

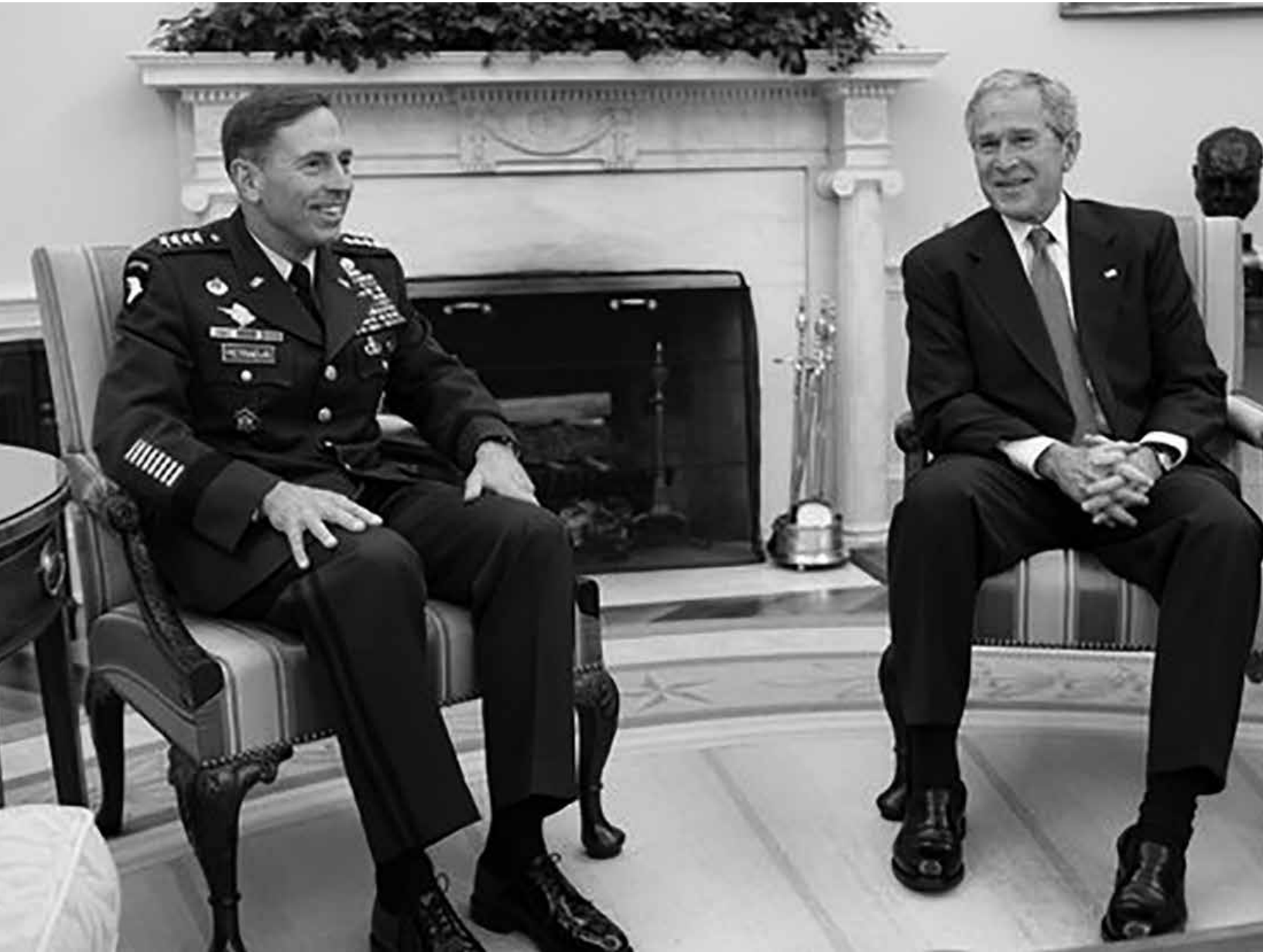
PASSPORT



THE SOCIETY FOR HISTORIANS OF AMERICAN FOREIGN RELATIONS REVIEW

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In this issue of *Passport*

Reagan's War on Immigrants

The Bear Awakens: Using Comics to Teach About Russia

The Future of SHAFR: Critical Questions

...and more!

Passport

THE SOCIETY FOR HISTORIANS OF AMERICAN FOREIGN RELATIONS REVIEW



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From the Chancery: Changing Course

Andrew L. Johns

I was supposed to be president right now. Not of SHAFR (yeah, like *that* would ever happen), but of the United States.

