beyond Washington and marks "the moment when small, non-European states took formal control of the agenda of the international community" (12). That changeover, in turn, marked an important shift in the United States' interaction with these international organizations, which would no longer be the "bulwark of American global powers" (12). By the end of the 1960s, the United States had decided to back away from the UN, and that decision recast its once positive international image into the world's "New Empire" (13). Global politics would never be the same.

Irwin divides his text into two parts that revolve around a pivotal moment in the story, the 1966 International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling regarding South Africa's occupation of Southwest Africa (present-day Namibia). At stake in this case was not only South Africa's right to remain in Southwest Africa but also, according to Irwin, the faith of African leaders in so-called "postcolonial organizations" such as the ICJ and the UN as well as their overall "faith in the nation-state as an instrument of development and freedom" (154).

Part I explores the lead-up to the ICJ crisis in three expertly crafted chapters that cover the three venues in which the debate over apartheid played out: South Africa, the UN, and the United States. In the first chapter of this section, Irwin sets up the antagonisms that defined South African politics after the Second World War. As much of the world was moving away from colonialism and racial segregation, South Africa was moving towards it. We learn, however, that rather than being a monolithic idea, the system of apartheid grew out of several competing visions. The voices opposing the developing apartheid state were equally diverse. Yet, according to Irwin, what set Afrikaner and African nationalists apart was not only their views on race but, more important, how they saw the world around them. Afrikaner nationalists framed their worldview through domestic events. African nationalists, on the other hand, "focused on the symmetry between their struggle and the fight against European exploitation elsewhere" (38). This difference between Afrikaner and African nationalists, Irwin explains, "foreshadowed the fault lines of the global apartheid debate of the subsequent decade" (39).

Irwin brings the story to the UN in chapter 2 by tracking the internationalization of the apartheid debate following the Sharpeville massacre, in which sixty-nine protesters were gunned down by South African police. Of particular interest in this chapter is Irwin's discussion of the Afrikaner government's shifting tactics in how it packaged apartheid for the world. For Irwin, such tactics reveal something more profound about the era: the "deep fissures [that] separate the First World politicians from the Third World ones" (44). The strength of Irwin's discussion in this chapter lies in his observation that what ultimately divided UN representatives in the debate over apartheid was the role they believed the international body should have in the affairs of a sovereign state. Was the UN meant to complement national power or was it meant to be a "mechanism to reshape international norms"? The profundity of this question is reinforced by its continued relevance today.

Irwin's third chapter brings the apartheid debate to South Africa's most strategically important ally, the United States. While acknowledging that the United States "did not have a direct stake in the apartheid debate," Irwin stresses that its international power did nonetheless shape "what was politically possible in these years" (73). Perhaps the most significant historiographical contribution of this chapter is Irwin's detailed analysis of the important role of Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs G. Mennen Williams in crafting U.S. relations with Africa. Williams, we learn, fundamentally "shaped how American global power interacted with postcolonial questions . . . [providing] a consistent counterweight to those policymakers apathetic about Third World political demands" (75).

Having outlined the major players involved, Irwin begins Part II of his book with the ICJ case on which his entire story pivots. In his strongest chapter, he lays out the important questions that the ICJ and South African apartheid posed for the world, questions that would turn out to have enormous significance for the future. At stake for so-called third world nationalists was their belief in the idea "that history was moving in a linear fashion toward a political order based on territorial liberation, racial equality, and economic development" (117). The applicants filing the case against South Africa asked the court to look beyond Southwest Africa and rule on the much larger question of whether "there was a single moral system for the world." And if there was, "did the 'international community' truly have boundless supervisory powers over nation-states in the world-system" (117)?

A ruling in favor of third world nationalists would have validated an "emerging 'postcolonial' vision of power based on universal racial equality" (118). Most observing nations, and the United States in particular, began to think about how they would react to what was seen as the inevitability of the ICJ ruling in favor of the nationalists' claim. It came as a great surprise to many when the court upheld South Africa's claim to Southwest Africa. The ruling "shattered the idea that the Court would act as an agent of transitional justice" and emboldened the South African government.

The final two chapters of Irwin's text consider the fallout from the ICJ decision and how it reoriented the tactics and policies of all parties involved. Fundamental to these chapters is Irwin's commitment to demonstrating that the ultimate end of apartheid in the 1990s was neither inevitable nor predictable but "ebbed and flowed in various directions as different doors opened and closed on international and domestic stages" (186). The ICJ ruling was a setback for those fighting apartheid, but it forced them to reorient their battles in way that ultimately would prove more powerful. Keenly aware of its Cold War strategic importance and emboldened by the court ruling, the South African government was able to parlay its victory into more favorable relations with the United States. Prior to

the ruling, the U.S. government, influenced by the work of Mennen Williams, had been hedging its bets against the apartheid regime. Convinced that its days were numbered, both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations sought to assure third world leaders that the United States stood united against racist regimes. This stance was especially important within the context of the Cold War. With the ICJ's decision supporting the South African government, the United States did an about-face. As a result, "by the end of 1968, Washington had accepted the status quo in South Africa and was beginning to discuss ways to curtail the influence of anti-apartheid advocates at the international level" (128).

For African nationalists, the ICJ ruling posed different problems. What in the early 1960s had been a belief in the transformative powers of the UN turned into a much more restrained assessment of the organization as a "knowledge source" and "organizing center" (143). Far from giving up their battles, however, anti-apartheid activists switched to fighting the South African government. In the aftermath of the ICJ decision, they transformed apartheid from a "'regional [African] problem' into a flashpoint in a larger, integrated story of neocolonial power in the world" that was "out of step with the shared values of all the people in the world community" (144, 146). Reframing apartheid in these terms galvanized people around the world into what became a global movement to end South African apartheid. According to the Irwin, the success of this new tactic combined with the failures in the UN and ICJ to reinforce the idea that "true independence" did not come "from decolonization but from the networks and identities that transcended, contested, and subverted the nation-state" (154). Irwin believes that such subverting demonstrated "the way globalization was transforming the Cold War" (155).

The strong points of Irwin's text are also its greatest weaknesses. In seeking to remain true to the multifaceted and complex situation surrounding South African apartheid, Irwin weaves a narrative that is at times confusing. Taken individually, his chapters present strong arguments that are lessons in close reading and painstaking research. Yet when woven together, these same chapters at times feel disjointed because of the multitude of arguments they are trying to make. For example, Irwin's analysis of international organizations such as the UN and the International Court of Justice is seamless and fascinating. His ability to home in on the larger issues at stake is impressive. However, the pairing of this conversation with a detailed analysis of U.S. foreign policy feels mismatched; the nuts and bolts of policymaking are presented alongside more profound conclusions about how the ICJ decision altered global thinking. Despite these jarring moments of overreach, Ryan Irwin's text is a welcome addition to the global history of the post-World War II era and is a valuable source for use in both undergraduate and graduate courses.

## A Different Lens

Ryan M. Irwin

A very sincere thank you to Kate Burlingham, Leslie Hadfield, Eric Morgan, and Phil Muehlenbeck, as well as James Meriwether for his introduction and Andrew Johns for this opportunity. In the past few years, I have had the privilege of working alongside Kate, Eric, and Phil at different conferences, and I have admired Leslie's work from afar. Together they are doing some of the most important and interesting scholarship in our field, and I am deeply appreciative of the thoroughness of their comments and the thoughtfulness of their critiques.

As each of the essays suggests, *Gordian Knot* is an

unusual book. It is not quite a history of U.S. foreign relations—African and Afrikaner nationalism organize too much of the narrative—but it is not really an African history either, since most of the action unfolds within international organizations. The book is designed to work on two levels; it explores both the diplomatic contest that surrounded South African apartheid and the intellectual story of how people learned lessons about their sovereignty as they exercised that sovereignty in novel ways after decolonization. *Gordian Knot* tries to capture what American hegemony felt like in these years, especially to small actors with big expectations. The book admittedly revels in its own granularity at times—as Burlingham and Hadfield suggest—but this attention to detail is balanced by a hedgehog-like interpretation of international life in the 1960s.

*Gordian Knot* is the product of our historiographical moment. When Matthew Connelly called on diplomatic historians to take off the “Cold War lens” and explore the twentieth century in its full complexity, his words were a useful reminder—especially to graduate students searching for dissertation projects—that the East-West interpretative paradigm had certain conceptual limitations. That was thirteen years ago, and if you have attended a SHAFR conference recently you have probably had the privilege of listening to panels on topics ranging from migration and borders to cultural theory and transnational activism. The Cold War lens is off. This turn has carried many labels and has found widespread support within SHAFR, but it has also muddled the field in fascinating and frustrating ways, and *Gordian Knot* is designed to tacitly raise an underexplored question: What are we talking about?

The book flirts with two different sorts of answers. First, it eschews the bilateral approach to international history. *Gordian Knot* attempts to move the United States to the side in a way that enhances our understanding of American power during the mid-twentieth century. Washington was a referee in the apartheid debate—not an antagonist—and treating it as such facilitates a two-part investigation of how outside actors influenced U.S. policy and how U.S. officials responded to their efforts. This approach requires juxtapositions that some readers may find unorthodox, as Burlingham indicates, but it provides useful insight into the way high politics interacted with postcolonial claim-making.

Second, the book makes a case for studying political process. The growing tendency to theorize American power has culminated in a vibrant historiography that has obscured the contingencies of international life in the mid-twentieth century. Focusing on what I call identification politics is one way to explain the development and foreclosure of different political trajectories in the recent past, and it sheds light on how tropes of empire operated within particular contact zones. *Gordian Knot*, in other words, invites a conversation about the way American power worked. It is not a call to study apartheid or global race relations so much as a subtle rejection of the field’s obsession with American power’s name.

Burlingham, Hadfield, Morgan, and Muehlenbeck critique this approach in different and very smart ways. Phil Muehlenbeck expresses the most skepticism about *Gordian Knot*’s conclusions. As his footnotes attest, he has a dog in this fight and some of these comments are as relevant to his book as mine. His first two criticisms—that I have exaggerated

apartheid’s centrality both to the Third World project and to African nationalism—subtly distort my claims. *Gordian Knot* is about a microcosm, one that illuminated an ongoing debate about racial paternalism’s relationship to material progress and the postcolonial nation-state. My argument is not that Africans chose to care about apartheid over development or Algeria or the Congo; it is that South Africa’s policies sharpened opinions about the meaning of development and racial difference. Muehlenbeck and I are engaged in different sorts of intellectual projects. On the Third World, for instance, the sentence he quotes comes at the end of a deliberately phrased paragraph that doesn’t argue that anti-apartheid sentiment “formed” the Third World. Rather, it shows that apartheid influenced the wider discourse of anti-racism in these years, which played a crucial role in shaping the political agenda of the Afro-Asian bloc at the United Nations. Muehlenbeck fails to relate the nuances of this claim, and his suggestion that apartheid had no influence on the Third World is factually inaccurate.

Muehlenbeck raises some good points about President Kennedy. Our quarrel may have potential as an organizing debate in this subfield: What motivated America’s interest in African affairs? Muehlenbeck and I agree that the U.S. government engaged African issues in these years, but we disagree on the reasons. For Muehlenbeck this engagement stemmed from an unwritten policy that was designed by Kennedy himself and flowed from his egalitarian commitment to social justice and African people. I’m not convinced by his evidence. In chapter 3, *Gordian Knot* uses Mennen Williams’s story to explore the mechanics of how civil rights and liberal internationalism interacted with U.S. policymaking toward South Africa. Rather than taking the president’s words at face value, the resulting narrative lingers on the tension between rhetoric and politics and points the reader toward an alternative conclusion: the administration’s African policy was tied to the United Nations. Kennedy lobbied African leaders and adopted a symbolic stand toward apartheid because he hoped that mid-century international institutions could manage the tumult of African decolonization and enhance American prestige in the postcolonial world. By using Williams’s story as a device to explore Washington’s messiness, this argument attempts to enhance what we have already learned from Thomas Noer, Tim Borstelmann, and William Minter. The president mattered, but so too did the assumptions that connected Washington to these institutions.

Muehlenbeck also challenges the book’s central claim. In his mind, the Sino-Soviet split, globalization, and American economic stagnation, among other variables, played a more prominent role than decolonization in eroding Washington’s influence over and support for the United Nations order. There is a terrific group of young historians working on this question, including Paul Chamberlin, Chris Dietrich, Jeremy Friedman, Victor McFarland, Chris Miller, Mike Morgan, Daniel Sargent, and Sarah Snyder, and it would be exciting if this shift in the Washington-UN relationship gained traction in the historiography, since the United Nations’ importance is often downplayed in narratives about the Cold War. I stand by my interpretation. Notions of nationhood and order changed as people interacted within international arenas, and the book’s central irony—that this conflict

moved in tandem with Washington's fleeting embrace of interactive institutions such as the United Nations and the International Court—is a useful way to think about how and why the system became unmanageable when it did. The anti-apartheid story facilitates a detailed examination of decolonization's relationship to global governance and illuminates some of the stakes that surrounded the turn toward détente. There may be better ways to conceptualize this period—and I eagerly await the evolution of this historiography—but my argument isn't necessarily wrong just because it's new.

*Gordian Knot* is about the unmaking of a political system, the origin and afterlife of which are beyond the book's temporal frame. The book looks the way it does for a reason, of course, but Eric Morgan is right to critique this underlying tension. He raises two interesting questions: Was there a lost moment in the 1960s, and did citizen activists buttress liberal internationalism? On both fronts, my tentative answer is no. *Gordian Knot* certainly invites the reader to see the ICJ case through African nationalist eyes, and it suggests that American policy thinking wasn't preordained in the mid-1960s, but I prefer to see this moment's implications in grayer terms.

My hope is that readers will pay as much attention to the midpoint of the ICJ case, when the African Group's lawyers turned to the norm of nondiscrimination, as its controversial resolution. Although American liberals certainly remained internationally minded after the 1960s, a fascinating shift occurred as development and decolonization collided in these years and older assumptions about state capacity and universal modernity eroded in the face of racial equality, human rights, and non-national identity. I prefer to see the ICJ as a window into this process rather than a lost moment, which tacitly answers Morgan's question about citizen activism. His version of liberal internationalism—focused on collaboration among citizen activists and advocacy against a common enemy—has merit, but it would arguably obscure this transition and distort the nation-state's conceptual centrality to the mid-twentieth century. Although liberals remained internationalist after 1970, the assumptions that oriented the liberal order had fallen by the wayside.

That is a topic worthy of a long debate. Less debatable is Leslie Hadfield's observation that African diplomats should have had a greater presence in *Gordian Knot*. One of the book's main research challenges was gaining access to African diplomatic materials. I used private papers and South Africa's liberation archive, as well as United Nations materials, but I was unable to secure access to diplomatic cables from African governments, which was a disappointment. The resulting portrait is as complex and thorough as my sources allowed. Hadfield's lament regarding unnamed Africans is misguided, in my opinion, since Americans and South Africans are also left unnamed at different junctures, always for stylistic reasons related to narrative flow. But I accept the overall thrust of her critique. One issue that continues to absorb me is the mechanics of how African diplomats communicated with their home governments. From what I can tell, African diplomats enjoyed a unique sort of autonomy in New York, which hints at the somewhat ironic nature of postcolonial sovereignty after 1960. For small national states, the General Assembly became essential to the meaning (and location) of "independence."

On the ANC, Hadfield's comments are useful. Although she skims over my actual interpretation, calling it incisive without explaining its place in this literature, she is correct that *Gordian Knot*'s final chapter might have done more with events in black South Africa during the late 1960s. The ANC's archives don't indicate that the exile mission operated in the way she suggests—especially after the Rivonia Trials—but every book would benefit from more

attention to local nuance.

Again, a very sincere thank you to Kate Burlingham, Leslie Hadfield, Eric Morgan, and Phil Muehlenbeck. I am honored by their willingness to review the book and deeply appreciative of their thoughtful and incisive critiques. My hope has always been that *Gordian Knot* might contribute to the ongoing conversation about the contours, content, and direction of U.S. foreign relations history.

## SHAFR's Nominating Committee is soliciting nominations for elected positions.

The 2013 elections will fill the following positions:

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**Council members** (3 vacancies)  
**Nominating Committee** (1 vacancy)

Please submit nominations to the members of the Nominating Committee no later than **July 10, 2013**. Nominations must include the nominee's name, email address, institution (if applicable), and a statement of the nominee's qualifications. Self-nominations are encouraged. It is helpful to indicate whether you have contacted the nominee about his or her willingness to serve.

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# From Periphery to Center:

## A Review of Edward C. Keefer and Myra Burton, eds. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, vol. 28: Southern Africa*

Ryan M. Irwin

The history of southern Africa changed at 12:20 AM on April 25, 1974. If at that moment you had been listening to Lisbon's Rádio Renascença, you'd have heard an eerie rendition of the song "Grândola, Vila Morena." Composed by musician Zeca Afonso two years earlier, the quiet ballad eulogized fraternity, democracy, and fairness—values that had eroded under a forty-year dictatorship in Portugal. "It is the people who lead / Inside of you, oh city," Afonso sang. "It is the people who lead / In the shadow of a holm oak / Which no longer knew its age." His words announced the beginning of a carefully orchestrated military coup—months in the planning—against Prime Minister Marcelo Caetano, who had ruled the country since its previous dictator, António de Oliveira Salazar, suffered a stroke in 1968. Later named the Carnation Revolution, the affair was over within hours. Caetano accepted exile in Brazil; and a military junta, led first by General António de Spínola and then Francisco da Costa Gomes, took the reins of government to establish a framework to end Portuguese colonialism in Africa and create a genuine democracy at home. When the junta disbanded two years later, Portugal was a fundamentally different country, and southern Africa—the region where so many anti-Caetano soldiers had fought and died in the name of empire—was being transformed by the dual imperatives of decolonization and superpower geopolitics.

The coup unfolded in the shadow of the Watergate scandal, and it shows up as a memo—written by Henry Kissinger on April 29, 1974—about one-third of the way into Myra Burton's new *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, vol. 28, Southern Africa*. "A reorientation of Portugal away from Africa and toward Europe could be traumatic," Kissinger speculated to President Richard Nixon. However, he continued, there was "little reaction to [the coup] from the Portuguese territories of Africa," and the "local governments [were] urging business-as-usual" (98).<sup>1</sup> His diagnosis hinted at the quiet before a storm. As Burton demonstrates, events in southern Africa consumed Washington during the next two years. Although Kissinger had derisively suggested in 1969 that "history [had] never been produced in the South," the region moved inexorably from the periphery to the center of U.S. foreign relations after 1974.<sup>2</sup> Whether in Angola, where Portuguese decolonization prompted an ill-fated U.S. covert operation that led to an acrimonious congressional investigation, or in Zimbabwe, where Kissinger became deeply involved in peace negotiations, top U.S. officials found it impossible to ignore the historical transformations that unfolded in the wake of the Carnation Revolution. The region was the first great battleground of the post-Vietnam Cold War, and events there were the harbinger of changes that

would remake U.S. global power in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Burton's document collection is one of the better *FRUS* volumes I have read. By selectively blending policy statements and memoranda with meeting minutes and phone records, she provides the reader with a useful summary of official thinking and quotable anecdotes to illuminate the frustrations, eccentricities, and hubris of U.S. leaders. The collection is organized in four chapters that proceed chronologically and thematically. The first section, entitled "Regional Issues," covers the Nixon administration's early dealings with southern Africa, lingering on the formation of National Security Study Memorandum 39, which announced that regional change would only come through collaboration with white rulers, and the passage of the so-called Byrd Amendment, which rolled back U.S. sanctions against Ian Smith's controversial government in Salisbury. The second and third sections flow together, covering Portuguese decolonization and the Angolan civil war between 1974 and 1976. Here, Burton expertly highlights the role of Zambia and Zaire in prodding the United States into action and illustrates how the Cold War helped distill a complex reality into easy bullet points in Washington. The volume ends with a section called "Independence Negotiations," which explores Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy in the region at the end of 1976. Eager perhaps to rehabilitate his reputation after the Angolan debacle, the secretary of state essentially renounced National Security Study Memorandum 39 and nudged Smith into indirect dialogue with Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda, and several of the liberation organizations, setting the stage for initiatives that carried into the Jimmy Carter administration.

This period and region have already been examined in two of our field's more prominent international histories, Piero Gleijeses's *Conflicting Missions* (Chapel Hill, 2002) and Odd Arne Westad's *The Global Cold War* (Cambridge, 2005). Burton's collection, in part, confirms the conclusions of these books. For instance, Gleijeses's once-controversial claim that Angola's MPLA had more support than UNITA or FNLA and therefore possessed more legitimacy than its rivals is tacitly confirmed by U.S. consular cables, meetings minutes, and policy documents. Kissinger was at his most cynical in 1975. Although he made no secret of his belief that the "history of Africa [had] shown that a nation's only focal point [was] the capital" (113) and admitted that the MPLA controlled Luanda and most of Angola's populated areas (135), the secretary nonetheless moved against conventional wisdom in Washington and put America's weight behind an illogical covert operation that ended in disaster. "What real choice do we have?" he queried blandly

as CIA funds flowed into the region that summer. “I know the AF bureau says that [Africans] care about economic aid, but there’s no empirical evidence for that” (111). The subsequent civil war lasted twenty-five years, left 500,000 Angolans dead, and put the MPLA (eventually) at the helm of a country engulfed by AIDS and ethnic strife. Could this bloodshed and devastation have been avoided without U.S. meddling? Reading Burton’s collection, it is hard not to marvel at Kissinger’s callousness:

William Hyland [INR Director]: We will have a problem of answering critics.

Kissinger: I’m relaxed. . . . So what if critics attack us, we can’t be faulted. What grounds would they use?

H: They can claim that we are perpetuating war by arming the people; that we will turn a civil conflict into a bloodbath.

K: What would they have us do, abandon the country to the Communists? (123)

For culturalists, there is suggestive evidence that racism influenced U.S. policy thinking. Especially in the early years, when Washington was so intent on rejecting African initiatives at the United Nations, Nixon and Kissinger refer to Africans casually as cannibals, savages, and uneducated naïfs. “Mobutu I think is a semi-savage,” Kissinger stated casually at the height of the Angolan crisis in 1975. “You can say we gave [FNLA’s] Roberto [dollar amount not declassified] but he didn’t need money, but strategy. Does Mobutu know strategy?” (111). Yet many of the African politicians Kissinger dealt with were shrewd rhetoricians who flirted dexterously with the meaning of words and knew how to manipulate an audience. “When I come to Africa, you’ll attack American imperialism?” the secretary asked Zambia’s foreign minister in late 1975. “Yes,” the minister responded, “so they’ll listen to the rest! [Laughter]” (150).

A deeper conceptual question shapes this well-crafted collection: Did the United States actually shape events in southern Africa or did it follow the initiatives of others? For Gleijeses, of course, the United States was “in the lead” by the mid-1970s, “flanked by Zaire and South Africa,” with England and France “at the rear.”<sup>3</sup> But this is not the

only possible conclusion. As Burton shows, at the height of the Angolan crisis, Kissinger’s support of UNITA and FNLA stemmed primarily from ongoing conversations with Zambia’s Kaunda and Zaire’s Mobutu, who lamented MPLA’s Agostinho Neto and saw U.S. action as a means to influence their new neighbor. Only moments after calling Mobutu a semi-savage, the secretary declared, “[First,] we consider Zaire one of the two or three key countries in Africa. Two, we consider him one of the two or three key leaders in Africa. Three, we want to cooperate with him” (111). Washington’s subsequent covert aid went not to UNITA and FNLA but to Mobutu’s government; and Kissinger rarely pursued goals that were wholly inconsonant with the recommendations of the frontline states, especially after 1974. The situation on the ground—even the existential issue of communism—was secondary to America’s “credibility” with Zaire and South Africa, as well as Zambia and Tanzania.

What are the implications of these documents for U.S. foreign relations history? Was the region an outlier or microcosm of wider global trends? And how should we remember Kissinger’s tenure as secretary of state? Hopefully these questions will find answers in the coming years as historians devote more attention to this period, region, and volume. Whether employing the theoretical framework of empire or writing in the classic mode of diplomatic history, they will have many reasons to pick up *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976*, vol. 28, *Southern Africa*. Congratulations to Burton on a job well done.

Notes:

1. Numbers in parentheses refer to documents rather than pages.
2. Cited by Mark Atwood Lawrence, “History from Below: The United States and Latin America in the Nixon Years,” in *Nixon in the World: American Foreign Relations, 1969–1977*, eds. Fredrik Logevall and Andrew Preston (Oxford, UK, 2008), 269.
3. Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976* (Chapel Hill, 2002), 293.

## In the September 2013 issue of *Passport*:

- A roundtable on Frank Costigliola, *Roosevelt’s Lost Alliances*
- A roundtable on Justin Hart, *Empire of Ideas*
- Reviews of recently-released *FRUS* volumes

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# A View From Overseas

## Obama's Foreign Policy: The Case of the Middle East

Pierre Guerlain

**Editor's Note:** *The following essay is part of the Passport series, "A View from Overseas," which features short pieces written by scholars outside of the United States, examining the views held by the people and government in their country about the United States. SHAFR members who are living abroad, even temporarily, or who have contacts abroad who might be well-positioned to write such pieces are encouraged to contact the editor at [passport@osu.edu](mailto:passport@osu.edu). AJ*

I would like to start by deconstructing my own title and therefore by interrogating the usual way of talking about foreign policy. The foreign policy of the United States is often designated by the name of the president. Thus one talks of John F. Kennedy's foreign policy or George W. Bush's or Barack Obama's. This is a linguistic convention that supposedly helps to distinguish policies from one administration to the next. However, it not only obscures strong lines of continuity between administrations, it also masks ruptures within the presidency of a particular leader. For example, George W. Bush's foreign policy shifted significantly in 2006, when Donald Rumsfeld was forced out of the cabinet and replaced by Robert Gates. Obama kept Gates in his post for a few years and thereby underlined continuity with the second phase of his predecessor's foreign policy.

This essay will review the actors involved in the shaping of foreign policy, assess their impact on changes, and consider factors explaining continuity or change in an effort to determine "who governs in the formulation of foreign policy." First I will examine the rhetorical journey that Obama undertook from his Cairo speech to his kill list of potential targets for assassination.

### Obama the Speechmaker vs. Obama the Chief Executive Officer

In June 2009 Obama went to Egypt, still ruled by the autocratic Hosni Mubarak, to deliver a speech that was widely considered an attempt to reach out to Muslims and to the Arab world. He declared that he had "come here to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world; one based upon mutual interest and mutual respect; and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive, and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap, and share common principles—principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings." In a passage about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict he expressed his support of Israel and, on the day before a scheduled visit to Buchenwald, condemned Holocaust deniers. However, he added that the United States would not "accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements. This construction violates previous agreements and undermines efforts to achieve peace. It is time for these settlements to stop." While he clearly opposed Iran's development of a nuclear bomb, he

affirmed his desire to work through diplomatic channels: "It will be hard to overcome decades of mistrust, but we will proceed with courage, rectitude and resolve. There will be many issues to discuss between our two countries, and we are willing to move forward without preconditions on the basis of mutual respect."<sup>1</sup>

In this speech, which was considered to be an olive branch to the Muslim world, Obama announced his intentions and presented a philosophy and *Weltanschauung* that corresponded to statements he made before he became president. So it is legitimate to view it as a yardstick to assess changes in his positions and measure his achievements and the results of U.S. foreign policy in the wider Middle East. In his speech to the UN in 2011, Obama repeated his belief in a two-state solution, yet he blocked the Palestinian initiative to become a full member of the UN, and his opposition to the building of new settlements was successfully countered by the Israeli prime minister and his allies in the United States. In his 2012 UN speech, Palestine figured in only one paragraph. It was no longer one of the administration's main concerns. In its place was Iran, which took center stage in both Obama's and Netanyahu's UN speeches. During the Obama-Romney debate devoted to foreign policy, Iran was the country cited most often (45 times); Israel was mentioned 34 times, and Palestine was not mentioned at all.<sup>2</sup> The disregard of Palestine was by no means novel, nor would it disturb many Americans. As Walter Russell Mead argues, "A Gallup poll in June 1948 showed that almost three times as many Americans 'sympathized with the Jews' as 'sympathized with the Arabs.' That support was no flash in the pan. Widespread gentile support for Israel is one of the most potent political forces in U.S. foreign policy, and in the last 60 years, there has never been a Gallup poll showing more Americans sympathizing with the Arabs or the Palestinians than with the Israelis."<sup>3</sup>

In *The Crisis of Zionism*, Peter Beinart tells the story of how Obama came to abandon his insistence on an end to settlements and how in May 2011 he and Netanyahu got involved in what the Israeli leader called a "diplomatic war" after Obama mentioned the 1967 borders in a speech delivered to AIPAC, the leading organization of the organized Jewish community and one actor in the pro-Israel lobby. Beinart concludes that "the May 2011 clash over the 1967 lines proved to be the last time President Obama publicly articulated the liberal Zionism that he had learned in Chicago. After that, he effectively adopted Benjamin Netanyahu's monist Zionism as his own."<sup>4</sup>

Nearly four years after Obama's Cairo speech, anti-American sentiment in the Muslim and Arab world is strong—stronger, according to some accounts, than when George W. Bush was in power. The attacks on the American consulate in Benghazi in September 2012 that led to the assassination of the American ambassador underline this hostility. The Obama administration is caught between its desire to "have Israel's back," as Obama several times

expressed it, and its determination not to intervene overtly in a war against Iran. So in his 2012 UN speech Obama both threatened Iran and reassured Israel. "Make no mistake: a nuclear-armed Iran is not a challenge that can be contained. It would threaten the elimination of Israel, the security of Gulf nations, and the stability of the global economy. . . . The road is hard but the destination is clear—a secure, Jewish state of Israel; and an independent, prosperous Palestine." Yet even the Israeli secret services do not believe Iran poses a real threat, and most serious analysts know that Iran could not use a nuclear bomb against Israel without being vaporized by Israeli and American responses.<sup>5</sup> The use of the expression "Jewish state" to refer to Israel is an echo of a new Israeli demand that the Palestinians recognize not just Israel (which the PLO did as early as 1988) but the Jewish character of the nation, even though no other state is recognized for its ethnic or religious character.

On May 29, 2012, the *New York Times* revealed that Obama personally approved the killing of targeted terrorists or alleged terrorists. American citizens could be included in that category, even though their execution would be illegal.<sup>6</sup> This journey from Cairo in 2009 to AIPAC in 2011 to the kill list and the 2012 UN speech seems to indicate that there have been changes in Obama's attitude or beliefs that require explanation. The kill list is certainly at odds with the image of Obama as a liberal law professor. These apparent changes prompted one foreign policy analyst to ask why such a "smart guy" would have "spent the last four years executing such a dumb foreign policy."<sup>7</sup>

There are two types of explanations for these changes or fluctuations. One blames Obama for being a weak president who caves in whenever he faces determined opposition, whether from Republicans in Congress or the Israeli Prime Minister; the other views Obama as the prisoner of institutional constraints and points out that the power of the president is not that of an individual but is dependent upon various actors, factors, and interactions. I intend to review some of these actors and factors but feel confident that the purely psychological approach can be dismissed. Obama proved decisive when he chose to launch the assassination of Bin Laden, but his decisiveness was the result of a general agreement. It also violated both international and American law. He proved indecisive in his dealings with Netanyahu and with John Boehner in Congress, but that apparent weakness had institutional determinants.

### **Actors and Factors in the Formulation of U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East**

Although Congress is very unpopular among Americans (only 11 percent approve of it),<sup>8</sup> it does play a key role in the formulation of some aspects of foreign policy. It may be irresolute or indifferent at times, as when it was faced with the question of intervening in Libya in 2011, but on issues involving Israel Congress is a major player. Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer's book on the Israel lobby may have some major flaws, but it describes very well how Congress has always fought presidents who deviate from a pro-Israeli line—including both George H. W. Bush and Obama.<sup>9</sup> The pro-Israel lobby, which includes not only AIPAC but also Christian fundamentalists and large segments of the military-industrial complex, lobbies Congress effectively. It funds the campaigns of pro-Israel candidates and undermines the campaigns of critics of Israel. Many congressmen and women are financially dependent on it. The American public is also ignorant of the complexity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and tends to feel closer to Israel, a Western nation, than to the Palestinians. Congress often abdicates its power and bows to the imperial presidency, as it did when it let the Bush administration launch its wars and illegal surveillance

programs. So why is Congress such a major actor when it comes to the Middle East? A systemic analysis of that question is required.

Congress cannot be apprehended in isolation or even with the power of AIPAC or Israel in mind. The military-industrial complex also plays a major role in the funding of campaigns and in the determination of U.S. foreign policy. If all sources of power are aligned, then U.S. policy, which is presented as the policy of the president, is forceful and clear. When there are conflicts within elite circles and powerful institutions, the policy is the result of a fight between various actors and institutions. The Pentagon and the CIA are often at odds, with the Pentagon winning most of the time when Rumsfeld was defense secretary. It is thus quite erroneous to present clashes between the United States and Israel, rare though they are, at least in public, as clashes between a strong, wily alpha male, Netanyahu, and a weak-willed Mr. Softy, Obama. Personality traits play a part, but a minor one. Netanyahu is universally detested, as a remark by Nicolas Sarkozy to Obama made plain, but his power does not come from his personality.<sup>10</sup> Even the fact that he is the leader of the United States' closest client state does not fully explain his influence. His close relationship to Republicans and the close relationship other Israeli leaders have with Democrats are better explanations of his power, without forgetting, of course, large segments of American public opinion.<sup>11</sup>

Ilan Pappé describes the pro-Israel lobby as being made up of four large groups, or pillars, that he calls the "fundamentalist quartet": big oil, the military-industrial complex, AIPAC, and Christian Zionists.<sup>12</sup> When the military-industrial complex is divided, the power of Israel and the pro-Israel lobby is diminished. The tension over Iran illustrates this point clearly. The U.S. military does not want a war with Iran nor, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey said, does it want to be complicit in one.<sup>13</sup> The defense sector might not agree with military leaders, but clearly, strong military opposition strengthens Obama's hand. Hence his balancing act at the UN in 2012: symbolic support for Israel but refusal to be sucked into a war. This policy is quite independent of personalities. George W. Bush, who was very close to Israeli leaders, also refused to go along with an attack on Iran in May 2008. The Israeli prime minister then was Ehud Olmert. He was supposedly more dovish than Netanyahu, and Bush was supposedly more hawkish than Obama.<sup>14</sup>

Thus the official U.S. policy towards Iran cannot be said to be either the Israeli policy or the one chosen by Congress or even Obama or his advisers. It is the result of several forces, and that may explain why it is not very consistent. In spite of the Iranian leader's often inflammatory speeches, no one really thinks Iran would wipe Israel off the map, but both Israel and the United States have launched cyberwarfare attacks on Iran (the stuxnet virus), and the United States and Israel cooperate with MEK, an Iranian group that until recently was considered to be a terrorist organization. The areas of agreement and disagreement between the United States and Israel are thus intertwined: disagreement about intervention (or rather disagreement about public declarations advocating war, for it is not certain that Netanyahu is really considering war) but broad agreement about containing and weakening Iran; agreement about creating a de-facto coalition between Saudi Arabia and Israel; agreement about shifting the focus in the Middle East from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to Iran and its alleged nuclear programs.

The various factors leading to a policy are in constant interplay. In 2011 Obama was pressured to intervene in Libya by two allies, France and Britain, and was given similar advice by three officials in his administration (Hillary Clinton, Susan Rice, Anne-Marie Slaughter), while Defense Secretary Gates famously declared that anyone

wanting an intervention ought to have his head examined.<sup>15</sup> No one's head seems to have been examined, for Obama came down on the side of intervention. Presumably Israel was not a factor. Advisers often represent key institutions or powerful interests. Peter Beinart details the fights over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict between Dennis Ross, a National Security Council staff member and special assistant to the president, and Special Envoy George Mitchell; they also represented different factions. Often the State Department and the Defense Department are at odds and mobilize resources and allies to get their message across and triumph in cabinet battles. Each of the four pillars identified by Pappé may itself be torn between factions, so instead of one man taking a decision in isolation, as Obama is said to do when it comes to choosing an assassination target, a whole cast of people may be involved in each decision process. Obama's preferences, which we can infer from his past and from statements before he reached the White House, do not necessarily prevail.

Public opinion, which of course should be paramount in a democracy, does have an impact, though it is often minimal. The war in Afghanistan was very popular in 2001, for it was seen as an act of revenge for the 9/11 attacks. Eleven years later, with the United States bogged down in a quagmire and a quandary, public opinion has shifted, and the war is now unpopular. On Iraq, public opinion followed the lies of the Bush administration, then turned against the war. It is easy to manufacture consent on matters of foreign policy, but changes occur with reversals of fortune on the ground. There is no strong anti-war movement in the United States—no movement that Obama could turn to in order to say "Make me do it," as FDR said in another context. The Iraq war ended with the United States declaring victory after thousands of deaths and millions of wounded or displaced people. Iraq is now a pro-Iranian country with no democracy.

Afghanistan is already in a state of chaos. American-trained Afghan troops kill American soldiers. The public is tired of war and therefore accepts Obama's shift to the use of drones to fight the so-called War on Terror with different means. The policy has changed—drones instead of armed intervention and troops on the ground—and is presented as a zero-death solution for Americans. This new policy thus takes into account the situation on the ground but does not deviate from the general framework of global hegemony. It was not shaped by public opinion. It fosters as much anti-Americanism as the old one, and it reaffirms the perception of U.S. dishonesty or hypocrisy when Obama's speeches are correlated with his actions. Once again, "his" actions are not truly "his": they are what the foreign policy establishment collectively comes up with. The public does not loudly object to a policy that does not cause American deaths and is said to be economical. Yet in geopolitical terms this policy is detrimental to both the image of the United States and the fight against terrorism.

Last but not least among the actors and factors shaping U.S. foreign policy are foreign powers and geopolitical shifts among the nations of the world. The United States, with France and Britain, easily convinced the UN Security Council that a resolution to protect populations in Libya was ethically and politically acceptable. Then, of course, the resolution was immediately violated and became a free pass for regime change in Libya. One year later Russia and China refused to go along with the West on Syria. Thus the United States is forced to take into account the opposition of its main geopolitical rivals. It still provides weapons to the Syrian opposition, even if it includes members of Al Qaeda (which was probably responsible for the murder of the ambassador in Libya). It also has to take into account the power of the dictator in Syria, which is much greater than his Libyan counterpart's was, so it adapts its policy to the power relationship at the UN and on the ground,

as any nation must. In this context there is no American exceptionalism. The United States had a major disagreement with Turkey when Israel killed nine activists on a Turkish boat in the Gaza flotilla, yet it is closely working with this country on Syria. Allies and rivals are, as Rumsfeld argued, mostly determined by the mission or the issue.

Trita Parsi gives a very convincing description of the complexity of the decision-making process in his analysis of U.S.-Iran relations. He writes that "faced with overwhelming resistance from Israel, Congress, Saudi Arabia, and other Arab allies, skeptics within his own administration and, most importantly, the actions of the Iranian government itself, the president's vision and political space were continually compromised. In the end, the diplomacy Obama pursued was only a shadow of the engagement he had envisioned."<sup>16</sup> Obama's personality and preferences are not the main factor at all.

On top of all the factors already mentioned, the United States has to take the power of China into account. China's emergence as a global power largely explains its new diplomacy in the Far East, but it also has an impact on other regions. The Chinese have not made the Israeli-Palestinian conflict a major issue, so the United States does not have to worry about strong Chinese support for the Palestinians. On the contrary, the Chinese buy weapons from Israel, sometimes against the advice of the United States. Yet on Iran, Russian and Chinese opposition is a factor in what policy the United States chooses: no direct intervention, but sanctions and sabotage planned in the United States and implemented by MEK. The United States and China have a duopoly; the two countries are both rivals and partners. The rising power of China, coupled with the relative economic decline of the United States, will have consequences for U.S. foreign policy in every region of the world.

In sum, each specific policy is determined by various actors, both domestic and global, and is likely to change if situations change. Thus the United States supported all dictatorships in the Arab world until the Arab spring, then it claimed to support this democratic uprising, although for a while in Egypt it was closer to the army than to the protesters. Yet the changes or swings must be understood as different interpretations of the same score. The U.S. desire for global hegemony has not disappeared, but the means to try to achieve it keep changing. Drones replace boots on the ground; sabotage and support for opposition groups replace air bombardments; speeches and rhetoric change but still encounter realities on the ground.

It is easy to understand why Israel is perceived as the tail that wags the dog when it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian problem: the United States demands an end to settlement, Israel refuses, insults the U.S. vice president,<sup>17</sup> and as a reward gets new weapons and credits. The media talk about Netanyahu defeating Obama as if they were in a boxing match or the leader of the small country were a David defeating a Goliath. Yet when all the factors are taken into account—and even if Obama were more forceful or more heedful of law—the picture becomes more complex. If the U.S. military opposes the Israeli leader his hand is much weaker; if China and Russia support Iran the United States has to choose different ways to destabilize it.

The lack of U.S. involvement in an effective peace process between Israel and the Palestinians can also be explained by the relative lack of interest of much of the world in this issue. Even Saudi Arabia, which produced a fair and balanced peace proposal in 2002<sup>18</sup> that Israel and the United States proceeded to ignore, is currently more interested in containing Iranian and Shiite power than in solving the conflict in Palestine. It is thus a close ally of the United States in spite of its being a theocratic dictatorship. As the willing prisoner of the oligarchy in the United States, Obama follows the main lines of force in U.S. foreign policy, although there is a small margin for personal input.

His foreign policy, like his domestic policies, thus reflects his gauging of the power of various elements in “the power elite.” As C. Wright Mills argued in the 1950s, “power is not of a man.”<sup>19</sup>

Notes:

1. The full text can be found at the *New York Times* website, June 4, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/04/us/politics/04obama.text.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>.
2. See Pierre Guerlain, “The United States and the World,” *Huffington Post*, November 2, 2012, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/pierre-guerlain/the-united-states-and-the\\_b\\_2066736.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/pierre-guerlain/the-united-states-and-the_b_2066736.html).
3. Walter Russell Mead, “The New Israel and the Old,” *Foreign Affairs*, July–August 2008: 28–46. Mead goes on to say that “in the United States, a pro-Israel foreign policy does not represent the triumph of a small lobby over the public will. It represents the power of public opinion to shape foreign policy in the face of concerns by foreign policy professionals.” This is an important observation; however, it begs the question of how public opinion is shaped. Further on the writer adds, “The United States’ sense of its own identity and mission in the world has been shaped by readings of Hebrew history and thought. The writer Herman Melville expressed this view: ‘We Americans are the peculiar, chosen people—the Israel of our time; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world.’” American support for Israel is confirmed in a Pew Research Center poll. Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, March 15, 2012, <http://www.people-press.org/2012/03/15/little-support-for-u-s-intervention-in-syrian-conflict/?src=prc-headline>.
4. Peter Beinart, *The Crisis of Zionism* (New York, 2012), 154.
5. Trita Parsi, *A Single Roll of the Dice: Obama’s Diplomacy with Iran* (New Haven, 2012).
6. “Secret ‘Kill List’ Proves a Test of Obama’s Principles and Will,” May 29, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/29/world/obamas-leadership-in-war-on-al-qaeda.html?pagewanted=all>. “Mr. Obama is the liberal law professor who campaigned against the Iraq war and torture, and then insisted on approving every new name on an expanding ‘kill list,’ poring over terrorist suspects’ biographies on what one official calls the macabre ‘baseball cards’ of an unconventional war.”
7. John Feffer, “Dumb and Dumber: Obama’s ‘Smart Power’ Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Policy in Focus*, September 6, 2012, [http://www.fpif.org/articles/dumb\\_and\\_dumber\\_obamas\\_smart\\_](http://www.fpif.org/articles/dumb_and_dumber_obamas_smart_)

power\_foreign\_policy.

8. Lawrence Lessig, *Lost: How Money Corrupts Congress—and a Plan to Stop It* (New York, 2011).
9. Stephen Walt et John Mearsheimer, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York, 2007).
10. France24, “Sarkozy qualifie Netanyahu de ‘menteur’ lors d’une discussion avec Obama,” August 11, 2011, <http://www.france24.com/fr/20111108-sarkozy-netanyahu-menteur-off-discussion-obama-israel-g20-cannes-journaliste-arret-sur-images>.
11. Trita Parsi quotes an article by Barak Ravid in the Israeli paper *Haaretz* (March 10, 2010) reporting the words of Netanyahu’s brother-in-law about Obama: “When there is an anti-Semitic president in the United States, it is a test for us and we have to say: we will not concede. . . . We are a nation dating back 4,000 years, and you in a year or two will be long forgotten. Who will remember you? But Jerusalem will dwell on forever.” Parsi, *A Single Roll of the Dice*, 167.
12. <http://infomideast.com/wordpress/?p=434> (link no longer active). Pappé makes a similar point in “Clusters of history: US involvement in the Palestine question,” *Race & Class* 48 (January 2007): 1–28.
13. *The Guardian*, “Israeli attack on Iran ‘would not stop nuclear programme,’” August 31, 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/aug/30/israeli-attack-iran-not-stop-nuclear?newsfeed=true>.
14. Jonathan Steele, “Israel asked US for green light to bomb nuclear sites in Iran,” *Guardian*, September 25, 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/sep/25/iran.israelandthepalestinians1>.
15. “In my opinion, any future defense secretary who advises the president to again send a big American land army into Asia or into the Middle East or Africa should ‘have his head examined,’ as General MacArthur so delicately put it.” *The New York Times*, “Warning Against Wars Like Iraq and Afghanistan,” A7, February 25, 2011.
16. Parsi, *A Single Roll of the Dice*, 211–212.
17. “When Israelis degrade Israel by humiliating Joe Biden,” *Haaretz*, March 10, 2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/when-israelis-degrade-israel-by-humiliating-joe-biden-1.264406>.
18. “The Arab Peace Initiative, 2002,” June 18, 2009, <http://www.al-bab.com/arab/docs/league/peace02.htm>.
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# Two Views on Foreign Policy in Obama's Second Term

*Robert David Johnson and Jeremi Suri*

## Obama and a Second-Term Foreign Policy

*Robert David Johnson*

It has become something of a cliché to suggest that two-term presidents focus on international affairs as their time in office passes. The greater freedom of action they possess in foreign policy enables them to take the initiative despite the general decline in their political leverage.

To at least some degree, Ronald Reagan made the shift to foreign policy involuntarily, after Democrats regained the Senate in 1986 and the Iran-Contra affair captured public attention. But his closing years as president also featured high-level negotiations with the Soviets aimed at winding down the Cold War. Similarly, Bill Clinton turned his attention to major international matters during his second term, proceeding, like Reagan in his handling of the Soviet Union, without congressional approval. Learning from his first-term errors in Rwanda, Clinton intervened—at the height of the impeachment controversy—to check Serbian military action in Kosovo. He was less successful at the 2000 Camp David summit, where Palestinian recalcitrance robbed him of a closing triumph. Even George W. Bush, who was too weakened politically to accomplish much of anything in his second term, adopted a new international mission. He sought to combat the spread of AIDS in Africa.