When I was in high school and in my first couple of years in college, I had my entire life mapped out in my head. Graduate from college, graduate from law school, and practice for seven years (making a lot of money along the way) until I turned thirty. Then I would get elected to the House and serve five terms, move to the Senate for two terms, and then get elected president in 2020 at the age of 52 and serve two terms in the White House. Lofty ambitions, to be sure, but I had total confidence that my life would turn out just the way I planned.

What is the old Yiddish proverb? “We plan, God laughs?” Sounds about right.

The point is that my life did not turn out the way that I planned or expected. Law school lasted for one semester before I realized that while I loved the courses and the intellectual challenge, I had no interest in being an attorney. My political ambitions came to a crashing halt for a variety of reasons—not the least of which was that I would *never* put my family through a campaign and the accompanying scrutiny (plus, I guarantee my wife would go ballistic on anyone who said anything negative about me...not a recipe for political success). Even my revised plan of getting a Ph.D. in history and becoming a professor experienced a number of significant detours along the way: three kids (including twins) in grad school, a miserable number of academic jobs available once I finished (although that market actually looks great in retrospect by comparison to today’s situation), a son who was diagnosed with autism at the age of two (which limited my options significantly), and a host of other life events kept me on the job market for years. But as John Lennon sang in “Beautiful Boy” in 1980, “life is what happens when you’re busy making other plans.” Eventually, after five rounds on the job carousel—and coming within three hours of chucking the whole academic plan to work with friends in Hollywood—things worked out.

I look back on the past twenty years since I started my current job, and two things are readily apparent: first, I could not have predicted in 1986 when I graduated from high school that I would be where I am today; and second, I would not change anything about those two decades—either the good or the bad. Do I think about those big law partner paychecks occasionally? Sure. Do I wonder about the paths not taken and choices I made (or avoided)? Naturally. Do I wish that I lived closer to a casino or a poker room? Absolutely. But I have no regrets. I got to coach or watch every single basketball game and volleyball match my kids every played. I got to (reluctantly, at the time) see all of my daughter’s dance recitals and attend all of my younger son’s video game tournaments. I do not own a suit or sport coat and wear jeans to work every single day...at least when I am not wearing shorts. I love what I do, even though I complain fairly frequently about the minor irritations (and a few major ones). And I get to travel to exotic places like

Abilene, Kansas and Austin, Texas (OK, maybe I have not made the best choices of research topics in terms of archival locations...I am probably still the only member of SHAFR to have never been to Europe).

At this point (assuming you are still reading), many of you will be thinking, “what, if anything, does this have to do with me/SHAFR? This really makes me want to read Mitch Lerner’s presidential column!” The reality of life as a scholar of U.S. foreign relations in 2024 is that a significant (and growing) majority of people who get Ph.D.s in fields of interest to SHAFR members simply cannot find stable employment (i.e. a tenure-track position) in academia. No matter how intelligent one is, how strong the reputation of the institution at which one studies or the adviser with whom one works, how many grants or fellowships one receives, or the quality of one’s scholarship, the dream/ambition of becoming a full-time faculty member seems almost as likely as hitting the \$1.85 billion Powerball. Even those who find work at a university may find themselves in a less-than-desirable situation, teaching an avalanche of courses without much (or any) research and travel support, or in an untenable (un-tenure-able?) political dynamic, or living in a locale that is light-years away from one’s preferred destination, culinary options, or entertainment possibilities.

Complicating all of this, of course, are the financial restrictions under which most of us teach and work, a situation that continues to deteriorate every year. This is true at universities facing cutbacks from state legislatures that are insufficiently committed to higher education; with scholarly organizations dealing with declining income from journals and rising prices for travel and conference venues; with stagnant or declining salaries for both tenure-track and contingent faculty; and for anyone who has paid out-of-pocket for a research trip or a conference (have you seen airfares and hotel rates lately??). Even SHAFR, which has been in a much stronger financial position than many of its peer organizations over the past two decades, is grappling with these economic realities and is being forced to make difficult decisions about its future. While we may not be, as Clark Griswold lamented in *Christmas Vacation*, “on the threshold of hell,” things have deteriorated financially for the organization—as SHAFR president Mitch Lerner discusses later in this issue.