A second-term focus on foreign policy would allow Barack Obama to come full circle politically. While international matters ultimately played little role in his triumph over John McCain in 2008, his early, consistent opposition to the Iraq War distinguished him in a Democratic primary in which the two other major contenders, Hillary Clinton and John Edwards, had voted to grant President Bush authorization to invade Iraq. The Illinois senator profited from the situation. In the entrance poll to the critical Iowa caucus, for instance, 35 percent of voters listed Iraq as the most important issue; Obama secured a healthy plurality from that group.<sup>1</sup> In the Wisconsin primary, which was the closest thing the 2008 race had to a decisive contest, Obama again easily prevailed (by 21 points over Clinton) among the 26 percent of voters whose choice was guided by Iraq.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps more important, his opposition to the Iraq War allowed Obama to consolidate his support among the roughly 15 percent of 2008 Democratic voters who described themselves as “very liberal” without having to adopt positions that would lessen his appeal to conservative Democrats in the primary process or hurt him with independents in the general election.<sup>3</sup> The Illinois senator carried self-described very liberal voters in virtually every 2008 Democratic contest; he even bested Clinton in that category in her home state of New York, where she won the primary by nearly 20 points.<sup>4</sup> Obama accomplished this feat even though Clinton's positions on many policy issues—most notably health care—and her differences from him in matters of tone—for example, her willingness to confront

Republicans in partisan fights—should have made her more appealing to very liberal voters.

Foreign policy played a far less significant role in Obama's re-election. As the campaign got underway, Mitt Romney had an opening to press the president on policy toward Israel because of the tensions between the Democratic base's increasing distaste for a pro-Israel policy and the overwhelming support Israel enjoys from the public as a whole.<sup>5</sup> (Given how close the swing states of Florida and Ohio appeared to be, a significant defection from the Democrats by Jewish voters could have tilted one or both to the GOP.<sup>6</sup>) But in the spring and early summer, Romney's campaign handlers eschewed a foreign policy focus, lest it distract from their (ill-conceived) strategy of portraying the election as a referendum on Obama's handling of the economy.<sup>7</sup>

As Romney stalled in the polls in mid-summer, the campaign reversed course tactically, but to little effect. The presumptive nominee's disastrous summer visit to Britain, Poland, and Israel led to widespread ridicule.<sup>8</sup> And Romney's promise to declare China a currency manipulator on day one of his presidency seemed like such an obvious pander to working-class voters in the Midwest that it never gained traction.

Then, on September 11, with the killing of four members of the U.S. diplomatic service in Libya, international events handed the Romney campaign a political opening. At the very least, the security failures tarnished a central premise of the Obama foreign policy—a promise to restore competence after the difficulties of the Bush years.<sup>9</sup> But the episode also raised serious questions about whether Obama had devoted sufficient attention to the political tribulations of post-Qaddafi Libya.

Almost incredibly, the Romney campaign ignored both of these lines of critique. Instead, the Republican responded to events in Benghazi by launching misleading attacks that, in any event, did not focus on matters of policy substance. Romney's initial statement on Libya, released late in the evening on September 11 and citing an item from the U.S. embassy in Cairo, deemed it “disgraceful that the Obama Administration's first response was not to condemn attacks on our diplomatic missions, but to sympathize with those who waged the attacks.” The remarks triggered widespread, bipartisan backlash.<sup>10</sup> The reaction from *New York's* Jonathan Chait typified the response from liberals. “The lies here are several,” he observed. “The statement was issued by an embassy staffer, not by Obama; it did not express sympathy with attackers; and it was not a ‘response’ to the attacks but in fact preceded them.”<sup>11</sup> Former Bush strategist Matthew Dowd was even blunter: “It almost feels like Sarah Palin is his foreign policy adviser.”<sup>12</sup> Romney quickly dropped the argument, only to mishandle Libya again in the second presidential debate, when the former governor incorrectly accused Obama of having waited two weeks before describing the killings as a terrorist attack.<sup>13</sup>

The Republican concluded his foreign policy-based

campaign discussion with an odd performance in the final debate. Apparently reassured by his campaign's internal polls, which consistently showed him winning even as public surveys indicated otherwise, he spent most of his time implying that he agreed with Obama's international goals.<sup>14</sup>

Romney's ineptness at discussing international affairs meant that a whole range of critical foreign policy and national security matters went all but ignored in the campaign. The legality or wisdom of Obama's drone policy; the deteriorating conditions in Yemen; what a post-Assad Syria might look like; whether the United States should attack Iran if international sanctions ultimately fail to block an Iranian nuclear weapon; how to handle an increasingly authoritarian Islamist regime in Egypt; the increasing financial instability of the Eurozone; how to deal with international climate change—these issues received scant or no attention from Romney, while Obama had little reason to explore such potential political pitfalls.

After such a campaign, it was little wonder that only five percent of voters described foreign policy as the most important issue in the election. Obama carried that group by 23 points. Remarkably, 11 percent of voters who cast ballots because of a candidate's foreign policy views wound up voting for fringe candidates running on either Libertarian or Green party lines.<sup>15</sup>

Obama enters his second term relatively free from binding commitments on pending international questions. The only exception involves Iran. The president has made it clear that the United States will not tolerate an Iranian nuclear weapon. For instance, in a March 2012 *Atlantic* interview, he asserted that as he did not "bluff," he expected both the Iranian and the Israeli governments to "recognize that when the United States says it is unacceptable for Iran to have a nuclear weapon, we mean what we say."<sup>16</sup> Indeed, policy toward Iran was a consistent first-term success for Obama. In 2009, he avoided the temptation of excessively positioning the United States behind the Green Revolution, lest doing so rob the movement of its nationalist credentials. He then assembled an international coalition to impose potent economic sanctions on the Tehran regime.

Although Obama may possess considerable flexibility going forward, he will have to act with a new national security team. Continuing a tradition that began with Bill Clinton, Obama will enter his second term with new heads of the State and Defense departments (he will also have a new CIA director, following the resignation of the disgraced David Petraeus). Yet unlike Clinton, who replaced the nearly somnolent Warren Christopher and the low-profile William Perry, Obama will lose the most popular member of his administration (Secretary of State Hillary Clinton). He will also lose a defense secretary and a CIA director who enjoyed widespread support from both sides of the aisle.

Nor should the president expect much assistance from Congress. Diplomatic historians need no reminder of the linkage between partisanship and foreign policy; the first American party system owed its existence in large part to clashes in international visions. Yet as Congress has transitioned in the past generation to a quasi-parliamentary system, with tighter ideological alignment within both sides' caucuses, the relationship between politics and foreign policy has changed in unhealthy ways.<sup>17</sup> Senator Jesse Helms (R-North Carolina) pioneered the tactic of legislating exclusively for partisan gain, proposing roll-call amendments on highly charged issues to provide fodder for campaign attack ads.<sup>18</sup> Representative Newt Gingrich (R-Georgia) perfected the tactic in the 1990s, and now such

legislation has become routine.

The post-election period provided a reminder of the poisonous effect of this scorched-earth partisanship on U.S. foreign policy. Continuing the pattern of denying cooperation to Obama on even the most routine matters, Senate Republicans overwhelmingly voted down the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Senator James Inhofe (R-Oklahoma) led the opposition, explaining his position to his colleagues with a highly strained interpretation of the treaty's effects: "I have a daughter—the runt of my litter, I say to the president—who is No. 4. Katie homeschools her children. She and I have talked about this, and this is very much a concern in that community, that unelected foreign bureaucrats—not parents—would decide what is in the best interests of the disabled child even in the home."<sup>19</sup>

November and December 2012 also featured an effort against the possible nomination of Susan Rice as secretary of state, led by Senators John McCain (R-Arizona), Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina), and—most important—Susan Collins (R-Maine).<sup>20</sup> At first blush, the trio's crusade seemed counterintuitive.

Of the major contenders for the position, Rice was the most closely associated with the humanitarian interventionism that sometimes appeals to McCain and Graham; Collins, meanwhile, has a reputation for promoting the advancement of women in government.<sup>21</sup> But in this instance, partisanship trumped ideology. For McCain, the nomination offered a chance to settle scores from the 2008 campaign. For Collins, Rice's fall opened the way for Massachusetts senator John Kerry to be nominated to the position, thus creating a vacancy and providing a possible path back to the Senate for one of the Maine senator's closest political allies, former senator Scott Brown (R-Massachusetts).<sup>22</sup>

If the realities of modern politics render unlikely any second-term initiatives (such as a potential climate change treaty) that require legislative approval, Obama can recall the legacies of Reagan and Clinton. Neither president relied on Congress to conduct the bulk of his second-term foreign policy. Apart from passing a toothless resolution reaffirming a commitment to stopping Iran from developing nuclear weapons, Congress played little role in formulating policy toward Iran in Obama's first term; but if he decides a military strike is necessary to ensure Iran does not obtain a nuclear arsenal, will he seek congressional authorization?

However Obama handles Iran, it seems likely he will employ instruments of soft power and diplomacy. He remains very popular in Europe—an October 2012 BBC poll asking Europeans for their preference in the presidential election yielded massive pro-Obama margins (72 percent for Obama to 2 percent for Romney in France; 65 percent to 7 percent in the United Kingdom; 64 percent to 8 percent in Germany; and 45 percent to 1 percent in Spain).<sup>23</sup> His strategy of "leading from behind" helped to account for a positive outcome in Libya, where the United States succeeded in ousting the Qaddafi regime with no U.S. deaths in the military campaign and scant opposition in Europe. Obama likewise has avoided getting out in front of Europe on Syria, especially given the relatively limited nature of U.S. military options available, even as he has provided military assistance to the anti-Assad government in Turkey. Given the depths of anti-American sentiment internationally at the tail end of the Bush administration, the restoration of a measure of U.S. soft power remains an important Obama accomplishment. Whether he will succeed in leveraging it against Iran remains to be seen.

Every president since Lyndon Johnson has attempted to achieve a peace settlement between Israel and its

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Arab neighbors. There is little reason to believe that a second-term Obama will accomplish any more than his predecessors. A deeply pessimistic essay from *The New Republic's* Leon Wieseltier, who doubts that a settlement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority will occur in his lifetime, captures the current consensus on the issue.<sup>24</sup> Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government has shown little willingness to accommodate Obama's demands for more openness to negotiations, especially as the Hamas regime in Gaza has violated international law through a multi-year campaign of launching rockets at Israeli civilians.

When Barack Obama took office, Qaddafi and Mubarak seemed secure, a centrist coalition governed Israel, the Eurozone's economic prospects appeared stronger than America's, and the Medvedev presidency held out at least some promise that a slightly less autocratic Russia could emerge. Some of the conditions in the Middle East, Europe, and Russia have now changed dramatically.

Given the impossibility of anticipating future international developments, perhaps the best way of predicting where Obama will take U.S. foreign policy in his second term might be to focus on his approach to his responsibilities as commander-in-chief. In 2008, Obama promised to end the war in Iraq, ruthlessly pursue Osama bin Laden, and implement a foreign policy based on competence and a largely non-ideological calculation of U.S. national interests. With the exception of consulate security in Benghazi, he largely delivered on his promises. Thus it seems reasonable to assume that his stated commitments from 2012—terminating U.S. involvement in Afghanistan, continuing to target Al Qaeda strongholds in Yemen and rural Pakistan, and aggressively championing nuclear non-proliferation—will guide his approach to world affairs over the next four years.

#### Notes:

1. 2008 Iowa caucus entrance poll, <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/primaries/results/epolls/#IADEM>.
2. 2008 Wisconsin primary exit poll, <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/primaries/results/epolls/#WIDEM>.
3. Obama consistently edged Clinton among conservative Democrats, at least until primaries in states with a significant percentage of Appalachian voters. For instance, according to exit polls, Obama bested Clinton by 19 points among self-described conservative voters in Wisconsin; by 49 points in Virginia; and by 20 points in Missouri. In each case, Obama's margin among conservative Democrats exceeded his margin of victory overall. <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/primaries/results/epolls/#WIDEM>; <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/primaries/results/epolls/#VADEM>; <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/primaries/results/epolls/#MODEM>.
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5. For party affiliation on matters related to Israel, see Gallup Poll, "Americans Continue to Tilt Pro-Israel," 2 March 2012, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/153092/Americans-Continue-Tilt-Pro-Israel.aspx>.
6. See, for instance, "Flying Blind on the Jewish Vote," *The Times of Israel*, 5 Nov. 2012, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/analysis-flying-blind-on-the-jewish-vote/> (accessed 10 Dec. 2012); "Republicans Intensify Drive to Win Over Jewish Voters," *New York Times*, 26 Sept. 2012; [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/27/us/politics/republicans-go-after-jewish-vote.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/27/us/politics/republicans-go-after-jewish-vote.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0).
7. "Romney Campaign Expands Focus Beyond the Economy," *New York Times*, 1 Oct. 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/02/us/politics/as-economic-argument-sputters-romney-broadens-focus.html>.
8. The video of London mayor Boris Johnson publicly mocking Romney came to symbolize the trip: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/video/2012/jul/27/boris-johnson-mitt-romney-olympics-video>.
9. Post-election inquiries demonstrated the potential power of this line of critique. A report from the Senate Homeland Security Committee (<http://i2.cdn.turner.com/cnn/2012/images/12/31/>

- [hsgac.special.report.on.benghazi.pdf](http://hsgac.special.report.on.benghazi.pdf)) accused the administration of committing a "grievous mistake," since "despite the inability of the Libyan government to fulfill its duties to secure the facility, the increasingly dangerous threat assessments, and a particularly vulnerable facility, the Department of State officials did not conclude the facility in Benghazi should be closed or temporarily shut down." An independent inquiry by the State Department's Accountability Review Board (<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/202446.pdf>) discovered "systemic failures and leadership and management deficiencies" producing a "security posture that was inadequate for Benghazi and grossly inadequate to deal with the attack that took place."
10. For a summary of the backlash, see "Mitt Romney's Comments on Libya Backfire Badly," *The Atlantic Wire*, 12 Sept. 2012, <http://www.theatlanticwire.com/politics/2012/09/mitt-romneys-libya-comments-backfire-badly/56784/>.
  11. Jonathan Chait, "Romney Tries To Defend Embassy Lies," *New York*, 14 Sept. 2012, <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2012/09/romney-tries-to-defend-embassy-lies.html>.
  12. Romney Repeats Sharp Criticism of Obama after Attacks in Benghazi, Cairo," *Washington Post*, 12 Sept. 2012, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/decision/2012/romney-repeats-sharp-criticism-of-obama-on-libya-egypt-attacks/2012/09/12/31074af4-fcdf-11e1-b153-218509a954e1\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/decision/2012/romney-repeats-sharp-criticism-of-obama-on-libya-egypt-attacks/2012/09/12/31074af4-fcdf-11e1-b153-218509a954e1_story.html).
  13. "TKO: Candy Crowley Calls Libya for Obama," *Politico*, 17 Oct. 2012, <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/1012/82510.html>.
  14. On Romney's internal polls see, Noam Schreiber, "Exclusive: The Internal Polls That Made Mitt Romney Think He'd Win," *The New Republic*, 30 Nov. 2012, <http://www.tnr.com/blog/plank/110597/exclusive-the-polls-made-mitt-romney-think-hed-win>.
  15. 2012 presidential exit poll, <http://www.cnn.com/election/2012/results/race/president>.
  16. "Obama to Iran and Israel: 'As President of the United States, I Don't Bluff,'" *The Atlantic*, 2 March 2012, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/03/obama-to-iran-and-israel-as-president-of-the-united-states-i-dont-bluff/253875/>.
  17. For a visual demonstration of polarization, see "Senate Gridlock Explained in One Chart," *The Atlantic Wire*, 8 March 2012, <http://www.theatlanticwire.com/national/2012/03/us-senate-now-completely-polarized/49641/>.
  18. "Jesse Helms," *Almanac of American Politics* 2000, <http://nationaljournal.com/pubs/almanac/2000/people/nc/ncsl.htm>.
  19. *Congressional Record*, 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> session, p. S7366 (4 Dec. 2012), <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CREC-2012-12-04/pdf/CREC-2012-12-04-pt1-PgS7365-2.pdf#page=2>.
  20. On Collins' significance in Rice's demise, see the *Washington Post's* Chris Cillizza, at <https://twitter.com/TheFix/status/279638796679659520> (14 Dec. 2012).
  21. Jeffrey Goldberg made this point the most consistently; see <https://twitter.com/JeffreyGoldberg/status/279338675991633921> (13 Dec. 2012); <https://twitter.com/JeffreyGoldberg/status/279625422759657474> (14 Dec. 2012).
  22. As Yochi Dreazen has observed, that Kerry was the only credible alternative to Rice testifies to the short Democratic "bench" for key national security posts. Yochi Dreazen, "For Secretaries of Defense and State, Democratic Bench Is Far Too Short," *Washington Post*, 14 Dec. 2012, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/for-secretaries-of-defense-and-state-democrats-short-list-is-far-too-short/2012/12/14/27ad6194-4610-11e2-9648-a2c323a991d6\\_story\\_1.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/for-secretaries-of-defense-and-state-democrats-short-list-is-far-too-short/2012/12/14/27ad6194-4610-11e2-9648-a2c323a991d6_story_1.html).
  23. BBC World Service, "Global Poll: Obama Overwhelmingly Preferred to Romney," 22 Oct. 2012, [http://globescan.com/images/pressreleases/bbc2012\\_obama/GlobeScan-BBC\\_US-Election-Poll\\_Oct2012.pdf](http://globescan.com/images/pressreleases/bbc2012_obama/GlobeScan-BBC_US-Election-Poll_Oct2012.pdf).
  24. Leon Wieseltier, "Losing Hope on Israeli-Palestinian Peace," *The New Republic*, 6 Dec. 2012, <http://www.tnr.com/article/politics/magazine/110888/losing-hope-on-Israeli-Palestinian-peace#> (accessed 10 Dec. 2012). If, in fact, little progress in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations occurs between now and 2016, it might be that the election ultimately had little impact on policy toward Israel. Mitt Romney, after all, had speculated that as president, he would "recognize that this is going to remain an unsolved problem. We live with that in China and Taiwan. All right, we have a potentially volatile situation but we sort of live with it, and we kick the ball down the field and hope that ultimately, somehow, something will happen and resolve it." "Kicking the Can," *The Economist*, 20 Sept. 2012, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2012/09/mitt-romney-israel>.

## Obama's Second Term Search for Policy Leverage

Jeremi Suri

Despite the economic pressures that seem to consume Barack Obama's politics, this second-term president will define himself and his legacy by his foreign policy choices. Like previous reelected office holders, the president will have the most freedom for action in his decisions about war and peace. These decisions will not be easy, and they will not center on a particular region or a particular set of issues. American citizens will continue to demand more evidence of strength and achievement, but they will also expect results at a lower cost. Setting careful priorities, patiently exploring new options, and exercising disciplined restraint will become ever more difficult. Our politics of partisanship, bombast, and erratic action will surely infect deliberations about foreign policy.

Even more than in his first term, President Obama will confront a shattering international landscape, with many contradictory qualities. The world is moving in multiple directions at the same time: toward democracy and authoritarianism; toward secularism and religious intolerance; and, most striking of all, toward more large hegemonic states and more small actors capable of challenging the hegemons. Obama will have to deal with threats of diverse kinds, few of which will imperil basic American security, but most of which will affect American wealth and power. In a period of economic precariousness at home, small shifts in international relationships will matter more than ever before for an anxious and insecure American public. Citizens will not call for large foreign interventions on the model of the Iraq War, but they will demand assertive use of the nation's power to protect markets, resources, and the country's honor. We should expect more limited uses of American force abroad, not fewer. We should, however, expect fewer foreign occupations and promises of nation-building.

As Americans confront their own internal difficulties of democratic governance, they will want to reaffirm their credentials as symbolic democratizers abroad. This will mean continued support for efforts to disempower authoritarians, fundamentalists, and the few remaining communists. The United States will offer assistance from a distance with technology rather than soldiers, rhetorical pressure rather than direct economic aid. Echoing Woodrow Wilson, Americans will still seek a world made safe for democracy. They will also look to positive international developments for democratic inspiration at home.

In the last decade, scholars of American foreign relations have broadened our understanding of how culture, memory, language, race, gender, and emotion influence the making of American foreign policy. Historians have also expanded our understanding of how American actions affect other societies. Scholars have, however, given much less rigorous attention to the influence of "others" on American policy. In a time of domestic stalemate and economic austerity, President Obama will look to foreign opportunities where he can exercise his executive power, enhance his standing at home, and discredit his domestic detractors. Instead of the traditional Cold War binaries between allies and adversaries, he will look to create shifting assortments of opportunities, threats, and points of leverage. Foreign actors will grow in domestic importance as catalysts to break the lethargy of a lumbering political system.

In his first term President Obama shied away from cultivating foreign leaders as his political allies. He gave a number of major foreign policy addresses in Cairo, Oslo, and other cities, but he generally sought to focus on managing America's many far-flung activities from the White House. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was the one who met extensively with leaders in Europe, the Middle East, East Asia, and other regions. By most accounts, Secretary Clinton was effective, but the absence of the president abroad meant that he did not benefit from a closeness with foreign leaders that he could translate into prestige and persuasion within the United States. In the case of Israel, Obama's distant relationship with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu became a major political liability, especially among members of Congress.

The president will act differently in his second term. As he faces more frustration around Washington, he will work harder to leverage his popularity overseas. This will mean more high-profile foreign tours, including meetings with large, enthusiastic crowds and intimate summits with foreign leaders. Obama will not only use these trips to

As he faces more frustration around Washington, he will work harder to leverage his popularity overseas. This will mean more high-profile foreign tours, including meetings with large, enthusiastic crowds and intimate summits with foreign leaders. Obama will not only use these trips to bolster his image, he will make the case that parts of his domestic agenda are necessary for the country's international standing.

bolster his image, he will make the case that parts of his domestic agenda are necessary for the country's international standing. Controversial issues that split the American electorate—including immigration, arms control, education, and the environment—are susceptible to public opinion shifts when framed in terms of national security rather than good governance.

In addition, Obama will try to re-frame other volatile issues under an international umbrella: health care, infrastructure, and, of course, basic social welfare entitlements. The president will claim that despite

the philosophical objections of many in the United States, all of these programs are necessary to keep the country capable, competitive, and respected among its peers as well as feared among its adversaries. International imperatives may give Obama a credible foundation for challenging Republican orthodoxies. After all, the Republicans still claim to be the party that is committed to national security and to the global economy. Obama will try to turn those commitments to his purposes.

This is a pattern, of course, that other presidents have followed with mixed success in their second terms. Dwight Eisenhower, Ronald Reagan, and Bill Clinton all gained domestic popularity at the end of their presidencies through displays of international capability. They challenged domestic orthodoxies inherited, respectively, from the New Deal, the Great Society, and the Reagan Revolution. The second-term Cold War leaders manipulated foreign pressures to deconstruct domestic policy patterns. They also used foreign pressures to discredit respected figures—Adlai Stevenson, Edward Kennedy, and Newt Gingrich—with strong standing at home, but little international experience.

As evidence of their international capability, second-term presidents pursued a series of "grand bargains" among long-standing foreign adversaries. Eisenhower pushed for a multinational agreement to restrain the growth of nuclear arsenals. He brought the leaders of the two Cold War blocs together, but he did not complete the major agreement he sought. Reagan famously encouraged and cajoled Mikhail Gorbachev to end the forced Soviet domination of Eastern Europe. Reagan and his successor, George H.W. Bush, managed this process with remarkably little violence, but the civil war in the former Yugoslavia became a damaging mark on this legacy. Clinton devoted

his final presidential energies to negotiating a peace between Israeli and Palestinian leaders. He came very close but failed to force a settlement. Clinton's lack of success encouraged a self-fulfilling fatalism for many Americans about the apparently irresolvable violence in the Middle East.

These historical examples are instructive for Obama because they show that although foreign activities in a second term can increase leverage at home, they rarely produce the intended results. Eisenhower used his prestige as an effective national leader to restrain impulses for new spending on social welfare programs, but he could not prevent a growth in federal expenditures for infrastructure, education, law enforcement, and unnecessary military programs. Reagan similarly used his international advocacy for the spread of freedom to extol the values of a smaller government at home, but he could not end the expansion of Social Security, Medicare, and other expensive domestic entitlement programs. Clinton leveraged the post-Cold War peace to create the first balanced budgets in almost thirty years, but he remained tied to policies that gutted social welfare and protected spending on expensive military systems of questionable strategic value. Although each of these presidents acquired a legislative boost from his ascending international image, none of them gained enough from this boost to overcome the inherited barriers to an ambitious domestic agenda.

President Obama appears to understand this history. His first decisions since his reelection display a determination to maximize his international standing and capitalize on it for whatever leverage is possible at home. For the most prominent foreign policy positions, secretary of state and secretary of defense, he has chosen established political figures with deep knowledge of international affairs and extensive experience with domestic maneuvering. John Kerry and Charles Hagel will not bring transformative strategic ideas to American policymaking, but they will not take rash action, either. Kerry and Hagel are often outspoken, but they are deliberative consensus-builders. They are committed to strong but cautious deployments of American power, with an emphasis on pragmatism and limited risks. They are also close and trusted friends of the president. Kerry and Hagel will lobby for Obama's priorities abroad and at home. They will also amplify the already strong influence of another former senator, Vice President Joseph Biden.

John Brennan, the president's pick for director of the Central Intelligence Agency, is the architect of the Obama administration's counterterrorism strategy. He has played a central role in the expansion of American unmanned drone strikes in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, and other suspected terrorist locations. Brennan brings less political value to the president than Kerry and Hagel, but he provides the technocratic and political acumen to manage the expanded use of targeted force at minimal cost and with minimal transparency. Brennan understands the intelligence bureaucracy, he has respect on Capitol Hill, and he already has the international relationships to assist American covert activities overseas. If Kerry and Hagel will be the public face of Obama's foreign policy, Brennan will dominate the operational management.

Thomas Donilon, the president's national security advisor, does not have the high-level political experience of Kerry and Hagel or the deep technical expertise of Brennan, but he is a smart tactician with the organizational skills to keep the members of the team focused on the president's priorities and coordinated in their efforts. He plays less the part of Henry Kissinger the strategist and more the role of McGeorge Bundy, manager for foreign policy deliberations. As was evident in the months around the attack on Benghazi and the presidential election, his role is crucial in keeping the administration focused on addressing international

crises effectively, minimizing potential damage to the president and maximizing domestic opportunities.

This Kremlinology of the second-term Obama cabinet maps closely onto the historical insight that the president must look for modest but worthwhile foreign policy successes that he can translate into increased domestic support for his larger agenda. Obama has, in fact, assembled a team that is, by personality and experience, drawn to this precise mode of behavior. In his second term we can therefore expect decisive action with little risk-taking, more deployment of American power with little permanence, and more regional thinking with less global strategic integration. Obama will look for focused opportunities and regional achievements, but he will be content to accept the status quo in places where American options are constrained, and he will resist the temptation to articulate anything like a grand strategy. He will bet on leverage from small victories abroad that translate into incremental advances at home. He will also accept present circumstances over uncertain alternatives in both settings.

With regard to China, Russia, and Pakistan, we should not expect any major shifts in the first-term posture of cautious engagement. The United States has few good options for pushing these governments very much, and the benefits of open, friendly relations far outweigh the costs of estrangement. The same is true for the new regimes in Egypt and other states that have emerged from the Arab Spring and the burst of participatory politics in the Middle East. American options are very limited, and engagement with new governments offers the most promising route to stability, at least during the next four years.

For Iran and North Korea, however, the administration's calculus will be different. Obama has a lot to lose if either of these states expands its nuclear capabilities or pursues new belligerent actions. The president is likely to look for a win in one of these simmering crises, probably through a major overture for some kind of grand bargain in the next twelve months, followed by more targeted military and economic coercion if peace overtures are rebuffed. Unchanged, the status quo will diminish the president's image as an effective leader. Crisis resolution will show him to be a strong and skilled deal-maker, worthy of partners overseas and across the domestic political aisle. The political stakes are greater, ironically, in the foreign countries where direct American interests are less significant.

We should also expect policy shifts on Cuba and Israel in Obama's second term. The fifty-year American embargo of the Caribbean island has failed to elicit political change, and the domestic constituency of first-generation refugees who support the hard-line U.S. policy is dying off. The president has already begun to pursue new openings with Cuba. The probable death of Fidel Castro in the next few years will create a moment for Obama to reach out and perhaps even visit this island just ninety miles south of Florida.

American relations with Israel are, of course, much more complicated. The domestic forces allied behind the almost unquestioning defense of the Jewish state are very strong. Israel is also the only functioning democracy in the Middle East and a reliable American ally. However, President Obama clearly believes that Israel must make more concessions to the Palestinians and end the expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied areas. He has also shown resentment toward Prime Minister Netanyahu for his frequent belligerence, condescension, and startling efforts to undermine the president within the United States.

Obama certainly has a lot to lose if he is perceived at home as anti-Israeli. He also has a lot to lose if conditions in the Middle East continue to deteriorate and he appears incapable of effective action. His best option will be a return to intensive American-sponsored negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian leaders, including elected

Hamas representatives. We should expect him to press for serious talks about a two-state solution, with promised American aid and protection for both sides. The president will claim that such a solution is necessary for peace in the Middle East as a whole, and he will argue that it will allow for a long-term reduction in American counter-terrorist operations in the region. He will seek to end his second term having created a new optimism in the United States about the prospects for peace and the alternatives to an expensive militarized policy in the Middle East. Combined with the expansion of new energy resources at home, a grand bargain on the Israeli and Palestinian territories will be part of a broader American liberation from dependence on this troubled part of the world.

Second-term presidents often benefit from important foreign policy accomplishments, and we should look for some from Obama in the Middle East and in other areas. Second-term presidents also encounter many disappointments, and Obama will have his share at home and abroad. What we should expect is a mix of modest victories and continued stalemates. The administration

will not gamble big and will not articulate a coherent strategic vision. It will take what it can get abroad, and it will work as hard as possible to translate international progress into movement on domestic issues.

Foreign policy will be one of the best levers available for pushing against the internal divisions that continue to stymie American society. Obama's greatest legacy will come from creating new sources of policy leverage for effective government action. To succeed in his second term, Obama must show that he can get some serious things done.



**THANKS!**

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# “Expand Your World”: The David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies at Brigham Young University

*Jeffrey Ringer<sup>1</sup>*

The David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies has been the hub of Brigham Young University's international activities since 1983. Named after David M. Kennedy—former secretary of the Treasury, ambassador-at-large, and ambassador to NATO—the Kennedy Center (KC) strives to build upon the unique level of international experience of BYU's students and faculty by providing opportunities on and off campus for students to expand their interest in and understanding of global affairs. The center's motto, “Expand Your World,” relates to the priority of globalizing the education of all BYU students. Although its location far from major cities or coasts might make BYU seem like an unlikely hub for international studies, the experiences and connections that the Kennedy Center gives to its students make it a truly world-class center for international learning. As the Kennedy Center continues to develop, it may provide a model for other universities seeking to better equip students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in today's globally oriented world.

## International Studies on Campus

While many universities stress the importance of gaining a strong grounding in international studies and foreign languages, Brigham Young University is uniquely positioned to make international studies a central focus. The university has an abundance of students and faculty members with foreign language skills and experience living abroad, in large part because so many of them have served as Mormon missionaries. As of fall semester 2012, 46 percent of BYU students reported having lived outside of the United States for a year or more. Seventy percent of students spoke a second language, and 31 percent were enrolled in a foreign language class (compared to 9 percent of university students nationally). For many students and faculty members, the international experience continues long after their missions; many pursue additional work or research opportunities in the areas where they served. These unique advantages give BYU a strong culture of international engagement.

Clearly the Kennedy Center did not create this unusual interest in international studies. The decision to serve a foreign mission and study foreign languages and cultures is largely a personal choice, made independently from any campus influences. However, the center is committed to building upon this pre-existing interest and giving students strong academic and professional experiences to supplement their personal ones. Jeffrey Holland, president of BYU when the Kennedy Center was created, spoke of this goal:

In the development of the David M. Kennedy Center, it is imperative that we capitalize on the now tens of thousands who do now and will yet spend long periods engaged in direct interaction with

people in all accessible nations of the world through the far-flung missionary program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.... Upon the foundation of genuine love for peoples with whom both students and faculty have lived and labored and spoken in their language, we must now build a university super-structure in which we better understand the history, culture, and institutions of these people and by which BYU will move into the forefront of the world as an informed facilitator of international understanding, communication, and peace.<sup>2</sup>

## The Organization of the Kennedy Center

With this mission in mind, the Kennedy Center focuses on three main functions that are designed to help all members of the campus community gain international education and experience: academics and research, international study programs, and events and outreach. Leadership consists of a director and associate directors who oversee each of these functional areas. Including support staff, the center employs a total of twenty people.

**Academics and Research:** The KC houses seven interdisciplinary programs, including five area studies programs (Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Asian Studies, European Studies, Latin American Studies, and Middle East Studies—Arabic) and two topical programs (International Relations [IR] and International Development). Approximately 1,000 students are enrolled in the KC majors, and the center holds its own convocation exercises each spring and summer. Each of these degree programs is coordinated by a faculty member with extensive expertise in the area. Although interdisciplinary majors are sometimes criticized for their lack of rigor, the majors at the Kennedy Center are some of the most academically challenging on campus. For example, students in the IR major are required to reach advanced proficiency in a foreign language, take advanced-level courses in economics and statistics, and complete an international internship or study abroad.

The associate director for this area also oversees the research program of the center, which grants approximately \$120,000 per year to BYU faculty to assist in research and travel to international conferences. These awards allow the Kennedy Center to play a key role in supporting quality, internationally focused research. Faculty members from across campus are invited to apply for funding to support their research, with the typical award capped at \$5,000. In response to the escalating costs of participating in international conferences and already stretched department and college budgets, several years ago the KC initiated a conference travel support program. The program recognizes

the global nature of academic discourse by supporting faculty participation in conferences that are located outside the United States. This support has allowed many junior faculty to advance their research and networking at key global meetings.

**International Study Programs (ISP):** The KC is mandated to provide operational support for all international study programs of the university. Each year over 1,500 BYU students participate in one of the over 60 programs offered annually. These programs range from traditional faculty-led study-abroad programs to internships and field research. Each of these programs is sponsored by an academic department, and the staff at the KC, under the direction of the associate director of international study programs, provides operational support.

The changing nature of study abroad has meant that the KC ISP office has changed as well. The emphasis is shifting from traditional liberal arts study-abroad programs to more skills-focused internships. Office resources are shifting in support of that move. While we continue to support traditional study abroad, more of our resources are being dedicated to the identification and management of internship opportunities. One example of this shift is the growth in the European Internship Program, which places students in the Scottish Parliament and with the European Union.

Over time, in addition to the logistics of the program, the KC has become responsible for concerns such as the health and safety of all students and faculty members while they are abroad. The changing nature of BYU's international study programs has meant that the KC has had to reorganize or expand to meet new needs. For example, in order to respond to the changing international security environment, the KC became one of the first university centers to hire a full-time security analyst in 2004 to monitor and assess the security climates of each country our students are studying in. Responding to campus academic imperatives, as well as forces and trends in international study beyond our campus, ensures that the KC continues to add value to what colleges and departments, as well as individual faculty and students, do at the university.

**Events and Outreach:** Since its founding, the KC has focused on providing students with a broadening of their university experience through campus events geared toward international studies. The center typically hosts or coordinates 150 events per year under the direction of the associate director of events and outreach. One highlight is the long-standing Wednesday lecture, when students and faculty hear from and ask questions of foreign ambassadors, politicians, business leaders, prominent academics, and other leading thinkers. Another highlight is the book-of-the-semester lecture. Each semester a book on an important global topic is chosen and the campus is invited to read it. The KC then hosts the author on campus for a series of lectures related to the book. As technology has developed, the center has moved more of its content online, and all lectures can now be accessed via podcast or video recording, greatly expanding the listening and viewing audience.

Whether through the sponsorship of lectures or the distribution of free copies of the *New York Times*, the KC strives to promote activities that relate to a key goal: to enrich the education of every student on campus, whether they are majoring in a KC program or not. While other departments sponsor occasional activities that benefit the campus as a whole, for the most part their efforts are rightly focused on their majors. Mindful of its founding mission, the Kennedy Center maintains a broader view and hopes to expand the world of all BYU students.

## Challenges and Opportunities

Although the Kennedy Center has received generous support from the central administration over the years, its organization as a center rather than a school presents continuing challenges. The key distinction between the school and center models is that the center model, without its own dedicated faculty, relies fundamentally on the ability to establish good relations with other actors on campus. Resources are always scarce on university campuses, and BYU is no exception. Often an innovative program launched in one area of campus has negative resource implications for another. Despite these difficulties, there is benefit to this creative tension. It requires communication and coordination across campus and forces programs out of the silos they might otherwise inhabit.

Given that the organization's survival rests on relationships, it is essential to demonstrate how the center provides value to the campus. Deans and chairs must view the KC as beneficial to their work; otherwise the natural forces on campus would eventually eat away at its mission. Providing security analysis and logistical support for students abroad, assisting departments in hosting visiting lecturers, and providing funds to support conferences or individual faculty research are all examples of adding value to the work of campus partners and strengthen the position of the center on campus.

Since so many resources at a university flow through typical academic lines of colleges and departments, centers can often be left out of the loop. The KC benefits from a generous budget allocation from the central administration, but the fundraising imperative is also increasingly apparent. Although well behind many of the traditional colleges in terms of fundraising, the Kennedy Center has attempted to advance in this area by forming its own advisory board and reaching out to alumni in key cities by holding events and lectures on location. It is early in the effort, but the initial response has been very positive.

## Conclusion

For thirty years the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies has worked to go above and beyond its basic responsibilities as an international center and truly "expand the world" of BYU students. By building on a student body that is already internationally minded, coupling rigorous academics with hands-on international experiences, and striving to provide on-campus international experiences on (at least) a weekly basis, the Kennedy Center is helping to produce a talented and competent cadre of globally minded graduates.

### Notes:

1. The author wishes to thank Noah Driggs for his assistance in preparing the article. Driggs is a recent graduate from Brigham Young University in International Relations, where he received a Kennedy Scholars Award and a FLAS Scholarship in Korean, as well as being a participant in Sigma Iota Rho (the international relations honor society) and the BYU Model United Nations program.
2. Speech, Jeffrey R. Holland, "The Mission of the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies," 17 November 1983.

# Affirmative Action and Conservative Republicans: The Foreign Service a Century Ago

*Richard Hume Werking*

## Introduction

The term “affirmative action” did not attain common usage until the 1960s or 1970s, but its practice by the U.S. government began long before. Today we tend to identify affirmative action with race or gender. Yet the concept has a broader application and a more established pedigree, such as when the U.S. State Department recruited individuals for a modernizing Foreign Service more than a hundred years ago.

The U. S. Constitution gives the President authority to appoint “by and with the consent of the Senate... Ambassadors, other public Ministers, and Consuls” to represent our country abroad.<sup>1</sup> By tradition, a nation’s diplomats (ambassadors and ministers) have been stationed in foreign capitals to negotiate with the host governments, while consuls have been posted in foreign commercial

centers to aid their countrymen -- merchants, sailors, and other travelers – overseas.

Although it was not until 1924 that America’s separate diplomatic and consular branches were unified into a single “Foreign Service of the United States,” much of the heavy lifting to modernize the Foreign Service was accomplished before World War I. Between 1905 and 1913, able State Department officials would institute a number of reforms, building a merit-based, career-oriented system that established rigorous written and oral examinations for appointment and awarded promotions on the basis of demonstrated performance. They faced significant obstacles in this undertaking.

## Combatting the Spoils System

During much of the nineteenth century it was common practice for newly elected presidents to reward political allies by replacing incumbent consular and diplomatic officers with “deserving” members of their own party, regardless of qualifications. Even when capable men were appointed (and in those days it was only men), their tenure in office was usually limited to the years their party had control of the White House. When the party changed, so too did the incumbents of almost all the overseas posts. Few men, if any, could look forward to a foreign-service career.

The U.S. Civil Service was created in 1883 to remove government positions from the political spoils system, but the law’s provisions did not extend to consuls and diplomats. And so politically connected office-seekers began to target appointment to these offices even more intently. Each of the four presidential elections from 1884 to 1896 switched control of the White House back and forth between Republicans and Democrats; the turnover rate among the consuls after the 1892 and 1896 elections was about 90%.<sup>2</sup> This cycle was finally broken by a string of three Republican presidencies lasting from 1897 to 1913.

During the 1890s a coalition of civil service reformers, businessmen, and a few State Department officials began the slow and arduous process of pressuring Congress to reform the consular service. While both the diplomatic and consular branches needed overhauling, it was the consular service that received almost all of the reformers’ attention. Career diplomat Henry White, in an 1894 letter to Senator John Morgan, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, even urged reformers to go slow in trying to reform the diplomatic service, “about which the general public, I fear, know and care very little.” He suggested that for the time being they focus their attention on the consular service, which “is better known by – and appeals to the sympathies of – our people.”<sup>3</sup> After all, consuls dealt with matters the public could understand, such as assisting American travelers overseas, verifying invoices of goods bound to the United States, and, increasingly by the mid-1890s, promoting the nation’s exports of manufactured products by supplying U. S. businessmen with accurate and



Secretary of State Elihu Root, 1907  
*Courtesy Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Biographical Files.*

timely information about opportunities abroad. Hence the reformers' goal was to remove the consular service from the spoils system and staff it with capable, career-oriented individuals who could help American products compete in foreign markets.

### Reforms and Affirmative Actions

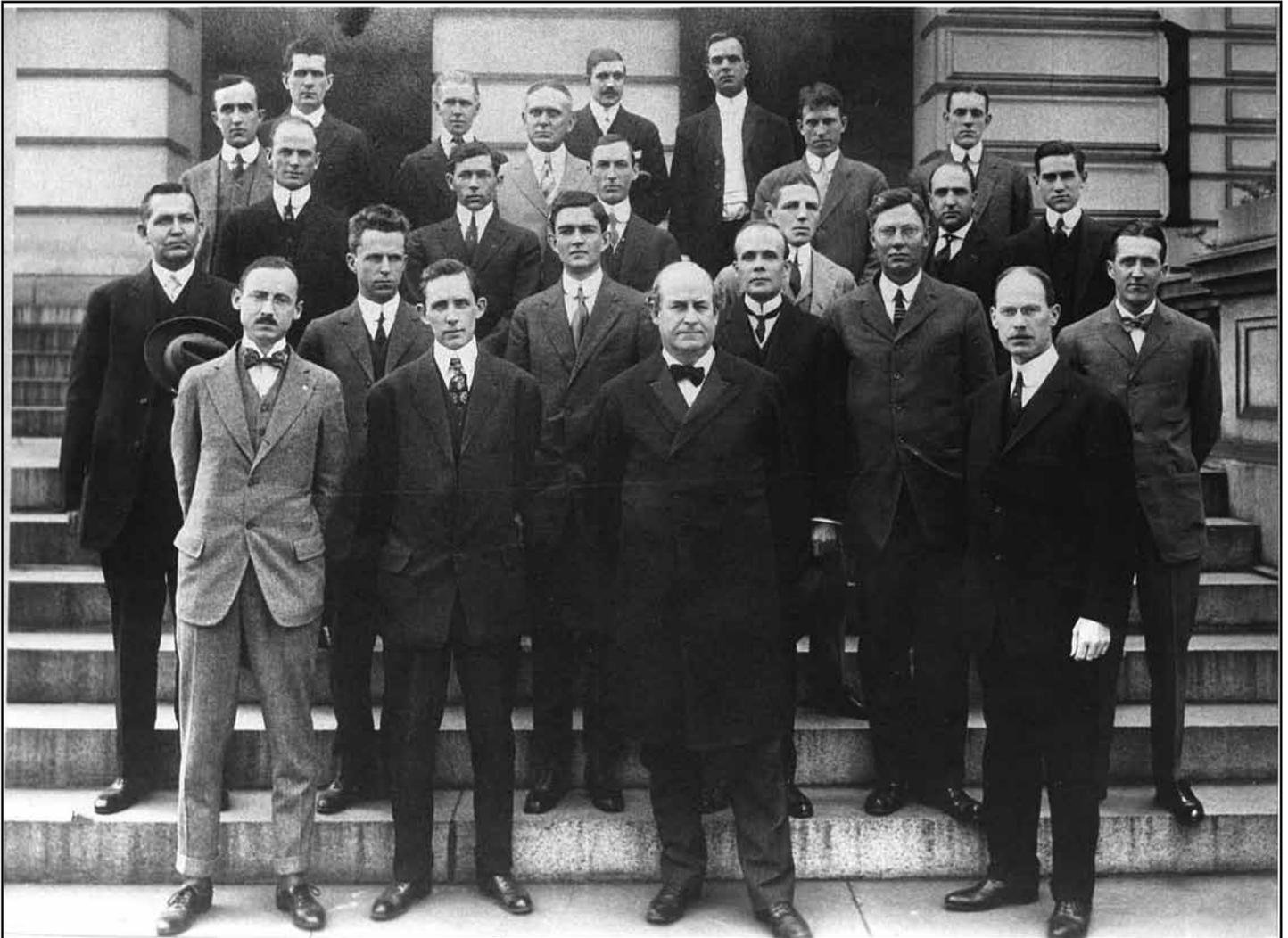
At the center of the consular reform effort was Secretary of State Elihu Root, a former corporate lawyer who had served as secretary of war and had reorganized the War Department. Once described by President Theodore Roosevelt as "the ablest man that has appeared in the public life of any country, in any position, in my time," Root in 1905 accepted Roosevelt's invitation to take the helm at State.<sup>4</sup>

The new Secretary wasted little time. With the strong support of business and civil service groups, he soon engineered a combination of congressional legislation and presidential executive orders that made significant changes to the consular service, including a requirement that appointees pass rigorous written and oral examinations. He believed that if the new system was well established by the time Roosevelt left office, no succeeding president could overturn it. (Unlike enacted legislation, executive

orders are not binding on subsequent administrations.)

Hoping to attract good candidates to come forward and apply to take the examinations, Root provided magazine and newspaper editors with detailed information about the reforms.<sup>5</sup> But in addition to this general publicity, he also undertook a much more targeted campaign. In the process he pursued a form of affirmative action that was intended to recruit individuals with Democratic leanings or connections.

Root and other State Department officials were acutely aware that almost all of the incumbent consuls had been appointed by Republican presidents at the behest of their fellow politicians. They knew that if the new system was to survive when the next Democratic president came into office, there had to be a respectable number of Democrats in the service. Otherwise they would not be able to persuade the new president and the Democrats in the Senate that the system was fair and not a gimmick for entrenching Republicans in federal jobs. Because in those years the American South provided the richest field for harvesting potential candidates who were likely to be Democrats (how times change), the State Department made special efforts to recruit applicants from the southern states by means of what one officer termed "constant propagandā" directed at southern colleges and southern senators. Years later



*A group of new consular officers, 1914, pictured on the State Department steps with three Department officials. Front row, right to left: Wilbur J. Carr, Director of the Consular Service and often called "the father of the Foreign Service"; Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan; Herbert C. Hengstler, Chief of the Consular Bureau. Courtesy National Archives at College Park, Still Picture Branch, Picture #59-M-135.*

Root reminisced about his recruitment campaign. "I used constantly to send round 'Dear Senator, we want a man from Georgia, or Alabama, or Mississippi, for Consul. Cannot you find a good man who can pass the examination?' Very slowly we succeeded in getting them."<sup>6</sup> The Secretary was practicing what *Washington Post* columnist Robert Samuelson has termed "a mild and pragmatic affirmative action," defined as one which "emphasizes aggressive recruiting" among groups that are significantly underrepresented in an organization.<sup>7</sup>

Under the new arrangements, the department decided which applicants would be designated by the president to take the examination. Qualified applicants from southern states often received preference over persons with approximately the same qualifications from "overrepresented" areas. One ranking State Department officer even kept what he called a "quota" system, listing each state's "share" of consular appointments based on its proportion of the national population. Six years into the reformed system, fully half the new appointees were from the southern states. When the next Democratic president, Woodrow Wilson, was elected in 1912, the new system passed scrutiny, and it continued to do so. The massive turnovers of earlier decades became a thing of the past.