All of these challenges mean that we—individually and collectively—are faced with the prospect of making tough decisions. Which ones are correct? Which ones will produce the best outcome? The reality is that we simply do not know for certain. At the end of the day, we have to choose a path we think has the best chance for success and accept what comes. If you were to ask the members of my department, they would unanimously agree that the third most frequently heard comment from me in meetings is, “choices have consequences.” (The first and second most frequent comments are not suitable for publication in a family journal like *Passport*.) This is true in every aspect of life. Buying a house is a choice. The consequences

include paying a mortgage, paying property taxes, paying for upkeep on the home, not worrying about a landlord or unruly neighbors, and building equity that could pay dividends down the road. A sports franchise can sign a player to a ridiculous contract that resets the market. The consequences include not being able to sign other players that might help the team and limiting the flexibility of the roster (well, unless you are Chelsea and just continue to spend in an utterly profligate way without any apparent planning or structure because Todd Boehly is playing real-life fantasy sports...but I digress).

In an academic setting, this means that choosing to edit a journal will almost certainly have consequences in terms of time and resources available to publish additional books and articles that might advance your career. Accepting or pursuing an administrative role means giving up opportunities to teach and research (or even tenure), although probably with a larger paycheck—gotta love that sweet dean or director money. Deciding to prioritize students by devoting more time to mentoring, experiential learning, grading, and course-related work usually results in a more limited research agenda. And for many of us, choosing to remain underemployed in a contingent job(s) in academia means passing up external opportunities that might be more lucrative financially or more fulfilling personally. What we must do, regardless of the choices we make, is to either figure out how to live with them and be—if not always happy—then at least content with the outcome, uncertain though it may be...or be willing to change direction when it is apparent things are not going the way we hoped or expected.

We see this repeatedly in the history that we study. Choices—whether based on domestic political considerations, strategic variables, or in response to an emergent situation—have consequences that often cannot be assessed or even realized for years or decades afterward... that's what historians are for, after all. If, as Fred Logevall argues, Lyndon Johnson chose war, the consequences of that choice reverberated for him personally and for the country both in the short-term and for the decades that followed. Deciding to restore the Shah of Iran to his throne made sense as a choice in the Cold War context of the early 1950s, but that choice looks much different with the perspective of the ramifications that played out decades later. Taking one path precludes the possibilities of another decision; we see this repeatedly in the documentary record and in contemporary decision-making. As historians of U.S. foreign relations, we should appreciate the nature of the dynamic between choices and consequences—and the uncertainties that result—better than most.

Many times, decisions do not have a clear-cut path, an obvious choice that makes things easy. SHAFR has chosen to use its endowment funds for specific purposes. For example, the Marilyn Blatt Young Dissertation Completion Fellowship is awarded to one doctoral candidate each year and comes with \$25,000 in support. That is a choice. The consequences? One graduate student has the opportunity to write and research with substantial funding...but it also means that twelve graduate students do not have the chance to participate in a SHAFR Summer Institute program. Is this the wrong choice for SHAFR and its members? That is an open question about which reasonable people can disagree. But in an era of dwindling academic budgets, limited employment opportunities, and economic uncertainty for the organization, these are the kinds of choices we must make and consequences we must consider if we are to be good stewards of SHAFR's resources and keep the organization strong and thriving for the next generation of scholars of U.S. foreign relations. Council is making an effort to do just that, and we should applaud their efforts even if or when we disagree with their specific decisions.

Fortunately, it is never too late to make a choice to take an alternate path that will lead to different (and maybe better) consequences. I tell my (now adult) children this all the time. If I can drop out of law school or if their grandfather can go back to graduate school at the age of forty or if Dave Grohl can become a lead singer, then it is never too late for them to make another choice and take a different path. That holds true for national security strategy, academic organizations, professional sports teams, and individuals as well. There might be some pain or difficulty along the way, but it is never too late to change course for the better.

Finally, on a completely different topic, all good things come to an end. Sadly, for *Passport*, that happened last fall when our long-time copyeditor, Allison Sweeney, decided to retire after two decades of working with SHAFR. Over the years, the hundreds of contributors who have submitted reviews and essays to *Passport* have benefitted from Allison's keen and expert eye; praise for her incomparable skill as a copyeditor has been virtually unanimous. She has made each issue that I have overseen for the past thirteen years better, and I can only say thank you to her for her devotion, work ethic, and witchcraft-esque ability to make even the worst writing (i.e. my own) stronger. Even more impressive, she put up with not only me, but also Mitch Lerner as editor—truly a heroic tenure. As Vaneesa Cook takes over as copyeditor (and she will be terrific), I wish Allison all the best in retirement.

Thoughts From SHAFR President

Mitchell Lerner

In his 1929 inaugural address, newly elected President Hebert Hoover proudly declared that “I have no fears for the future of our country. It is bright with hope.” By the end of the year, the Great Depression had rocked the American economy, typhoons ripped through the Philippines, a member of the president’s cabinet was sentenced to prison for the first time in history, fears of a Parrot Fever pandemic (seriously!) swept the country, and the White House actually caught on fire on Christmas Eve. Although my transition to the SHAFR presidency has not been that dramatic, I confess that my first series of budget meetings have given me some insights into how Hoover must have felt! SHAFR, thanks largely to the generosity of its members and benefactors and the wise policies implemented by decades of foresightful leaders, certainly remains one of the most stable, prosperous, and vibrant professional organizations in the history discipline. Yet, we have not been untouched by the turbulence of the present moment around us, and as a result, council has been forced to make some difficult decisions to ensure that SHAFR remains “bright with hope” for future generations.

The impetus for these conversations was some alarming projections about SHAFR’s future fiscal situation. Our initial estimates projected years of deficits ahead, averaging more than \$30,000 annually over the next six years. These projections were even more troubling since they were based on current revenue and expense numbers but—just as in 1929—other alarm bells were also ringing. We are drawing near to the end of the Oxford publishing contract for *DH* (with an expected decline in future revenue), and are approaching a renewal of the *DH* editorial team’s contract (with an expected increase in costs). Conference expenses are exploding as well, and we are committed to a long-term contract with a facility in DC that charges us \$6.80 per banana (but, I hasten to add, only charges us \$4.60 per donut, so when you brush past the fruit plate to reach for that 5th donut at some future conference, remember that you are actually saving SHAFR money!). This year is also the last year in office for our wonderful executive director, Amy Sayward, who is stepping down after a decade of dedicated service, a fact that is not particularly relevant to our budget crisis but—when combined with everything else that is on the immediate agenda—did push me one step closer to my long-term goal of breaking the world record for Irish whiskey consumption.

These exigent circumstances, it is worth noting, are generally the result of forces beyond SHAFR’s control. The cost of journal production has skyrocketed with inflation, while challenges like open access publishing are forcing publishers to trim costs dramatically, all of which mean a decline in SHAFR’s revenue from Oxford University Press. Most of the work done by the terrific team of *DH* editors is situated at Temple University, where a recent strike yielded higher wages and benefit costs for graduate students that in turn raises the amount of the SHAFR contribution (and, in a personal commentary that in no way reflects an official SHAFR position, let me add: rock on, Temple grad

students!). Meanwhile, conference costs have exploded in general, increasing our outlays for everything from facility rental to social events to technology services to, most notably, bananas.

In order to meet these challenges, SHAFR Council has been forced to make some difficult decisions. A small increase in membership rates and conference registration rates, which had actually been approved before COVID but was paused in the wake of that crisis, will likely begin next year. Even at these slightly higher rates, however, SHAFR membership will remain cheaper than most of its peer organizations. Recognizing the high printing costs of *DH*, we hope to soon shift to a primarily online model, with an option to also purchase hard copies for an annual fee of approximately \$30. Funding for social events at the annual conference will be trimmed significantly as well. I admit that I take a back seat to few people in my enthusiasm for a good social event, but when faced with a choice of subsidizing another DC boat cruise or maintaining full funding for graduate student and junior faculty research grants, it was an easy decision. We will also be tinkering with the menus at lunches and receptions at future conferences (Kraft macaroni and cheese, just so you know, come in a wide variety of shapes and flavors!). The availability of technology at conference panels will also be restricted in future DC years. While I know that this is not ideal, it feels necessary considering that the Renaissance Arlington charged us \$275 per day for every podium we requested last year (up from \$84 in 2019) and another \$360 for each microphone we added; for those fancy-schmancy panels that sought the extreme luxury of a screen and projector, that came in at a mere \$1,537.33 per room for each day. We are also eliminating a few smaller programs, such as the Electronics Communication Committee (huge shout out to Brian Etheridge and Kelly McFarland for all of their great work in that field these last few years, including the podcasts, the website redesign, and so much more!), and our support for the National Coalition for History. Other reforms are still under consideration and may be implemented down the road if necessary. I am proposing, for example, a plan to send me to Vegas with the entire SHAFR endowment and a promise that I can triple it within a week. I also think that sales of a souvenir Mitch Lerner photo calendar would generate significant revenue for the organization, although I am still working on the details (apparently, there is some legal holdup over the April layout, which features me wearing nothing but a giant paperback copy of *Tragedy of American Diplomacy* and a smile). So, stay tuned for more to come on possible initiatives!