### The Conservative as Institution-Builder

Instrumental in reforming the two government departments he led, Root was nevertheless a staunch conservative. In his aptly titled biography, *Elihu Root and the Conservative Tradition*, Richard W. Leopold notes that the liberal reformers of the time justifiably regarded Root as "the epitome of conservatism." While a U.S. senator in the years following his State Department tour, elected by the legislature in his home state of New York, he fought unsuccessfully the constitutional amendment that provided for the election of U.S. senators by popular vote; he retired from the Senate without seeking another term. He also opposed women's suffrage.<sup>8</sup>

Root was an institution-builder, an aspect of conservatism that today seems to have gone out of fashion for many nominal conservatives. In 1909 he described himself to the New York State Legislature as "a convinced and uncompromising nationalist of the school of Alexander Hamilton." And in his 1903 address to a convention of the Interstate National Guard Association while he was secretary of war, he declared his appreciation for the members' contributions by emphasizing the importance of the kind of institution-building he himself engaged in. "One of the saving things about doing work in the public service is that it is work for all time" he said. "You and I come and go; what we do for ourselves dies with us; but the great country, the institution, lives;...and what these men ... are doing is laying stones in the structure of national strength that will endure century by century."<sup>9</sup>

Root believed that it was in America's national interest to deploy a modern, efficient, and competent foreign service. He knew that if he and other officials at State were going to succeed in building something that would last, they had to reach out and make special efforts -- for practical reasons -- to recruit people from a group that was woefully underrepresented in that service. Only by doing so could they secure the requisite amounts of "buy-in," agreement, and cooperation in what was supposed to be, after all, a common endeavor.

Notes:

1. *Constitution of the United States of America*, Article 2, Section 2.
2. George McAneny, "How Other Countries Do It," *Century* 57 (February 1899), p. 611; "Changes in the Consular Service," unsigned and undated memorandum, Consular Bureau Decisions and Precedents, RG 59, Records of the U.S. Department of State, National Archives at College Park (NACP), College Park, MD.
3. White to Morgan, May 23, 1894, Henry White Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
4. Henry B. Needham, "Mr. Root and the State Department," *World's Work*, 11 (November 1905), p. 6835.
5. Root to Albert Shaw, March 23, 1907, file 1592/8a, RG 59, NACP.
6. "Consular Bureau: Duties and Functions," n.d. but apparently 1911, in Reports of Clerks and Bureau Officers, RG 59, NACP; Root to George Wickersham, May 17, 1919, National Civil Service League Papers, U.S. Civil Service Commission Library, Washington, D.C.
7. *Washington Post*, March 1, 1995, p. A21.
8. Richard W. Leopold, *Elihu Root and the Conservative Tradition* (Boston, MA, 1954), 176, 76-77.
9. "Address of Hon. Elihu Root to the Legislature of New York Accepting His Election to the United States Senate," January 28, 1909, Root Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; "Military Preparedness the Guaranty of Peace," in Robert Bacon and James B. Scott, eds., *The Military and Colonial Policy of the United States* (Cambridge, MA, 1916), p. 149. Root was a graduate of Hamilton College in Clinton, New York, whose Root-Jessup Public Affairs Society today honors both his memory and that of another distinguished jurist, Philip C. Jessup. <http://www.hamilton.edu/catalogue/cultural-life>

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS TO HOST THE 2014 SHAFR SUMMER INSTITUTE

The SHAFR Summer Institute Oversight Committee welcomes proposals to host the 2014 SHAFR Summer Institute. The Institute is intended to provide advanced graduate students and/or junior faculty with the chance to engage in intense discussion with senior scholars on topics and methodologies related to the study of foreign policy and/or international history. It also serves as an opportunity for all participants, senior scholars included, to test out ideas and themes related to their own research.

To underwrite the Institute, SHAFR provides \$45,000, which includes a \$5,000 stipend for each of the two co-organizers; a small stipend, travel, and room expenses for the participants; and other costs. Organizers are encouraged to seek additional funding, either by subsidies or in-kind support, from their home institutions. Prior Institutes and their themes have been: "War and Foreign Policy: America's Conflicts in Vietnam and Iraq in Historical Perspective;" "Turning Points in the Cold War;" "Decisions and History;" "Freedom and Free Markets: The Histories of Globalization and Human Rights;" "Does Culture Matter? The Emotions, the Senses, and Other New Approaches to the History of US Foreign/ International Relations;" and, in 2013, "The International History of Nuclear Weapons."

The Institute can take place in the five days prior to or just following the annual SHAFR conference in June 2014 which will be held at the University of Kentucky on June 19-21, 2014. The Institute can be held at the host's home institution or at the SHAFR conference site.

Those interested in applying to host in 2014 should prepare a proposal including (1) title of the Institute they wish to conduct; (2) brief description (one page) of the themes to be pursued during the Institute and how it will be organized; (3) preferred audience (grad students, junior faculty, or both); (4) a statement on funding secured from home institutions; and (5) contact information and c.v. of the co-organizers. Proposals should be sent to **shafr@osu.edu** by **May 1, 2013**. Questions can be directed to Peter L. Hahn, Executive Director, at **Hahn.29@osu.edu**.

# A Historian Goes to Washington: The Merits of Taking a Working Vacation from the Ivory Tower

*Jonathan R. Hunt*

The esteemed delegate from Indonesia rose from his chair in the eleventh row of the World Forum in The Hague. The Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) was debating a South African proposal to amend sub-paragraph 9.4 of the final conference report. Three states would not destroy their chemical weapons by the extended deadline of April 2012. Many delegations wanted to add a clause reminding those states of their treaty obligations. The crux of the issue was how to reconcile the statutory universality of the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) with the facts on the ground. The CWC had required its 188 signatories to rid themselves of chemical weapons by April 2007, and the deadline had already been pushed back by five years. But because of the massive quantities of deadly and difficult-to-dispose-of chemical weapons stockpiled by the United States and Soviet Union during the Cold War, and the Libyan uprising the previous summer, the United States, Russia, and Libya would inevitably fall short of the new finish line.

Umar Hadi, Indonesia's envoy to the OPCW, wanted to remind the delinquent states of the price of breaking promises in the international arena. After acknowledging the ticklish circumstances and extolling the progress made to date, he concluded his speech with a quotation from a "popular Hollywood movie." "With great power comes great responsibility," he reminded the assembly, reciting Uncle Ben's deathbed counsel to a young Peter Parker in the 2002 release of *Spider-Man*.

As a comic book fan I was thrilled by this illustration of American superhero culture's global reach, but I was also struck by how neatly this dictum encapsulated the power dynamics at work in international law and organizations. Political scientists, legal experts, and policymakers tend to regard international treaties such as the CWC and institutions such as the OPCW as immutable entities bereft of history. National historians have untangled how domestic legal regimes codify hegemonic ideas about class, race, gender, nature, and community and have diagnosed how contestation of these ideas by social protest movements can bring about cultural, social, political, and, eventually, legal change. The realm of international law is no different. No scholar can look closely at the nuclear nonproliferation regime, for instance, and deny how levers of soft and hard power influence the making of international law, norms, and institutions. Mr. Hadi's remarks offered a piquant example of how forums such as the OPCW serve to lubricate the workings of world affairs, which remain in significant ways the Hobbesian jungle described by Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, where "the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what

they must." In today's international system crisscrossed with nongovernmental organizations, transnational connections, and supranational councils, the weak at least must no longer suffer in silence.

The hours of debate I had just sat through at the World Forum were a testament to that emancipatory clamor. It was Friday, December 2, 2011, the fifth and final day of the conference, and it was gray and overcast in The Hague. I was in some disbelief at being there in the penultimate row—the cheap seats—of the World Forum, where they put invited NGOs such as the International Green Cross (known as Global Green USA in the States). I had been a fellow at Global Green the previous summer. The Indonesian emissary having ended on his comic high note, I listened as the Indian delegate expressed her hopes that representatives present from 131 states would find the common language needed to achieve a world free of chemical weapons. The British chairman was busy guiding the delegations through the long and laborious process of registering full and total agreement to the thirty-page conference report's every section, sub-section, and clause. The proceedings struck me as an uncanny mixture of Kafka's *The Trial* and a half-remembered Super Bowl commercial in which a posse of tired and outnumbered cowboys drove an ocean of housecats across the Great Plains.

The route that I had taken to the OPCW conference had been roundabout and unforeseen. I had arrived in the Netherlands on the express train from Paris two nights before, after Paul Walker, my former boss at Global Green USA, extended me an invitation when I swung through DC at Thanksgiving. Paul and I had recently published an article on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Soviet-American summit at Reykjavik, Iceland, on October 11–12, 1986, when U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev famously—or infamously—came within a hair's breadth of ridding the world of nuclear weapons. He was happy with how the article and some accompanying op-eds and publicity pieces about the anniversary had turned out. Since I would be in Europe for six months looking at the origins of the nuclear nonproliferation regime, he offered to add my name to the IGC's delegate list. I had never been to an international meeting before and jumped at the chance to watch multilateral diplomacy in action.

I had found myself working for Paul through a strange alchemy of fortuitous error, personal conviction, and professional fear. Like most doctoral students in history, I keep an eye out for grants and fellowships to fund my research. As Matthew Connelly and others have pointed out, the challenges of doing international history are the need to learn multiple languages, sleuth in numerous and oft-unwelcoming archives, and have it all eventually cohere into a defensible dissertation. Students not only

have to spend months and years abroad learning the relevant languages and documents, but also must apply for enough funding to pay for it all. So when I saw the email promoting a summer-long fellowship in the nation's capital, administered by the University of Texas system, I thought I had struck research gold. Here was the chance to spend three months working in the Library of Congress and the National Archives, among other places, before I began my international travels. I would knock out the balance of my U.S.-based research in one fell, funded swoop and start my research abroad with the U.S. side already well fleshed out.

I should have read the solicitation more closely. About a month after applying, I found myself sitting in front of a six-person committee in the University of Texas at Austin's iconic Tower, explaining why I wanted to hitch my historian's wagon to a policy train. The inaugural Archer Center Graduate Program in Public Policy was, in point of fact, established to help place promising graduate students in appropriate positions in Washington, D.C. If I accepted the assignment, I would spend my time helping to shape foreign policy rather than investigating its past.

At first, I considered declining the offer. Most doctoral candidates are advised to bear down on their research and writing and above all to finish their dissertation rather than pursue outside interests. Even an article for an academic journal is considered an extracurricular project to chip away at on the weekends or vacation. But I have always been electrified by history's capacity to help society understand and resolve today's controversies and challenges. This is perhaps a questionable trait in a historian. The present, many historians warn, limits and skews our hindsight. We assign pejoratives such as "impressionistic," "journalistic," or "presentist" to historical works deemed colored by present-day agendas and concerns. Yet historians have always pondered the co-existence of their professional and personal selves. In a now classic article for the *American Historical Review*, "The Age of Reinterpretation," C. Vann Woodward wrote that "[a]s responsible human beings we are rightly concerned first of all with the impact of these events upon the present and immediate future. But as historians we are, or we should be, concerned with their effect upon our view of the past as well."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, it is problematic to try and divorce our beliefs from our work. Historians have questioned the validity of an objective approach since at least the publication of Peter Novick's *That Noble Dream* in 1988. Our upbringings, our principles, and our identities permeate our scholarship and imbue it with meaning. This passion is and ought to be leavened by the methods and standards instilled by graduate education and the scrutiny of our professional milieu. It is, after all, the marriage of vigor to rigor that gives scholarly history its significance and authority.

And so, despite my reservations and those of my parents, who aspired to see their youngest finish school one day, I accepted the fellowship and applied to a host of positions, ranging from the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the Cold War International History Project to the Institute for Science and International Security and the Council for a Livable World. Beyond my growing interest in how history and policy intersect, I had three reasons for doing so. First, I wanted to live and work in DC again. My short stint as a research fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars the previous summer had whetted my appetite for the capital's intellectual

and political life. The sense that big decisions were being made a stone's throw from my room on Capitol Hill was admittedly heady, but the knowledge that senior colleagues at the Wilson Center were enriching these debates was truly gratifying. Second, I had gone straight into doctoral classes from intensive Russian-language studies in Moscow my final summer as an undergraduate. I wanted the chance to work on behalf of a cause in which I believed before I began to apply for professorships. Finally, the unfolding crisis in the academic job market made forging connections to the policy community seem like a good idea. I had heard one too many horror stories about top-notch applicants struggling to get an AHA interview. I wanted a professional backstop that would challenge me and pay more than minimum wage while allowing me to re-enter the academic job market as soon as possible.

From my options I chose a position at Global Green USA's Security and Sustainability Program. Their mission at the crossroads of environmental policy and arms control neatly fitted my passions, and Paul Walker, who is an international expert on weapons of mass destruction, arms control, Track 2 diplomacy, and the military's past and present environmental footprint, assured me that I would have the freedom and time to work on my dissertation. I was fortunate to have advisors that supported my choice. I promised them that I would

spend my spare moments in the region's wealth of archives and finish a dissertation outline by summer's end. I frankly didn't expect to spend much time away from my notes and chapters and reckoned that the office in downtown Washington would be the job's greatest asset.

My illusions were quickly dispelled. My first week on the job, I was offered the program's portfolio for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Reykjavik summit. The subject fell fifteen years beyond my dissertation's terminus, but it was nonetheless a seductive project. I had taught Soviet history, and I saw the fall of the Soviet empire against the backdrop of the Chernobyl meltdown, the collapse of the petrodollar-denominated Soviet economy, and Gorbachev's ill-starred reforms as an appealing subject for a second book. Paul thought he could get Gorbachev to visit DC for a commemorative forum on the progress (or lack thereof) in nuclear arms control since 1986 (though, sadly, health problems would ultimately preclude the visit). What became the capstone of my fellowship was a five-thousand-word article on the history and legacy of Reykjavik for a broad but learned audience. I found myself tasked with sending abstracts to *Arms Control Today*, *The Atlantic*, *Foreign Policy*, and *The New Yorker* rather than sending drafts of my specialist work to *Environmental History*, *ISIS*, or *Diplomatic History*.<sup>2</sup> I spent two months reading up on topics I knew better from the headlines and private conversations than from history books: the Strategic Defense Initiative (aka Star Wars), the Euromissiles crisis, the Committee on the Present Danger, and Reagan's equivocal and evolving record on arms control. In my office and in Lafayette Park at lunch, I leafed through Gorbachev's memoirs, the diary of Anatoly Chernyaev, his leading policy advisor, and the exceedingly helpful "Reykjavik File" from the National Security Archive. I pored over classic and recent articles by political scientists and international relations experts on the security dilemma, nuclear arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament. The authors and arguments were familiar, but I had never had the time to read them while in classes. I went to a smattering of talks

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at the Wilson Center, the U.S. Institute of Peace, the New America Foundation, and the Stimson Center that bore on the relationship between arms control, nonproliferation, and defense spending. And even though the Arms Control Association politely declined my proposal for *Arms Control Today*, they solicited my advice about an interview they were conducting with a key U.S. participant at Reykjavik. After years of classes and solitary labor in the stacks and boxes, it was refreshing to find my expertise sought after.

The remainder of the summer was spent running workshops, seminars, and roundtables, editing research publications, and getting to know my peers in the Archer program. I publicized and assisted with seminars on “The Economics of Nuclear Power” and “Scientific Engagement in the Middle East” and helped a colleague put on an event with the Kazakhstan embassy to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the closure of Semipalatinsk Nuclear Testing Grounds, the epicenter of Soviet-era nuclear testing whose grounds are among the most contaminated in the world. My office issued reports on the Pentagon’s use of microgrids to streamline energy usage and on how the Arab Spring would impact arms control and disarmament prospects in the Middle East. The *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, the seminal arms control journal whose early issues figured centrally in my historical work, accepted Paul’s and my article for publication. At first, I struggled to apply a rigorous historical methodology to a policy paper. My breakthrough came when I reflected on how histories such as Peter Kolchin’s *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom* illuminate similar historical phenomena in different geographic contexts using comparative techniques. Why not employ a similar approach, I thought, by juxtaposing today’s circumstances with those of yesteryear? By charting the degree of change and continuity I could shed light on the basic dynamics of nuclear diplomacy.

From my interactions with my Archer fellows and the policy experts, newspeople, and politicians whom we met through a series of talks and roundtables, I drew out a few salient lessons for young historians intent on making a mark on and effecting a transition to policy. First, there is a real demand for people who can write well and illustrate complex ideas with historical or real-world examples. Moreover, good editors are worth their weight in gold. Second, there is a premium placed on education and expertise in and around the federal government that makes holding a Ph.D., regardless of discipline, a valuable commodity. Finally, policymaking is in grave need of historians who can shape public debates as much as the discourses of their subfield. When I talked to current and former heads of government agencies about how they use history, they stressed the importance of “institutional memory” for an organization to comprehend its past, learn from its mistakes, and fulfill its purpose. Historians serve a vital function by preserving the collective memory, enforcing standards of accuracy, and producing useable knowledge for both themselves and the broader community. Listening for a short while to debates in the House or Senate foreign relations committees about human rights, the threat of a rising China, or nuclear proliferation, for example, turns up a jumble of infelicitous and misconceived historical analogies. Historians ought to help sort out this mess.

I never did spend as much time in the archives that summer as I had originally planned, although thankfully I was able to spend some of September and October in the boxes after finishing the Reykjavik piece. And after two months of reading and getting my feet wet in the Parisian archives, I was thrilled to rejoin Paul in The Hague for the OPCW conference. I only had a passing familiarity with arms control as it related to chemical weapons and looked forward to the educational opportunity. But most of all, I wanted to experience what it felt like to be at an international conference instead of reading about one. I

was beginning to cross-reference reports by diplomats at the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament where the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was drafted between 1964 and 1968. I hoped that getting a feel for the work being done in the hallways and behind closed doors at the World Forum would spark some insights.

The long process by which the final report was drafted gave me a few such small revelations. The lion’s share of the report was boilerplate, an enumerated list of what the multinational body could agree to confess that it had discussed during the week of meetings, consultations, presentations, mudslinging, and compromises. Two passages had stood out as stumbling blocks. The first was a further extension of the 2012 deadline for the elimination of chemical weapons by the states mentioned above. In response to a comment by the U.S. representative to the OCPW regarding Iran’s alleged NPT violations, the Islamic Republic of Iran railed against the “illegal and illegitimate efforts of the United States for maintaining its . . . reserves of chemical weapons,” and accused the United States of “crimes against humanity” for allegedly supplying Iraq with chemical munitions in the 1980s amid the Iran-Iraq War.<sup>3</sup> The U.S. response was to characterize these accusations as “poppycock.”<sup>4</sup> These traded barbs amounted to high drama at the OCPW.

It had been known for a while that the United States, Russia, and Libya would miss the April deadline. The Libyan case was more or less pardonable. Progress had been slowed by legitimate equipment failures after Mu’ammar Qaddafi renounced weapons of mass destruction in 2004 after the Iraq War began. The 2011 rebellion had brought the disarmament process to a complete halt. With the conflict having recently struck its tents like some strange and gruesome carnival, most observers were simply relieved to find that Qaddafi’s stockpiles of mustard gas had remained sealed in their canisters.

For the United States and Russia the issues were more complex, entailing factors of scale, finance, and resolve. The Soviet Union ran a sprawling chemical weapons complex, ably described by David E. Hoffmann in his superb book, *The Dead Hand: The Untold Story of the Cold War Arms Race and Its Dangerous Legacy*. In 2005, Russia declared over forty thousand tons of mustard and sarin gas, lewisite, VX, and other lethal chemical agents. By 2011, they had destroyed about 50 percent of those materials with financial and logistical help from the United States and Europe. Russia subsequently presented an updated target date of 2015. The United States has destroyed over 90 percent of its stores and has announced that it will finish its chemical weapons demilitarization by 2022. The delay of the CWC’s centerpiece—the abolition of chemical weapons by the treaty’s fifteenth anniversary—thus prompted relatively little criticism outside of Iran’s broadsides. The final report would give the offenders a respite but specify that the “Draft Decision does not provide for an open-ended timeline.”<sup>5</sup>

The second hitch in reaching an agreement on the final conference report involved chemical weapons abandoned by Japan in China during the Second World War. Japan wanted any reference to the hazardous chemicals left out of the final report, while China insisted that they be noted. The real business at international meetings is done behind closed doors, where delegates from key states hammer out deals to preserve consensus and avert a public dispute. I knew this from books and archives, but it was another thing to see it happen in real time. Regrettably, the dealmakers didn’t think I rated an invitation. Instead, from 4:30 p.m. that Friday afternoon to almost 9:30 p.m. that night, the Chinese, Japanese, and other OPCW Governing Council members deliberated in seclusion. My colleagues from the IGC and I killed time by talking about the discovery of chemical weapons dumped in the North Sea, the recent marriage of Apollo from IGC headquarters in Geneva, and

the best place to grab a late bite in Holland's second city. Paul, who had been nominated as the U.S. delegate to the OPCW only to see his nomination stonewalled by Senate Republicans, caught us up on political intricacies as Japan and China sought to win language that would best appease domestic opinion.

I learned three lessons that night. First, the late-night kebabs in The Hague are fantastic, especially if you are famished because your conference went five hours over schedule. Second, the interpreters' union that contracts with the large international community there stipulates that its members finish their workdays as per the conference schedule. Otherwise, the delegations could shanghai the translators whenever a disagreement arose, which is to say just about every time they came to work. Finally, those diplomats who ply their trade in The Hague tacitly support this arrangement. When translation services cease, the French delegate invariably stands up and voices (ironically, in English) his country's regret and disapproval. In truth, the far-from-home emissaries welcome the added incentive to finish meetings on time. It struck me, being there, that international meetings have a certain physicality that is absent from the documents. The sense of how time, space, and the diplomatic body impose real limits and incentives on negotiations has enriched my reading of personal memoirs, diplomatic papers, and historical conference minutes.

The Chinese and Japanese, among others, eventually left their round table. The record would note that the Sixteenth Conference of the States Parties to the OPCW conferred about "destruction-related issues of particular interest to [China] on [its] territory" without mentioning Japan by name and included a statement that Japan emphasized the Governing Council's role on the matter. My fly-on-the-wall experience at a focal point of international arms control was over. To celebrate, Paul invited my colleagues and me for a nightcap at his hotel. He would take the train to Geneva the next day before continuing on to Moscow to meet with the IGC's Russian bureau (the organization was founded by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1997). I would swing by Amsterdam to spend the morning in my favorite art museum, the Van Gogh, then catch the afternoon train back to Paris.

While my case is singular, I hope the story of my ill-conceived and surprising interlude in Washington may help others think imaginatively about their careers. Traditionally, historians of international affairs have been respected critics of U.S. foreign policy, much as historians of all stripes have served as public commentators and advocates on their subjects. As the disciplinary tent of what was once called U.S. diplomatic history expands to accommodate a growing host of scholars working on questions that go beyond the nation-state and bridge national communities, it is critical that we stay involved in contemporary matters. My stay in Washington, D.C., was not nearly as fraught as that of Mr. Smith, the idealistic, accidental senator from the West in Frank Capra's memorable *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. But it nonetheless impressed on me the important role historians play as arbiters of the public discourse. And as the global recession marches glumly into its fifth year, it is also crucial that history faculty and students broaden their horizons and think clearheadedly and imaginatively about non-academic career paths and employment options at policy schools. My experiences in Washington, D.C., and The Hague enriched my historical thinking and professional outlook. Most important, they strengthened my belief that historians must remain committed to bringing history out of the classroom and into the public sphere.

#### Notes:

1. C. Vann Woodward, "The Age of Reinterpretation," *American Historical Review* 66, No.1 (Oct. 1960): 1-2.
2. *The Atlantic* and *The New Yorker* were long shots. Nevertheless, I felt it was a useful exercise, and I encourage all ABDs to try their hand at it. The act of writing for a general audience helps you to think of yourself less as a student and more as an aspiring expert, and of your dissertation less as a brick in the wall and more as an intellectual springboard. Less poetically, writing for non-specialists helps you polish your answers to those two existential questions to which all doctoral candidates are eventually subjected: the polite, "cocktail party" query ("What is it, exactly, that you do?") and the job talk inquiry ("How, exactly, is this new, and why is it important?").
3. Iranian Delegation to the OPCW, "Islamic Republic of Iran's Reply to the Statement of the US Delegation," 28 November 2011. Copy of statement in author's possession.
4. U.S. Ambassador Robert P. Mikulak, U.S. Permanent Representative to the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the OPCW, "Statement and Supplement," 29 November, 2011. Copy of statement in author's possession.
5. States Parties to the OPCW, "Report of the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, 28 November-2 December 2011," 2 December 2011.

# Teaching the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan

Molly M. Wood

**Editor's Note:** This essay is part of an ongoing collaboration between Passport and the SHAFR Teaching Committee to discuss the teaching of the history of U.S. Foreign Relations. The Committee will sponsor a roundtable discussion at this year's SHAFR conference, "Teaching America to the World and the World to America," on Friday, June 21 from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. in Studio F of the Renaissance Arlington Capital View. Participants will include Chester Pach, Jessica Chapman, Kenneth Osgood, Simon Rofo, and Sandra Scanlon. **AJ**

I teach a course at Wittenberg University called The Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The course grew directly out of my participation in the inaugural (2008) SHAFR Summer Institute session at The Ohio State University on War and Foreign Policy: America's Conflicts in Vietnam and Iraq in Historical Perspective. As part of our collaborative work that week, Peter Hahn and Bob McMahon led us through a series of common readings, facilitated discussion of those and additional readings, and initiated a practical syllabus-creation exercise. They also emphasized the comparative dynamic of the SHAFR Institute, prompting me to think more broadly and explicitly about the benefits of teaching through the use of historical comparisons.

The course I developed is designed for upper-level undergraduate students who are usually history majors, political science majors, or international studies majors. The class generally consists of fifteen to eighteen students and emphasizes class discussion of readings and documentary evidence. I cannot guarantee or assume that students have any background in U.S. foreign relations history; some might not even have a strong background in history. I therefore include in my assignments and class discussions explicit consideration of historical methodologies and sources. I have also found a comparative framework to be particularly effective with students who have varied backgrounds and academic experiences. The students' responses to the course have been gratifying, as this comment from the spring of 2012 would indicate: "I loved that I was learning about something that was so relevant." But their responses have also been instrumental in the continued evolution of the course.

What follows are three selected comparative assignments, with explanations about how I access, organize, and utilize a variety of primary and secondary source materials.

## Sample Assignment 1: 9/11 in Historical Context Source Comparison: Presidential Speeches

This assignment may be shortened or expanded to cover one or multiple class periods, and it is scheduled very early in the course for two reasons: (1) because I begin the course chronologically with 9/11, then move backward to consider the many historical forces leading to 9/11, and then move forward again to the decade of war from 2003 to the present; and (2) because I use this assignment to introduce students to a variety of historical sources.

To begin, I assign students chapter 10, "Day of Infamy,"

from Emily Rosenberg's 2003 book, *A Date Which Will Live*. This book, which "examines the construction of Pearl Harbor as an icon in historical memory, commemoration, and spectacle," culminates with a chapter exploring the ways in which "political and media commentary" after 9/11 "elaborated Pearl Harbor allusions."<sup>1</sup> My intention is to encourage students to think about what "historical context" means, to consider whether it is useful to compare one historical event to another, and to think about the meanings of memory for historical study. I start by giving them a list of questions they need to be prepared to discuss. For example, according to Rosenberg, how and why did Americans invoke the memory of Pearl Harbor after 9/11? Is the analogy between 9/11 and Pearl Harbor accurate? Why or why not? How, according to Rosenberg, was this analogy used to question American "national security readiness?" After discussing these and other questions from the reading, the class then listens to audio of President Franklin Roosevelt's Pearl Harbor speech, available from the FDR Presidential Library website at [www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu](http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu).

But before we listen to the speech, we discuss the *practice* of listening and the use of *audio* as primary source material. I ask students to envision what it might have been like to listen to this speech in December 1941, gathering with family around the radio. I want to ensure that they understand the importance of radio as a form of mass communication at that time so that they will have a basis for comparison with twenty-first-century communication. Students then are prompted to listen critically to the speech with a series of questions in mind: Who was President Roosevelt's audience? What main points did he make? What kind of emotive or provocative language did he use to make his points? At this point, we may also revisit some of the discussion points from Rosenberg's chapter. Now that the students have heard and briefly discussed Roosevelt's speech, they may have additional insights into Rosenberg's arguments and analogies.

Next, we consider video as a primary source by watching President George W. Bush's televised speech from the evening of September 11, 2001.<sup>2</sup> Before the students watch the speech, I tell them that they should consider the same questions we just discussed about the FDR speech and that we will be assessing and comparing the two speeches both on the basis of content and as different types of historical sources. My objective is for students to critique some of the analogies to Pearl Harbor made after the 9/11 attacks, to appreciate the very different historical contexts for each event, and to analyze some of the similar strategies the presidents used in addressing their audiences.

I next move to textual analysis by asking students to again compare the language of each speech (from a distributed copy of the speech or from a projection of the text on a large screen).<sup>3</sup> As many of you are no doubt aware, the first typed draft of Roosevelt's war address is available at the "Teaching with Documents" section of the National Archives website: (<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/day-of-infamy/>). The images clearly show the president's hand-scrawled edits, including the replacement

of the phrase “world history” with the word “infamy.” I ask students to pick out similarly evocative words and phrases from President Bush’s 9/11 speech and then to discuss the possible rationale for choosing those words (“mass murder,” “evil,” “terrorist attacks”) and the impact of these words and phrases on the American public.

To wrap up this assignment and provide a path forward, I ask the class to consider the timeline of events following each of these key speeches. In December 1941, of course, President Roosevelt asked Congress for a formal declaration of war. We can then begin to discuss the decisions made by the Bush administration, from the invasion of Afghanistan in the fall of 2001 through the invasion of Iraq in the spring of 2003, and the official justifications for each, in a comparative context.

### **Sample Assignment 2: “Toppling” Saddam Hussein** **Source Comparison: Photojournalism**

This assignment revolves around the media coverage of the toppling of a statue of Saddam Hussein in central Baghdad on April 9, 2003. I first ask students to use the *New York Times* historical database to pull up initial reports of the event and to summarize what they find for discussion in the next class period. In class, then, I make sure that we analyze some key sentences from the coverage: “U.S. Marines toppled a huge statue of Saddam Hussein in the heart of Baghdad. . . . Cheering ecstatically, a crowd of Iraqis danced and trampled on the fallen 20-foot high metal statue . . . . In scenes recalling the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall, Iraqis hacked at the statue’s marble plinth with a sledgehammer.”<sup>4</sup>

The comparison with the Berlin Wall provides an opportunity to incorporate an overview of the Cold War, and especially the end of the conflict, into the class if the students do not have a strong background in the history of U.S. foreign relations. In particular, I want to ensure that students understand the context of the comparison being made in the article and begin to see *why* journalists immediately made that comparison (and, implicitly, how historians might then end up calling that comparison into question). To enhance the comparison, I show students some photographs and excerpts of television footage from the Berlin Wall in November 1989.<sup>5</sup>

Then I show some photographs of the toppling of the statue of Saddam Hussein, as described in the *New York Times* article, followed by a sampling of the television coverage. I generally use YouTube to choose two or three different outlets, and I ask the students this question: What “story” is being told by this news coverage? Generally it is fairly obvious to them that the dominant narrative is one of triumph but that it has an emphasis on *Iraqis* acting spontaneously to take down the statue of Hussein with the help of tools supplied by the American Marines. By portraying the Iraqis as “toppling” the hated dictator with the aid of American Marines, the media is thus implicitly justifying the Bush administration’s decision to go to war.

After these class exercises, I assign students Peter Maass’s *New Yorker* article, “The Toppling: How the Media Inflated a Minor Moment in a Long War,” for discussion in the next class.<sup>6</sup> A series of questions is designed to encourage students to compare history and journalism, as well as the transitory nature of evidence. For example, why, according to the author, did some observers argue that the toppling of the statue was staged? How does the author compare his understanding of events at the time they were happening with his later understanding of events? What problems does he see with the media coverage of the event, especially the roles played by journalists, editors, producers, and news anchors? We also watch some of the video coverage again so that students can see exactly what the author critiqued in his article. For example, students can analyze the camera angles that Maass says were used

to suggest a much larger crowd than had actually been present. The discussion invariably includes thoughtful reflection on the adage “seeing is believing” and the ways in which historians gather evidence to answer accurately the question, “What happened?”

### **Sample Assignment 3: The Good Soldiers** **Source Comparison: Soldiers’ Voices**

This assignment begins to address the experiences of American soldiers in Iraq and also allows students to engage with sources and methodologies most often associated with social histories of individuals and communities. I assign students the award-winning book *The Good Soldiers* by David Finkel, which one of my students in the spring 2012 class described as “the most gut-wrenching book I’ve ever read.”<sup>7</sup> As an embedded journalist, Finkel followed a U.S. Army battalion for one year, from the beginning of the “surge” in Iraq in April 2007 to April 2008.

Students will read the entire book, but I make sure to schedule a class period before they read chapter nine, which focuses on the experiences of several members of the battalion on home leave. For this class exercise, I link to the audio from a radio show entitled, “Will They Know Me Back Home?” from the popular National Public Radio series, “This American Life.” The show originally aired on March 11, 2011, and is available in the archive section of the website (it can be accessed by date and/or title) at [www.thisamericanlife.org](http://www.thisamericanlife.org). The show features sections from chapter nine of Finkel’s book, recreated by voice actors.<sup>8</sup> After listening to the emotional show, which includes moments of humor as well as sadness and pathos, we discuss it as a source of information about the experiences of soldiers and their families. We track the material we heard from the voices (actors) on the radio back to the original voices of the soldiers, filtered through David Finkel. This discussion leads to a consideration of oral history and the various ways in which historians can use oral history methods to capture individual voices, as well as the challenges historians face as they become emotionally enmeshed in the moving stories of real people portrayed so effectively in Finkel’s book.

Students are eager to discuss the issues raised by the radio program and by the book as a whole. I initially provide them only with open-ended guidance. For instance, I might ask them to identify the most compelling person in the book and to justify their choice, or I might ask them to choose some specific quotes from the book to share with the class and to explain and interpret those quotes. Another strategy is to ask students to take some time to write down how they would describe this book to someone who has not yet read it. What I am trying to do is to encourage students to more clearly articulate their reactions to the book, because their initial responses tend to be intense but vague (“this was so sad”). So I ask them to think about and discuss ways in which reading this book, so unsparing in its portrayal of the realities of war for American soldiers and their families, explicitly helps *historians* understand and interpret the wars and American foreign policy.

In my experience with this discussion, the topic of an all-volunteer military inevitably arises. This issue provides an excellent opportunity to engage in comparative explorations of American involvement in other wars, particularly Vietnam. At this point, I might assign students some background reading about the Vietnam era, either on the draft or on the soldiers’ experience, from the many anthologies or documentary collections available (such as *Major Problems in the History of the Vietnam War* or Christian Appy’s chapter, “Class Wars,” in *Iraq and the Lessons of Vietnam*).<sup>9</sup> But for additional purposes of comparison and further discussion of the methods associated with oral history, I ask students to conduct some targeted research

using the Veteran's History Project at the Library of Congress ([www.loc.gov/vets](http://www.loc.gov/vets)). On this site students can search through digitized transcripts of interviews with veterans from World War I to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The site makes it possible for students to choose a wide variety of comparative research and discussion topics, and it serves as an excellent example of the value of oral history for studying the American experience at war. It also introduces students to the wide variety of primary sources available for research at the Library of Congress.

### SHAFR Syllabus Initiative and Additional Resources

My syllabus for this course (HIST 325: The Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan) is now posted on the SHAFR website as part of the Teaching Committee's Syllabus Initiative. As time passes, more and more SHAFR members will be teaching similar courses and/or incorporating events from this era into their current courses. I urge them to submit their syllabi and to continue to engage in conversations about teaching this topic.

*The author would like to thank the many colleagues who have contributed to my thinking about teaching this topic, especially the members of the SHAFR Teaching Committee; the members of the 2008 SHAFR Institute—particularly co-directors Peter Hahn and Bob McMahon; and my fellow participants in a 2010 SHAFR Roundtable on Teaching the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan: Matt Jacobs, Chris Jespersen, Fabian Hilfrick and Peter Hahn. I would also like to thank my students at Wittenberg University.*

Notes:

1. Emily Rosenberg, *A Date Which Will Live: Pearl Harbor in American Memory* (Durham, NC, 2003), 1, 175.
2. There are many routes to access this and other important video from 9/11 and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many videos are available via YouTube, but access and availability may change over time. I might go directly to a news source video archive, such as CNN.com. Several colleagues have recommended the Vanderbilt University Television News Archive (<http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu>), but you do need an account or an institutional membership for full access. I have also used *Understanding 9/11: A Television News Archive* (<http://archive.org/details/911>) at the enormous Archive.org site. This site provides a seven-day timeline with worldwide video of news coverage of 9/11 and other features.
3. Rosenberg includes a useful analysis of the use of the word "infamy" in the Roosevelt speech in the first chapter of her book.
4. *New York Times Historical*, 9 April 2003. My students access the site through our institutional membership.
5. For example, the CBS News website has a nice series of photographs at [http://www.cbsnews.com/2300-500283\\_162-5554834.html](http://www.cbsnews.com/2300-500283_162-5554834.html). I have also used BBC video coverage available on YouTube.
6. *New Yorker*, 10 January 2011. The first time I used this assignment, the article was new and freely available on the *New Yorker* website at [www.newyorker.com](http://www.newyorker.com).
7. David Finkel, *The Good Soldiers* (New York, 2009).
8. Act I, which covers the material in Finkel's book, runs about 21 minutes. Act II of the same episode, which I have also used in class, runs about 26 minutes and covers the experiences of an Iraqi female translator working for the U.S. Army in the Green Zone.
9. Robert McMahon and Thomas Paterson, eds., *Major Problems in the History of the Vietnam War* (Stamford, CT, 2007); Lloyd Gardner and Marilyn Young, eds., *Iraq and the Lessons of Vietnam* (New York, 2007).

## SYLLABI & ASSIGNMENTS INITIATIVE

### CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The SHAFR Teaching Committee maintains a collection of syllabi and assignments on the SHAFR website, providing a place to share the intellectual structure of our courses and our reading lists, plus ideas for skills instruction and classroom management techniques. At present, there are more than 70 syllabi, and we are always happy to receive more. All contributions are welcome, from complete syllabi to instructions for brief in-class exercises and major research projects.

Send submissions to Nicole Phelps at [nphelps@uvm.edu](mailto:nphelps@uvm.edu) as .docx, .doc, or .pdf files. Please include information that will help readers understand the institutional context of the course and/or the assignment, including the number of students enrolled, the level (intermediate undergraduate, graduate, etc.), and the frequency and duration of class meetings.

**The Syllabi & Assignments Initiative can be viewed online at <http://www.shafr.org/teaching/higher-education/syllabi-initiative/>.**

## SHAFR Council Meeting Minutes

Friday, January 4, 2013

8:00 am-12:00 noon

Sheraton New Orleans

Borgne Room

*Members present: Laura Belmonte, Mark Bradley (Presiding), Carol Chin, Christopher Dietrich, Mary Dudziak, Rebecca Herman, Fred Logevall, Andrew Rotter, Marc Selverstone, Michael Sherry, Sarah Snyder, Tom Zeiler*

*Other present: Matthew Ambrose, Frank Costigliola, Peter L. Hahn, Andrew Johns, Martin Sherwin*

### Business Items

#### (1) Welcome, Introductions, and Announcements

Bradley called the meeting to order at 8:08 AM, welcoming new members of Council and expressing thanks to recently-retired members Frank Costigliola, Mitch Lerner, Andrew Preston, and Annessa Stagner.

#### (2) Recap of motions passed by e-mail vote

Hahn reviewed motions passed by e-mail vote since the last Council meeting.

In July, Council passed a motion authorizing the naming of Peter L. Hahn and Thomas Zeiler as “authorized officers” of the SHAFR endowment.

In August, Council passed a resolution approving the minutes of the June 2012 meeting.

In August, Council passed the following motion: “The SHAFR Council acknowledges the leadership, vision, and oversight of Robert Schulzinger during his service as Editor in Chief of *Diplomatic History*. Bob was instrumental in raising and maintaining the excellence of the journal. SHAFR thanks him for his years of service.”

In September, Council passed a motion authorizing a “society partnership” with Oxford University Press.

In October, Council passed the following motion: “The Council of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations expresses sincere condolences upon the passing of Professor Anna K. Nelson on September 27, 2012. A scholar, advisor, and friend to many, Anna was a pivotal figure in our field. We will dearly miss her.”

#### (3) 2012 financial report

Hahn presented oral and written reports on the finances in 2012 and the budget for 2013. SHAFR enjoyed positive revenues and net incomes, though Hahn cautioned that much of this margin resulted from sources that are not guaranteed to continue in 2013. Dudziak asked if there were ways by which Council could be brought into a more advisory role in acceptance of the year-end report, perhaps by previewing some portions of the projected budget by email before the meeting. Bradley and Hahn noted that this step had not been done previously because changes to the budget year-to-year were relatively small, because the Ways & Means Committee was fulfilling its duty to oversee budgetary matters, and because there were concerns with electronic distribution of records containing confidential and/or proprietary information, although they were happy to share reports more widely with Council. A consensus developed that steps will be taken to circulate portions of the financial reports to Council by email before future meetings. Dietrich moved to accept the 2012 reports; Belmonte seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Hahn then reviewed the budget for 2013. Hahn reported that SHAFR’s endowments and combined assets were at record high values, and had increased by 40% since 2008. The projected gap between guaranteed minimum revenues and planned expenditures in 2013 remains considerable. Actual shortfalls would be covered by unrestricted endowment resources. The 2013 operating budget will enable continuity of programming. Bradley recalled that in June, Council had considered reducing planned expenditures but decided to avoid that difficult step pending clarification of actual revenues moving forward. Belmonte noted that the consensus also included avoiding new expenses. Rotter also noted that programs for graduate students were among Council’s top priorities at the June meeting. Sherry asked if there was an earlier point in 2013 at which Council would know how the finances were developing, as this would help to better inform spending decisions. Bradley and Hahn agreed that a mid-year update in time for the June meeting would be helpful.

#### (4) Motions from Ways & Means Committee

For the Ways & Means Committee, Bradley reported that the Ohio Academy of History requested a \$300 grant for its 2013 conference; that the Transatlantic Studies Association sought a \$2,000 annual grant for its conference; that Council should consider whether to renew indefinitely funding for the National Coalition for History (presently funded at \$6,000 per year); and that Council should discuss a request from the National History Center to increase its annual allocation from \$5,000 to \$7,500.

Council members supported the Ohio Academy proposal, clarifying that a process should be set up whereby any such professional association could apply for a small grant. Council also expressed support for the TSA program for 2013 on the condition that the grant would support a keynote address by a SHAFR member. Members noted that the TSA conference featured high quality papers and that it advantaged graduate students. Others noted that the TSA reflected European interests only and often conflicted with the summer SHAFR conference. Bradley endorsed the work of the NCH and noted that Kristin Hoganson had agreed to serve a three-year term as SHAFR’s representative to the NCH (in place of the late Anna Nelson). Council agreed to affirm the pledge to fund the TSA in 2013 but to postpone any funding of future years until a future meeting. Chin moved to approve the Ohio Academy and the NCH allocations; Belmonte seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Bradley stated that Council previously had discussed the appropriation to the National History Center and its return on investment. It was observed

that the program itself is undergoing a transition. After a wide-ranging discussion, a consensus developed that, considering the significant fiscal uncertainties in 2013, Council should deny the request for increased funding and table consideration of extending any funding. This step would suspend support without terminating the appropriation or undermining the relationship. Dudziak moved to table consideration of National History Center funding; Selverstone seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Bradley shared a report from Emily Rosenberg, Endowment Liaison, regarding management of the endowment. Rosenberg investigated SHAFR's endowment management firm and principles, and recommended that Council consider appointing a new management firm and clarifying its preferred investment strategies. Ways & Means, which had met with Rosenberg the previous day, recommended that the committee be directed to approach TIAA-CREF for a discussion about managing the endowments. After a discussion of several of the issues involved, including asset allocations, current performance of the endowment under its current management, and a possible move to incorporate socially responsible investing, a consensus emerged that Rosenberg should inquire at TIAA CREF and present a report at the SHAFR conference in June, at which point Council will deliberate and take any appropriate action.

#### (5) 2013 Summer Institute

Sherwin reported that the SHAFR Summer Institute for 2013 will focus on building and reinforcing a community of scholars in nuclear history. Applications are due on February 1. Sherwin reported that the organizers hoped to choose approximately 15 participants from a broader range of career stage than in previous years. In keeping with this broader range, the structure of the program will be more interactive, closer to a workshop than a seminar. Discussion about the balance between graduate students and junior faculty or senior faculty ensued. As originally conceived, the institute would alternate between grad students and faculty. Because most years have been graduate-student focused, this year's organizers were willing to take a different approach.

#### (6) Summer Institute Oversight Committee

Bradley reported that the call for applications to host the 2014 institute has been published. The SIOC will keep Council posted as the program develops.

#### (7) *Passport*

Johns reported that production of *Passport* is going well, and the first issue with Oxford was currently in production without problems. Johns also reported his excitement for the quality of content accepted for publication. Johns will transition much of the material in the announcements section of *Passport* to the website. Bradley noted that Johns was added to the standing committee on SHAFR and the Internet to better enable coordination.

#### (8) Report from *Diplomatic History* Editor Search Committee

Costigliola reported the *Diplomatic History* editor's current term expires in 2014. SHAFR convened a search committee to advise on succession. The committee placed an ad in OAH's newsletter, H-Diplo, and *Perspectives*. The deadline for proposals is March 1, 2013. Costigliola stated that the committee had received indications of interest from at least two applicants, and that it planned to meet with finalists at the OAH. SHAFR will provide funding for finalists to come to the OAH.

#### (9) Report from the Webmaster Search Committee

Dudziak reported that a task force had proposed hiring a new webmaster, allocating funds to redesign the website, and proposed a standing committee to provide oversight. Zeiler had appointed a webmaster search committee which put out a call for applicants. The committee received two applications, and recommended George Fujii, a graduate student at UC-Santa Barbara. Dietrich moved to approve the recommendation; Selverstone seconded; and the motion passed unanimously. Bradley specifically thanked Dudziak and the committee for its hard work and dedication in this effort.

#### (10) Report on transition of publisher to Oxford University Press

Hahn reported that the transition to Oxford University Press has been generally smooth. The editors of *Diplomatic History* and *Passport* have reported smooth transitions. A few small glitches and delays occurred in the transfer of e-files from the old publisher to the new, but none was insurmountable. The database of research interests remains a small area of concern. Some renewal letters were mailed late, but steps have been taken to ensure timely distribution in future years. Two Council members indicated that they found the on-line renewal process somewhat confusing; one recommended a Paypal option for foreign currency transactions. Zeiler reported that it appeared that *DH* would be available on JSTOR after the transition.

#### (11) Rescheduling SHAFR events at the OAH annual meeting

Bradley reported that it was decided last June that starting in 2014, the Bernath Lecture would transition from the OAH conference to the AHA conference and the president would seek to build a marquee academic panel at the OAH meeting. Council now needs to decide whether to delay the spring publication awards to the SHAFR meeting or to issue them at the academic panel at the OAH. Sherry made a motion to move the prizes to the SHAFR conference. Dudziak seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### (12) SHAFR conference reforms

Hahn reported several suggestions and recommendations from the SHAFR Conference Coordinator. Because AV costs remained high (in excess of \$10,000 in 2012) and because past efforts to keep costs in check have been of limited success, it was suggested that Council consider a token (\$20) fee on AV users. In discussion, reservations were expressed that a fee would discourage digital media in a digital era and that it would impose a burden on graduate students. Consensus developed that conference organizers should try other means to keep AV costs in check, including requests to confirm AV needs when acceptances are sent.

A suggestion that SHAFR develop its conference Twitter account into a general Twitter presence was referred to the new Web committee. Council declined to accept the suggestion of creating a one-day registration option. Council approved a suggestion of distributing a post-conference survey for attendees.

(13) Motion to clarify timing of publication of articles nominated for the Bernath Scholarly Article Prize

Hahn reported that the Bernath Article Prize Committee asked for clarity regarding an article's "year of publication," not as clear in the digital era as it once was. Discussion ensued on whether a single standard could be applied based on paper or e-publication date. It was noted that some journals post different versions of an article over time. A consensus developed to allow prize committees to determine the date of publication of any work submitted for consideration, provided that no one work was considered for a prize in more than one year.

(14) Resolution of thanks to the editor of the dissertation list

Rotter moved to affirm a resolution of thanks to Professor Edward A. Goedeken of Iowa State University for his many years of service (1988-2012) in publishing the annual U.S. foreign relations dissertation list. Dudziak seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

(15) Discussion and possible motion on SHAFR Guide

Zeiler reported on the SHAFR *Guide to the Literature*, published on paper and in e-form by ABC-Clio. A survey of SHAFR members in mid-2012 elicited 51 responses, 98 percent of which indicated that the Guide was important and should continue. Hahn noted that the annual update process had cost \$4,000-\$5,000 per year. Hahn stated that there may be legal complications regarding copyright. Zeiler stated that SHAFR should explore ways for SHAFR to take over responsibility for the *Guide* as much as possible, suggesting reviewing the content of the contract and returning to the issue in June.

(16) *Diplomatic History*

Zeiler summarized a written report, previously circulated, on DH article and book review publication.

(17) Discussion of possible new prizes or fellowships

Bradley reported that the late Nancy Tucker would be memorialized with a lectureship at the Woodrow Wilson Center and a book series at the Columbia University Press.

(18) Motion to re-establish life membership option

Hahn reported that Oxford University Press had asked if SHAFR wished to restore a life membership option. Bradley noted that life memberships provide a means to identify donor and leadership prospects. Rotter moved to reinstitute the life membership option at \$1,000. Logevall seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Council also recommended that life membership status ought to appear on badges at the SHAFR Conference.

(19) 2013 annual meeting

On behalf of the program committee, Bradley noted the acceptance rate for proposals was a bit lower than in recent years given a high number of proposals. Bradley also expressed enthusiasm about the planned plenary session that would bridge 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> century history, about a keynote speaker, and about a dinner-dance on the Saturday evening.

(20) 2014 annual meeting

Hahn reported that the 2014 meeting would be held on June 18-22 at the Hyatt Regency in Lexington, KY. Hang Nguyen, Paul Chamberlin, and George Herring would serve as local hosts.

(21) Prizes and Fellowships

Hahn reported on behalf of various grants and fellowships committees that \$54,600 in awards would be distributed at the SHAFR luncheon on Saturday. Recipients would include: Simon Toner (Michael J. Hogan Foreign Language Fellowship); Teishan Latner (Stuart L. Bernath Dissertation Research Grant); Wen-Qing Ngoei (W. Stull Holt Dissertation Fellowship); R. Joseph Parrot (Gelfand-Rappaport Dissertation Fellowship); Talya Zemach-Bersin (Myrna Bernath Research Fellowship); Simon Stevens, Aaron Rietkerk, Amanda Boczar Chapman, Mauricio Castro, Aaron Moulton, David Olson, Stuart Schrader, Koji Ito, Asher Orkaby, Zach Fredman, Joshua Goodman, Kate Geoghegan, Micah Wright, Aaron Bell, Denise Jenison, and Talya Zemach-Bersin (Honorable Mention) (Samuel Flagg Bemis Research Grants); and Marc-William Palen and Jennifer Miller (William Appleman Williams Junior Faculty Grants).

(22) Adjournment

Bradley thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 11:50 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter L. Hahn  
Executive Director

PLH/ma

# The Diplomatic Pouch

**Editor's note:** Beginning with the April 2013 issue, *Passport* will no longer publish announcements regarding upcoming conferences, fellowships and grants, or calls for papers and proposals in the "Diplomatic Pouch." The time-sensitive nature of these announcements and the delay inherent in the period between finalizing an issue of *Passport* and its publication complicate their inclusion on these pages. Moreover, this information is readily available on H-Net, SHAFR.org, and other web-based locations. *Passport* will instead devote its pages to publishing additional reviews and articles of interest to SHAFR's membership. Please contact the new SHAFR webmaster, George Fujii (george.fujii@gmail.com), if you wish to submit such announcements to the SHAFR website.

In addition, all information about SHAFR prizes and fellowships—including deadlines and contact information—will now appear exclusively at SHAFR.org.

The "Diplomatic Pouch" will continue to publish personal and professional announcements, research notes, and a list of recent books of interest to SHAFR members. If you have material that you would like to submit for the "Diplomatic Pouch," please contact the editor directly. *AJ*

## 1. Corrections

In the January 2013 issue of *Passport*, there were two errors in the published version of Mark Stoler's article, "And Perhaps a Little More: The George C. Marshall Secretary of State Papers" (pp. 56-58). Please note the following corrections:

1. On page 56, right column, second full paragraph, line 4: "of the State Department's" should be deleted.
2. Due to an editorial error, the notes at the end of the number are misaligned with the references in the text. Note 1 in the text does not exist in the endnotes. Note 2 in the text corresponds with note 1 in the endnotes; all subsequent notes should be transposed accordingly.

*Passport* regrets these errors and apologizes to Professor Stoler. *AJ*

## 2. Research Notes

### FRUS E-Books

The Office of the Historian at the U.S. Department of State is pleased to announce the release of its *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)* series in a new e-book format that is readable on popular electronic devices such as the Amazon Kindle and Apple iPad. The e-book edition combines many of the benefits of print and web publications in a new form that is portable and extremely convenient. During the pilot phase of the *FRUS* e-book initiative, five selected *FRUS* volumes are available here. The public is invited to download the new e-books and provide feedback to help improve the *FRUS* e-book edition. At the conclusion of the pilot phase later this year, the Office will work to offer e-book versions of many more *FRUS* volumes both through the Office website and on a wide array of e-bookstores. The Office will continue to expand and enhance its e-book offerings, as part of the ongoing *FRUS* digitization effort.

The *FRUS* e-book initiative is an outgrowth of the Office of the Historian's efforts to optimize the series for its website. Because the Office adopted the Text Encoding Initiative's open, robust XML-based file format (TEI), a single digital master TEI file can store an entire *FRUS* volume and can be transformed into either a set of web pages or an e-book. The free, open source eXistdb server that powers the entire Office of the Historian website also provides the tools needed to transform the *FRUS* TEI files into HTML and e-book formats.

For questions about the *FRUS* e-book initiative, please see our FAQ page at <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/e-books>; for other questions or to provide feedback, please contact [historyebooks@state.gov](mailto:historyebooks@state.gov). To receive updates about new releases, follow us on Twitter at @HistoryAtState.

## FAQs on how to make your Research Visit to NARA more Successful

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) reference staff is committed to giving researchers the best possible assistance. The following questions and answers are provided to help researchers have a good on-site experience and take full advantage of their limited time at the National Archives.

## **Do I need to contact the Archives before I arrive?**

Writing or calling in advance is not required; however, we strongly encourage researchers to write to the National Archives before making a research visit. Please send the same reference inquiry to only one address to avoid confusion and duplication of work. Making contact before arrival can help prepare researchers for what they will find and help smooth the process when they arrive. Researchers should make contact far enough in advance to provide the NARA reference staff with sufficient time to respond. A good rule of thumb is to write a minimum of 4 weeks before you plan to arrive. This allows time for the staff to log-in requests, to conduct necessary background work, and to prepare and send a response. If researchers have complex questions that require an in depth consultation, they should write even sooner. Please note, however, that NARA staff cannot undertake research for you. Our staff assists researchers with their work by providing information about the records, but we do not undertake substantive research for researchers.

## **Do some records need more advanced notice to be available?**

Contacting us ahead of time is especially necessary if a researcher is interested in more recent records (1960s and later); records of agencies that deal with more sensitive government functions (such as State, Justice, FBI, the intelligence agencies); records for which you have incomplete or partial identification (agency-assigned numbers, such as Department of State "Lot File" numbers that do not always carry over into use by the National Archives); and records that have only recently been transferred to the National Archives.

## **Are the records well described for easy use?**

Some are and others are not. While it is our ultimate goal, not all records are fully processed, with full descriptions and complete finding aids. Until the goal is met, locating specific bodies of records transferred to the National Archives, especially those transferred recently, can often involve a time-consuming, multi-step process involving both researchers and NARA staff. This cannot be done effectively on an ad hoc basis while researchers wait in the Research Room. Researchers may have to request additional information from the agency of origin, and NARA staff may have to consult transfer documentation, printouts, preliminary finding aids, and classified indexes to assist in locating files of interest. The same is true for locating files relating to esoteric topics. NARA understands that the absence of complete finding aids can be frustrating to researchers, but by writing in advance, some of the problems may be overcome.

## **What are some of the other reasons to contact the National Archives in advance?**

We can provide information about hours of operation and holidays. Hours of operation are established by each facility.

We can provide you with information about NARA procedures. For example, we are unable to pull records for use in advance of your arrival.

We can identify records that are available on-line or on National Archives Microfilm Publications, thus saving a trip to the National Archives. Researchers must use microfilm and online resources when those options are available.

We can identify records that will not be transferred to the National Archives. Only a small percentage of all Federal records are designated as permanent. All others are scheduled for destruction under the authority of approved records control schedules.

We can identify permanent records that are not yet in the National Archives. In those cases you must contact the agency of origin.

We can let you know if the records in which you are interested are temporarily unavailable to researchers because of various reasons (the records are undergoing preservation work, are being imaged or microfilmed, or for some other reason).

We can identify records that have been moved to another location, such as a Presidential Library or a NARA regional facility.

We can let you know if the records have been sent to remote off-site storage and thus require advance special arrangements to use.

We can let you know if the records in which you are interested are available for use. Before records are made available to researchers, they must be processed and reviewed for documents containing security classified information or information that is otherwise restricted.

## **What information does a prospective researcher need to prepare an effective inquiry?**

Now that you are ready to contact the National Archives, it is time to prepare your research inquiry. An effective inquiry consists of a succinct description of your research interest. Be sure to specify the date period of your topic. Records change

over time. What we tell you about 19th century records is very different from what we tell you about those of the 20th . If you are interested in a number of individuals, alphabetize your list, although we generally can respond to only about a handful at one time. If you have specific questions about the records, list them. Please remember that it may take a few weeks for NARA to respond.

### **What official sources are available for consultation before visiting the National Archives that will assist in identifying records relevant to my research?**

Published agency annual report, official histories, and official documentary publications often cite records or provide examples of records now in the National Archives. These can provide entry points for beginning research on a particular topic. Be sure to take note of records descriptions and file citations and note those in your reference inquiries and bring them with you when you visit.



### **3. Recent Publications of Interest**

- Abrahamian, Ervand. *The Coup: 1953, the CIA, and the Roots of Modern U.S.-Iranian Relations* (New Press, 2013).
- Ali, Ansari. *Perceptions of Iran* (Tauris, 2013).
- Bachrach, Bernard. *Charlemagne's Early Campaigns (768-777): A Diplomatic and Military Analysis* (Brill, 2013).
- Bader, Jeffrey A. *Obama and China's Rise: An Insider's Account of America's Asia Strategy* (Brookings, 2013).
- Bartov, Omer and Eric D. Weitz, eds. *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Hapsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands* (Indiana, 2013).
- Benjamin, Medea. *Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control* (Verso, 2013).
- Bennett, Gill. *Six Moments of Crisis: Inside British Foreign Policy* (Oxford, 2013).
- Braumoeller, Bear F. *The Great Powers and the International System* (Cambridge, 2013).
- Brown, Vahid. *Fountainhead of Jihad: The Haqqani Nexus, 1973-2012* (Columbia, 2013).
- Burns, Richard Dean, Joseph M. Siracusa, and Jason Flanagan. *American Foreign Relations Since Independence* (Praeger, 2013).
- Calkins, Laura M. *China and the First Vietnam War, 1947-54* (Routledge, 2013).
- Chapman, Jessica M. *Cauldron of Resistance: Ngo Dinh Diem, the United States, and 1950s Southern Vietnam* (Cornell, 2013).
- Clark, Christopher. *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (Harper, 2013).
- Cook, Jane Hampton. *American Phoenix: John Quincy and Louisa Adams, the War of 1812, and the Exile that Saved American Independence* (Thomas Nelson, 2013).
- Courteaux, Oliver. *Canada between Vichy and Free France, 1940-1945* (Toronto, 2013).
- Cox, Michael. *Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (Polity, 2013).
- Davies, Philip H. and Kristian C. Gustafson. *Intelligence Elsewhere: Spies and Espionage Outside the Anglosphere* (Georgetown, 2013).
- Dimitrakis, Panagiotis. *Secret War in Afghanistan: The Soviet Union, China, and Anglo-American Intelligence in the Afghan War* (Tauris, 2013).
- Gaiduk, Ilya V. *Divided Together: The United States and the Soviet Union in the United Nations, 1945-1965* (Stanford, 2013).
- Gao, Bei. *Shanghai Sanctuary: Chinese and Japanese Policy toward European Jewish Refugees during World War II* (Oxford, 2013).
- Garrison, Justin D. *'An Empire of Ideals': The Chimeric Imagination of Ronald Reagan* (Routledge, 2013).
- Gentilini, Fernando. *Afghan Lessons: Culture, Diplomacy, and Counterinsurgency* (Brookings, 2013).
- George, Alice. *The Cuban Missile Crisis: The Threshold of Nuclear War* (Routledge, 2013).
- Gilje, Paul A. *Free Trade and Sailor's Rights in the War of 1812* (Cambridge, 2013).
- Haddad, John R. *America's First Adventure in China: Trade, Treaties, Opium, and Salvation* (Temple, 2013).
- Hanhimaki, Jussi. *The Rise and Fall of Détente: American Foreign Policy and the Transformation of the Cold War* (Potomac, 2012).
- Hanhimaki, Jussi, Benedikt Schoenborn and Barbara Zanchetta. *Transatlantic Relations since 1945: An Introduction* (Routledge, 2012).
- Hanhimaki, Jussi and Bernhard Blumenau, eds. *An International History of Terrorism: Western and Non-Western Experience* (Routledge, 2013).
- Higham, Robin and Mark Parillo, eds. *The Influence of Airpower upon History: Statesmanship, Diplomacy, and Foreign Power Since 1903* (Kentucky, 2013).
- Hull, Christopher. *British Diplomacy and U.S. Hegemony in Cuba, 1898-1964* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
- Immerman, Richard H. and Petra Goedde. *The Oxford Handbook of the Cold War* (Oxford, 2013).
- Jeffreys-Jones, Rhodri. *In Spies We Trust: The Story of Western Intelligence* (Oxford, 2013).
- Keenan, Jeremy. *The Dying Sahara: US Imperialism and Terror in Africa* (Pluto, 2013).

Khalidi, Rashid. *Brokers of Deceit: How the U.S. Has Undermined Peace in the Middle East* (Beacon, 2013).

Lindeman, Albert S. *A History of Modern Europe: From 1815 to the Present* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

Lipsey, Roger. *Hammar skjold: A Life* (Michigan, 2013).

Mieczkowski, Yanek. *Eisenhower's Sputnik Moment: The Race for Space and World Prestige* (Cornell, 2013).

Miller, Edward. *Misalliance: Ngo Dinh Diem, the United States, and the Fate of South Vietnam* (Harvard, 2013).

Mitoma, Glenn. *Human Rights and the Negotiation of American Power* (Pennsylvania, 2013).

Mombauer, Annika. *The Origins of the First World War: Diplomatic and Military Documents (Documents in Modern History)* (Manchester, 2013).

Mor, Jessica Stites. *Human Rights and Transnational Solidarity in Cold War Latin America* (Wisconsin, 2013).

Moran, Christopher. *Intelligence Studies in Britain and the U.S. Historiography since 1945* (Edinburgh, 2013).

Mylonas, Harris. *The Politics of Nation Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities* (Cambridge, 2013).

Namikas, Lise. *Battleground Africa: Cold War in the Congo, 1960-1965* (Stanford, 2013).

Olson, Lynne. *Those Angry Days: Roosevelt, Lindbergh, and America's Fight Over World War II, 1939-1941* (Random House, 2013).

O'Neil, Shannon K. *Two Nations Indivisible: Mexico, the United States, and the Road Ahead* (Oxford, 2012).

Owen, David. *Bosnia and Herzegovina - the Vance Owen Peace Plan* (Liverpool, 2013).

Pargeter, Alison. *The Muslim Brotherhood: From Opposition to Power* (Saqi, 2013).

Rohde, David. *Beyond War: Reimagining American Influence in the New Middle East* (Viking, 2013).

Rubin, Barnett R. *Afghanistan in the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford, 2013).

Scahill, Jeremy. *Dirty Wars: The World is a Battlefield* (Nation, 2013).

Schmidt, Elizabeth. *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror* (Cambridge, 2013).

Schoenhals, Michael. *Spying for the People: Mao's Secret Agents, 1949-1967* (Cambridge, 2013).

Shepperd, Taryn. *Sino-US Relations and the Role of Emotion in State Action: Understanding Post-Cold War Crisis Interactions* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

Singer, Barnett. *The Americanization of France: Searching for Happiness after the Algerian War* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2013).

Solovey, Mark. *Shaky Foundations: The Politics-Patronage-Social Science Nexus in Cold War America* (Rutgers, 2013).

Steil, Benn. *The Battle of Bretton Woods: John Maynard Keynes, Harry Dexter White, and the Making of a New World Order* (Princeton, 2013).

Taliaferro, Jeffrey W. *Realism and US Foreign Policy: The Primacy of Power* (Routledge, 2013).

Van Vlack, Milton C. *Silas Deane: Revolutionary War Diplomat and Politician* (Mcfarland, 2013).

Vanetik, Boaz. *The Nixon Administration and the Middle East Peace Process, 1969-1973: From the Rogers Plan to the Outbreak of the Yom Kippur War* (Sussex, 2013).

Venn, Fiona. *The Anglo-American Oil War: International Politics and the Struggle for Foreign Petroleum, 1912-1945* (Tauris, 2013).

Wang, Chi. *The United States and China Since World War II: A Brief History* (Sharpe, 2013).

Wang, Dong. *The United States and China: A History from the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2013).

Watts, Carl P. *Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence: An International History* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Weeks, William Earl. *New Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations, volume I: Dimensions of the Early American Empire, 1754-1865* (Cambridge, 2013).

Woolfley, H.L. Dufour. *A Quaker Goes to Spain: The Diplomatic Mission of Anthony Morris, 1813-1816* (Lehigh, 2013).

Young, Nancy Beck. *Why We Fight: Congress and the Politics of World War II* (Kansas, 2013).



**Passport congratulates the following SHAFR fellowship and grant recipients:**

**The Michael J. Hogan Foreign Language Fellowship** was established to honor Michael J. Hogan, long-time editor of *Diplomatic History*. The Hogan Fellowship of \$4,000 is intended to promote research in foreign language sources by graduate students.

The Hogan Foreign Language Fellowship Committee (Gordon H. Chang, chair, Naoko Shibusawa, and Amy Sayward) prize citation:

*Simon Toner, of the London School of Economics, is the recipient of this year's Michael J. Hogan fellowship to support the development of non-English language skills that will be used in the completion of his doctoral dissertation. Toner is completing a fascinating study of how modernization theory, as developed in the United States in the Cold War, was understood and pursued in South Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s. Toner will use the award to advance his ability to use Vietnamese materials. This year's committee received a number of impressive applications which were also deserving of support and regrets being unable to fund them all. Congratulations to Toner and to all the other fine doctoral students who are using non-English language sources to expand the frontiers of scholarship on American foreign relations history.*

**The Myrna Bernath Fellowship of \$5,000** was established by the Bernath Family to honor Myrna Bernath and to support research by women in the field of U.S. foreign relations.

The selection committee (Michaela Hoenicke Moore, chair, Katherine Statler, and Carol Anderson) prize citation:

*Talya Zemach-Bersin's project "Going Global: A Cultural and Political History of U.S. Study Abroad" examines international education as part of the history of American foreign relations. Her proposal describes an ambitious, broadly conceived study with a suitably interdisciplinary methodology, grounded in extensive research across eight archival collections. Zemach-Bersin's research strongly resonates with Paul Kramer's 2009 Bernath Lecture outlining the rewards of examining the intersection of student travel and U.S. global power in the long twentieth century. Drawing on a diverse range of sources and combining insights from literary criticism, feminist theory as well as postcolonial critiques, Zemach-Bersin examines study abroad on three interconnected levels: cultural/ideological, institutional/governmental, and the personal. Within the framework of institutions of higher education, federal programs, political as well as economic interests, Zemach-Bersin focuses on how international education "engages the emotions and subjectivities of young citizens" thus tracing how power arrangements are translated into "lived and felt patterns of sentiment." The resulting study will be of great interest to the overlapping constituencies of academics and practitioners in the fields of the U.S. in the World and higher education.*

**The Stuart L. Bernath Dissertation Grant of \$4,000** was established by the family of the late Stuart L. Bernath to support dissertation research by graduate students in SHAFR.

The Graduate Student Grants and Fellowships Committee (Michael Allen and Meredith Oyen, co-chairs, Michael Donoghue, Dirk Bonker, and Todd Bennett) prize citation:

*The 2013 Stuart L. Bernath Dissertation Research Grant is awarded to Teishan Latner of the University of California, Irvine. Latner's dissertation, "Irresistible Revolution: Cuba and American Radicalism, 1968-1991" examines the relationship between the Cuban Revolution and the American left from the late 1960s through the late 1980s. While prior studies of Cuba's importance to the American left have focused on the late 1950s and early 1960s, Latner argues that Cuba was equally important to the American Left's global turn in the long 1970s, when leftwing movements came into ever more frequent contact with leftist movements abroad. While Latner is principally concerned with mapping transnational exchanges between non-state leftists and tracing their influence on radical politics in the United States, he also documents their diplomatic implications using U.S. and Cuban official sources. His is a rich, multi-layered account of transnational politics told in startling new detail, and the committee was most impressed by the multiple registers on which Latner operates and the multiarchival research that makes it possible. The Stuart L. Bernath Dissertation grant will finance further research in Havana archives as well as work in the University of Miami's Cuban Heritage Collection where he will study those Cuban-Americans who promoted rather than opposed the normalization of U.S. relations with Cuba in the 1980s who were characteristic of the political and cultural go-betweens that are at the heart of his vivid transnational history.*

**SHAFR established the W. Stull Holt Dissertation Fellowship of \$4,000** to defray the costs of travel necessary to conduct research on a significant dissertation project.

The prize citation:

*The 2013 W. Stull Holt Fellowship is presented to Wen-Qing Ngoei of Northwestern University. Wen-Qing's dissertation, "Empire of Dominoes: Malaysia, Singapore, and the United States as a Southeast Asian Power, 1950-1975," is a thoughtful and exciting project that attempts to rescue significant American interests in Southeast Asia from relegation to a side note in Vietnam War history. Ngoei contends that the failure of Malaya and Singapore to adhere to Eisenhower's domino theory in the 1950s defied contemporary*

explanations, and even helped revise the use, understanding, and circulation of the theory internationally in the 1960s and beyond. His ambitious multi-national and multi-archival research project will complicate our understanding of the Vietnam War in regional context, but it also raises important questions about the impact of the transition from European decolonization to American neo-imperialism in the region and the influence of non-Western voices in shaping U.S. policy choices. The Holt fellowship will fund extensive research in a wide range of archives (some quite underutilized in the field) in Britain, Malaysia, and Singapore, facilitating Ngoei's progress toward a new perspective on the domino theory and the dominoes that never fell.

**The Lawrence Gelfand-Armin Rappaport Fellowship of \$4,000** was established to honor Lawrence Gelfand, founding member and former SHAFR president and Armin Rappaport, founding editor of *Diplomatic History*.

The prize citation:

*The 2013 Gelfand-Rappaport Fellowship is presented to Joseph Parrot of the University of Texas at Austin. His superbly conceived dissertation, "The Wind of Change Triumphant: The Global Politics of Portuguese Decolonization, 1961-1976" offers a wide-ranging international history of the collapse of the Portuguese empire in Africa. Parrot seeks to explain "how a network of liberation groups and western activists sustained the [anti-colonial] revolution in spite of official intransigence and launched a transnational movement that rejuvenated the push for African independence." Here, then, is an exemplary history of the struggle over "self-determination" and de-colonization in Africa, focusing on the intersection between the Cold War and the North-South conflict, and exploring a broad array of governmental and non-governmental actors, institutions, and networks situated across and in-between at least three continents. The committee was particularly impressed with the multi-lingual and multi-national research program and source base of Parrot's dissertation. The fellowship itself will help fund a final round of research that will take Parrot to archives in New Haven, Amsterdam, and Uppsala and cap off his exploration of activist networks from Europe and America, as they helped to shape the struggle over empire in South Africa.*

SHAFR established the **Samuel Flagg Bemis Dissertation Research Grants** to help defray the costs of domestic or international travel necessary to conduct research on significant scholarly projects. This year, SHAFR will distribute 15 Bemis grants of \$2,000 each to:

Simon Stevens  
Aaron Rietkerk  
Amanda Boczar Chapman  
Mauricio Castro  
Aaron Moulton  
David Olson  
Stuart Schrader  
Koji Ito  
Asher Orkaby  
Zach Fredman  
Joshua Goodman  
Kate Geoghegan  
Micah Wright  
Aaron Bell  
Denise Jenison

The selection committee also issued an honorable mention to Talya Zemach-Bersin.

The **William Appleman Williams Junior Faculty Research Grants** are intended to promote scholarly research by untenured college and university faculty and others who are within six years of the Ph.D. and who are working as professional historians. Grants are limited to scholars working on the first research monograph.

The formal prize citation on behalf of the Williams Grant Committee (Kathryn Statler, Chair, Barbara Reeves-Ellington, and Molly Wood):

*Dr. Jennifer Miller is a Visiting Assistant Professor at Dartmouth University. She received her Ph.D. in 2012 from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her publications include "The Struggle to Rearm Japan: Negotiating the Cold War State in U.S.-Japanese Relations," *Journal of Contemporary History* 46:1 (January 2011): 82-108. Her project, entitled "Building a New Kind of Alliance: The United States, Japan, and the Cold War," analyzes the transformation of the U.S.-Japanese relationship in the 1950s, from the occupation to the establishment of an active alliance. Despite the crucial role that the U.S.-Japanese alliance played in the development of the Cold War, Jennifer argues that historians have overlooked its centrality. The committee members were impressed with Jennifer's reinterpretation of the U.S.-Japanese relationship as a harmonious partnership. Instead, she argues that the relationship has been consistently tense and contested as Japan sought to secure a representative democracy after the trauma of authoritarianism, war, and occupation. As Japanese groups sought to define the relationship between citizens and a democratic government, many of them came to believe that the U.S.-Japanese relationship undermined this fragile new political regime by committing the Japanese government to the United States rather than the Japanese people. This activism deeply influenced government understandings of policy goals and possibilities, increased Japanese influence on the U.S.-Japanese relationship throughout the 1950s, and, ultimately, fundamentally shaped U.S. perceptions of alliance politics—and American power—in a Cold War world. Miller will use the Williams grant to complete research at the National Archives, the Library of Congress, the archives at Catholic University, the MacArthur Memorial, the Army Heritage and Education Center, and the Rockefeller Foundation and Ford Foundation archives.*

*Dr. Marc-William Palen is a Visiting Lecturer at Tufts University. He received his Ph.D. in 2011 at the University of Texas at Austin. His publications include "Foreign Relations in the Gilded Age: A British Free Trade Conspiracy?" Diplomatic History (Jan. 2013). His project, "The Conspiracy of Free Trade: Anglo-American Imperialism and the Ideological Origins of American Globalization, 1846-1896," explores how the cosmopolitan belief that global free trade would bring world peace and its protectionist counterpart are interwoven within American and British foreign relations throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. The committee was captivated by Palen's reinterpretation of late nineteenth-century party politics and foreign relations and his demonstration of how transnational ideas shaped world events. Palen identifies two previously overlooked global ideological visions—what he calls "Cobdenite cosmopolitanism" and "Listian nationalism"—that warred over late nineteenth-century capitalism, foreign policy, industrialization, and globalization. He argues that U.S. and British expansionism occurred because of the global ideological interplay of Victorian free trade cosmopolitanism and economic nationalism. Where historians long have argued for a Gilded Age American policy of bipartisan imperialism, he asserts that political and ideological conflict drove expansion. Palen will use the Williams grant to examine the archives and correspondence between two influential transatlantic nongovernmental associations: the American Free Trade League collection held at the New York Public Library and the Free Trade Union League collection at the British Library.*



Dear Professor Hahn and members of SHAFR,

27 October 2012

In November 2011, the SHAFR Graduate Fellowship Committee chose to award me the W. Stull Holt Dissertation Fellowship for 2012. I used the award to fund part of my dissertation research in Washington DC, where I have been living since the end of May.

Under the working title "Mad Dogs Unleashed: Anarchist Assassinations and American National Security, 1881-1907," my dissertation examines the influence of assassination on American foreign relations and national security in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Between 1881-1907 – beginning with the assassinations of Tsar Alexander II and President James Garfield and ending with Congressional approval of the Sundry Civil Expenses Act, which allotted the Secret Service funds for presidential protection – the fear of politics dictated by the dagger, gun, and bomb influenced debates over American values, techniques to protect officials, and measures to restrict "alien" anarchists.

Over the past five months, I have spent most of my time working at National Archives I and II (College Park) as well as the Library of Congress. In addition to the traditional correspondence so familiar to diplomatic historians, I have been able to go through undercover police investigations, hundreds of petitions, institutional archives, private correspondence from concerned citizens, and crank letters alleging everything from personal vendettas to, in one instance, a vast international conspiracy to overthrow the American government.

Along the way, one of the most consistent surprises has been seeing just how widely – and fiercely -- debates about policy turned on wider, less tangible questions and perceived values. With the Secret Service, to offer one example, while protection for the president was increasingly formalized in the wake of President William McKinley's assassination, sincere critics invoked arguments of class and even the spectre of monarchy to highlight their opposition to such measures long after. Such concerns also trickled down to the day-to-day practices of the agents, affecting everything from the manner in which agents coordinated – later dictated – planning with police departments to how it belatedly became standard operating procedure for the president's protective detail to watch the crowd, rather than his immediate person.

One of the main hurdles I have encountered is that the records of agencies of the American government in this period are often fairly incomplete, particularly as it relates to their interactions with non-governmental actors or foreign governments. Consequently, I will be spending November through May living and researching in London while also traveling to archives in other European cities that are essential to understanding the international dimension of efforts to curtail the problem of anarchist violence. After May 2013, I will return to the United States where I will hopefully finish my remaining research trips and transition to writing full-time.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Professor Hahn and the members of the Fellowship Committee. For a number of reasons, the past year was mentally and physically exhausting in ways difficult to express. The Holt Dissertation Fellowship not only afforded me the tremendous opportunity to travel to essential archives, it was also a source of encouragement and contributed to my own personal development in essential ways.

Sincerely Yours,

Alexander Noonan

# In Memoriam: Anna Kasten Nelson

Anna Kasten Nelson, Distinguished Historian-in-Residence at American University, who was known for her research on the history of the foreign policy process and her tireless campaigning for the public's right to access to government records, died in her home on September 27 after a long illness. Her critical mind, elegant style, and fighting spirit made her a beloved member of the SHAFR community.



Anna's dissertation and her first book, *Secret Agents: President Polk and the Search for Peace with Mexico* (1988), criticized the turn toward covert foreign policy and presidential efforts to control information. She pursued those concerns for the rest of her career. She was an early proponent of efforts by historical associations to improve the declassification process and promote access to the records of public figures, publishing on the topic and devoting her considerable energies to the cause. In 1976–77 she served on the National Study Commission on Records and Documents of Federal Officials, also known as the Public Documents Commission, which was partly responsible for the passage of the Presidential Records Act (PRA). The commission arose in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal, with its shredding parties and litigation over control of the Nixon tapes. The PRA deemed White House and vice presidential records not the private property of the authors or their heirs, to be guarded or disposed of at will, but public records that must be preserved and made available within a reasonable period of time. In the early 1980s Anna became the chief investigator for the Committee on the Records of Government, which argued that the advent of computer technology should not be permitted to erode the permanency of government records. She testified before congressional committees on freedom of information principles and practices numerous times between 1981 and 2008. In March 2007, she spoke out against George W. Bush's Executive Order 13233, which restricted indefinitely the release of presidential papers in violation of Congress's intent. Anna pointedly told a congressional committee that "delaying the release of records does not delay the memoirs and self-serving books that fill the gap," giving as an example Henry Kissinger's falsification of his own record. "I did tread lightly on Kissinger's toes," she observed dryly in *Passport*.<sup>1</sup>

Anna was a member of the Department of State Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation and received a presidential appointment (with Senate confirmation and the highest security clearance) to the John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Review Board; in both capacities she often directly challenged government officials to release documents to the public. "She fought some good battles" with State, CIA, and Congress, recalled Walter LaFeber; as an advocate, she was "quietly factual and devastating." Anna often made the case that concealing information was not only unprincipled and illegal but was not necessarily in the self-interest of establishment officials,

pointing out that presidential reputations from Lyndon Johnson to Jimmy Carter improved in the light of historical research and that the concealment of information does not ensure the predominance of an official narrative. In the absence of documents, conspiracy theories flourish. "Agency declassification of selected, heavily redacted records will not serve the public interest," she told congressional intelligence panels in 2000. "It will only breed more suspicion."<sup>2</sup> The archiving and release of records—along with the selection process by government

historians involved in the declassification process or publication series like the State Department's *Foreign Relations of the United States*—shape the work that historians do and what the public can know about the past. Her belief in the importance of accessibility explained the intensity of her commitment and her outrage when incompetence or malfeasance threatened the public's right to know.

Anna's career as an advocate for improving the relations between historians and government was, in a way, accidental. She finished her Ph.D. during a tight academic job market, and with two children and a spouse, Paul Nelson, who worked in Washington, she was geographically limited. As a newly minted Ph.D. with few prospects, and, she recalled, little support or direction from academic faculty, she took on work as a researcher that awakened her interest and appreciation for archives, repositories of the "iron and coal" of history writing, as she liked to say. At the same time, she was discovering an uncelebrated world of historical production generated in and around government institutions that would come to be known as public history.

Arnita Jones, director of the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History (NCC), invited Anna to write a paper about federal history programs and opportunities for historians outside traditional faculty roles. She quickly learned that the federal government was producing a lot of historical reports, generally written by public relations officials rather than trained historians. She wrote an article on that subject for the AHA Newsletter, "History without Historians" (1978), and subsequently helped Jones and Jones's successor, Page Miller, promote public history at the AHA and OAH. As a leader in the growth years of the public history field, she sought to hold the history produced in federal offices to professional academic standards while legitimizing public history in the eyes of skeptical academics. Anna joined the steering committee of a new organization combining these aims, the Society for History in the Federal Government (SHFG); its first business address was her house. She was "ubiquitous in the early days" of the federal history movement, wrote Dennis Roth in a SHFG history. She was "involved in everything from federal documents to the establishment of a House of Representatives History Office."<sup>3</sup>

Anna continued to promote the interests of the historical profession as a member of the Policy Board of

the National Coalition for History, an organization that, at Anna's recommendation in 1982, superseded the NCC to become a lobbying organization advocating in Washington for the interests of scholars, archivists, and teachers of history. (Her move into advocacy had begun when she joined a group of historians in a Capitol Hill apartment—her husband Paul called them her “cell meetings”—to oppose a mid-1970s proposal to split up the National Archives.) She kept up her activism as six presidents came and went. “She played a key role in our dealings with Attorney General Alberto Gonzales during meetings at the White House” on executive department records during the George W. Bush Administration, recalled former Coalition director R. Bruce Craig. “Her unflagging efforts and insights in bringing about a reversal of the Bush-era Presidential Records Executive Order were particularly important in that quest.” Trudy Peterson, former Acting Archivist of the United States, called Anna “the best friend the National Archives ever had,” not only because she was a supporter but a supportive critic, whether she was filing endless Freedom of Information Act requests or pressing the Archives to more aggressively pursue the right to preserve the records of neglected federal agencies. Her work to benefit historical scholarship was recognized with the James Madison Award from the Coalition on Government Information, the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Prize for the Advancement of Historical Study of the Federal Government, and the Troyer Steele Anderson Prize for Advancement of the Purposes of the American Historical Association.

Anna's scholarly interests moved from the nineteenth century to the post-World War II creation of the modern national security establishment. She became a recognized expert on the National Security Council and the postwar transformation of the foreign policy process, publishing more than thirty articles and book chapters. Her intimate knowledge of government records gave her special insights into the connection between structures and policy. She perceived that Eisenhower used NSC meetings to reach and implement decisions, for example, whereas Kennedy tasked the NSC to write research reports but relied on ad hoc groups of advisers for the real action. “In one dinner with her I learned more about Eisenhower's National Security Council machinery than at the time [the late '70s] could be found in any book,” recalled Richard Immerman.

Anna took roadblocks to document access as a personal affront, because access would determine the historical record. Kissinger became her *bête noire* in part because he simply absconded with his desk diaries and other office papers—“the only complete set of the highest-level records of the foreign policies of this country in the Nixon and Ford years,” in William Burr's words<sup>4</sup>—and donated them to the Library of Congress on condition they not be released until five years after his death. She also wrote about the corollary problem that stems from the availability and prominence of presidential records and the neglect of other federal agencies, which tends to foster histories that can overemphasize presidential decision-making and downplay the role of many other players in the system, simply because their papers are sitting in crates somewhere. The connections among process, policy, records, and historical narrative were the thread running through her publications across four decades. Most recently, she edited *The Policy Makers and the Formation of American Foreign Policy, 1947 to the Present* (2008) and published “Continuity and Change in the Age of Unlimited Power” in *Diplomatic History* (2005) and a chapter on “The Evolution of the National Security State” in Andrew Bacevich's edited collection, *The Long War: A New History of U.S. National Security Policy since World War II* (2007).

Anna Kasten was born and raised in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Her Eastern European Jewish immigrant family was one of maybe two “in the Jewish community

that did not own a retail establishment or a wholesale establishment,” she told Holly Cowan Shulman.<sup>5</sup> “We had a real sense of the underclass.” She became interested in politics and foreign policy through conversations with her father and by listening to the reports of Pauline Frederick, a path-breaking female radio journalist who covered the United Nations. Anna taught high school, married Paul Nelson, bore two sons, and began graduate work at the University of Oklahoma and Ohio State University before earning her Ph.D. at George Washington University in 1972. One of fewer than a half dozen female doctoral students in a history cohort of twenty-five, she was a few years older than her fellow students. “She took us all under her wing,” recalled Linda Lear. “That was a time when there were real obstacles to women . . . sexual harassment, needless rewrites, professors who didn't believe you would amount to anything. Anna was the guru of how to navigate all this. She had that wonderful manner, with no stridency, but underneath that she could subversively get whatever she wanted. Anna was a radical feminist in very soft clothing.”

After teaching courses at George Washington University, Tulane University, Arizona State University, and for several years in the 1980s and '90s at American University, Anna became AU's Distinguished Historian-in-Residence in 1996. She specialized in undergraduate and graduate courses on the history of U.S. foreign relations from the founding of the Republic to the present, and she acquired a reputation for holding students to a high standard. For many years the sole diplomatic historian in the department after Bob Beisner's retirement, Anna directed and served on Ph.D. committees and singlehandedly sustained AU's graduate program in U.S. foreign relations. When I arrived in 2007, she graciously welcomed me onto her turf and helped integrate me into the department.

Anna was a pioneer in a field where most of her colleagues were men. When she joined SHAFR, she was the organization's sixth female member. She took a special pride in mentoring young women at the universities where she worked and in the many national organizations to which she belonged. Michele Pacifico, who was Anna's teaching assistant at GW in 1979, credits her with launching her “truly wonderful career” at the National Archives. “Anna's reputation as an expert on access and public documents was and remains outstanding,” Pacifico said. “In looking over her resumé, I am reminded of my respect for this woman who juggled so many jobs at once—diplomatic scholar, teacher, writer, speaker, expert witness, mother, wife, colleague, and friend. While some of us carrying half her load looked and felt frazzled, Anna was always calm, polished, and poised. . . . She was a brilliant, beautiful woman who inspired many of us.”

Beyond serving as a role model, Anna was, as her friends put it, a militant in Ferragamo shoes. Petra Goedde recalled the “very personal and moving speech” Anna gave at a SHAFR women's breakfast in 2007 about the difficulties she faced as a woman in a male-dominated field. The talk was titled “The Pleasure (and Pain) of Writing about Powerful Women in Foreign Affairs,” and it prompted Goedde and Frank Costigliola to create the Committee on Women in SHAFR. Anna also supported the creation of targeted fellowships for women historians and made a point of approaching young women at scholarly conferences to offer advice on networking and professional practice. “We often met and commiserated at OAH and AHA conferences about the status of the history profession and problems facing younger PhDs,” recalled Joan Hoff. “She once said to me that she believed encouraging and directing her students was more important than her publication and speaking career.”

The students noticed. At AU her office hours “literally turned into hours,” said doctoral student Shannon Mohan, “as she and I had long discussions” about the policy process.

Anna was “a source of unending encouragement and support for my research and writing,” said Michael Giese. “I owe her a tremendous intellectual and personal debt.” Anne Foster, an AU undergraduate in the 1980s and now an associate professor of history at Indiana State, remembered Anna’s “tough questions” and how she “applauded and celebrated the younger women who had a much easier time in her field, supporting us always. And she continued to offer that support even when we stretched the field’s methodological boundaries in ways she wasn’t sure she liked.” Anna was “legendary among graduate students in the department—partly because of her scholarship, but also because she had earned a reputation as a tough, rigorous prof who suffered no fools gladly,” said doctoral student Susan Perlman. “We also found her to be a critical but astute judge of our own work—a cause of consternation and heartache, but also a vote of confidence. Although she will not be at the finish line for us, we will each carry her with us every step of the way.” Anna signed off on her last dissertation from her hospital bed late last summer. She took pleasure in noting that the dissertation—Sarah J. Thelen’s “Give War a Chance: The Nixon Administration and Domestic Support for the Vietnam War, 1969–1973”—was yet another accomplishment by a young woman she had mentored and watched develop into a fellow scholar.

Tributes poured in as the news of her death spread through the SHAFR community. “Anna was not just a dedicated historian but a crusader for open information,” wrote Nancy Bernkopf Tucker. “She worked hard to bring documents into the public sphere and refused to be thwarted by government officials or dubious colleagues. I admired her determination.” Geoff Smith called her “the conscience of the organization.” Richard Immerman asked, “Did anyone ever do more in the universe of declassification? Anna sacrificed her own scholarship to benefit ours. And she has left a lasting and invaluable legacy.” The SHAFR Council, to which she was elected in 2005, expressed “sincere condolences upon the passing of Professor Anna K. Nelson on September 27, 2012. A scholar, advisor, and friend to many, Anna was a pivotal figure in our field. We will dearly miss her.”

Anna’s husband of 50 years, Paul Nelson, died in 2006. He was a former staff director of the House Banking Committee. She is survived by her sister, Reba Kasten Nosoff, of New York; two sons, Eric Nelson of Rockville, MD, and Michael Nelson of Maplewood, NJ; her daughter-in-law, Sarah; and her three grandchildren, Faith, Marc, and Jeffrey Nelson.

--Max Paul Friedman

Notes:

1. “Testimony of Anna K. Nelson before the Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and National Archives,” *Passport* (August 2007).
2. Nelson to Bradley and Newcomb, 6 January 2000, at [www.fas.org/sgp/news/2000/02/nelson.html](http://www.fas.org/sgp/news/2000/02/nelson.html).
3. Dennis Roth, “The First Decade of the Society for History in the Federal Government,” 1988, [www.shfg.org](http://www.shfg.org).
4. William Burr, “The Kissinger Papers,” *New York Review of Books*, 18 March 1999.
5. Holly C. Shulman, “Public Documents and Public History: An Interview with Anna K. Nelson,” *The Public Historian* 25:1 (Winter 2003): 29–49.

# In Memoriam: Nancy Bernkopf Tucker

Along with her husband, Warren Cohen, Nancy Tucker was a leader in the field of the history of U.S.-East Asian relations. Her numerous writings were in the tradition of Dorothy Borg, with whom she studied at Columbia. Like her mentor, Nancy was meticulous in research, wrote in clear, accessible style, and presented detailed data in an overall framework and with a main argument that would stand the test of time. It is difficult to think of any other historian of her generation who contributed more to the study of U.S.-PRC, U.S.-ROC, and U.S.-Hong Kong relations.

Her first book, *Patterns in the Dust: Chinese-American Relations and the Recognition Controversy, 1949-1950* (1983), offered a full-scale study of U.S. policy toward the People's Republic of China during the critical first months following the establishment of the Beijing regime. On the basis of much archival material that was just beginning to be made available, Tucker carefully traced ideas and influences that bore on the question of whether Washington should recognize the new regime. Her thesis, that Secretary of State Dean Acheson was leaning in that direction but that the outbreak of the Korean War made it untenable, is still accepted by most scholars of postwar U.S. foreign relations. But the book contained much more than a discussion of a handful of policy-makers. It also offered a useful analysis of the so-called China Lobby, showing the author's adeptness at establishing connections between domestic politics and foreign policy.

Tucker then turned her attention to Taiwan and Hong Kong, which the Communist authorities claimed to be part of China but which were administered separately, the former by the Nationalist regime in Taipei and the latter



(until 1997) by the British colonial authorities. She published her findings as *Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States, 1945-1992: Uncertain Friendships* (1994). The book remains the most authoritative study of the subject. As in her first book, here again Tucker dug deeply into archival material to determine precisely how U.S. officials understood and dealt with Taiwan and/or Hong Kong. At the same time, she dealt a great deal with economic and cultural affairs affecting these countries,

making the book an indispensable guide even today to the history of contemporary Taiwan and Hong Kong.

In between these two books as well as afterwards, Tucker continued to conduct research and write on aspects of postwar U.S. relations with China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Her last book, *The China Threat: Memories, Myths, and Realities in the 1950s* (2012), was her best in many ways. It exemplified her continued dedication to archival research and to delineating every nuance in the evolution of U.S. policy toward China. At the same time, as the subtitle of the book indicates, she was also incorporating themes and subjects that historians were beginning to pursue, such as memories, myths, and, of particular interest, racism. In broadening the study of foreign affairs to include an inquiry into emotions, prejudices, and memories, the book may be regarded as one of the best examples of the recent scholarship in the field of U.S. foreign relations.

Together with Dorothy Borg and Warren Cohen, Nancy Tucker contributed enormously to establishing and maintaining the field of U.S.-East Asian relations as an unassailably authentic, researchable, and communicable area of historical inquiry.

--Akira Iriye

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