I want to offer my most sincere appreciation for the efforts of SHAFR council and ED Amy Sayward for helping us through these difficult decisions, and to all of our members for their understanding of the current circumstances. I have no doubts that SHAFR will come through these lean years even stronger and more vibrant than it has ever been, and soon, it will once again be unlimited bananas for everyone.

A Roundtable on Melvyn P. Leffler, *Confronting Saddam Hussein: George W. Bush and the Invasion of Iraq*

Cameron D. McCoy, Nathan J. Citino, Molly M. Wood, Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicut, Aaron O'Connell, and Melvyn P. Leffler

Introduction, Roundtable on Melvyn P. Leffler, *Confronting Saddam Hussein: George W. Bush and the Invasion of Iraq*

Cameron D. McCoy

C*onfronting Saddam Hussein* is focused on the role of U.S. grand strategy in displacing Saddam Hussein from power, and the invention of the “Vulcans” (i.e., a team of experts to tutor President George W. Bush in the field of foreign policy) and their analysis of the costs and benefits of America’s invasion of Iraq and military commitment to the war on terror. Melvyn P. Leffler points out, “Although [the Vulcans] often have been treated as a unified group espousing a militant, hegemonic, and missionary role for the United States, they in fact had different interests and proffered diverse advice [to Bush]” (28). It is in this vein that Leffler is able to convincingly highlight the subtleties involved in George W. Bush’s thinking and actions associated with the planning and preparation of U.S. forces to invade Iraq in March 2003.

In *Confronting Saddam Hussein*, Leffler is less concerned with arguments regarding whether President Bush misled the United States into war with Iraq and more concerned with *why* the United States made the critical foreign policy decision to go to war, which leads to *who* exactly was *most* responsible for this ultimate decision. To address these areas of interests, Leffler keenly takes the reader on a journey through war rooms, Texas ranches, policy briefings, and Camp David that provide illuminating and compelling portraits of Saddam Hussein and George W. Bush.

With this in mind, Leffler’s opening chapter, “Saddam Hussein” is a powerful account of the complex and seemingly fearless international figure. Born into turbulence in 1937, Saddam is subject to the dark side of life in a world rife with instability. “Children mocked Saddam because he had no father. With no real friends, he learned that to survive he had to be tough, cunning, and self-sufficient. His given name, Saddam meant ‘one who confronts,’ and he did so as a young boy—fighting, stealing, lying, and inflicting cruelty on little animals” (1). Saddam Hussein would naturally embrace his aggressive predilections, which led to his presidency of Iraq in July 1979. From 1979 to 2001, Hussein’s violent rampage and reign of tyranny would remain fixed on his desire for personal greatness and propagating a dominant Iraq with global influence.

With Hussein drawing outside the lines of international

fair play, *fear* eventually drove the Bush administration to pursue the goal of invading Iraq. Even with the alarmist narrative of a determined rogue leader in Hussein, Leffler makes it clear that America’s decision to invade Iraq was less about ideology or some misguided missionary zeal to spread a special brand of U.S. democracy and more about jettisoning Saddam Hussein. While it has been more than 20 years since the events of 9/11—at the time—the majority of Congress, members of the Bush administration, mainstream media, as well as U.S. and foreign intelligence groups genuinely believed Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, the thought of another, and possibly imminent, terrorist attack pushed key decision makers to outsize a constructed myth, even though Hussein was never linked directly to the events of 9/11.

Despite clear evidence that Saddam had no attachment to the events of 9/11, President Bush still viewed Hussein as evil, conniving, and shrewd. Along with the ominous threat of al-Qaeda, which was eminently real in the eyes of many, President Bush believed an Iraq policy focused on regime change was the proper course of action. Along with his key principals (Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell, Donald Rumsfeld, and Dick Cheney) President Bush would steer U.S. goals in a direction that highlighted Hussein’s barbarism, lack of adherence to international sanctions and weapons inspections, blatant armed antagonism, nuclear weapons program potential, human rights violations, and his previous uses of chemical and biological weapons.

For the Bush administration this alarmist narrative would birth the term “coercive diplomacy.” The Bush administration had to undoubtedly position Hussein as a clear and credible threat of military action for successful diplomacy to work; for example, Bush believed “that the process of moving an increasing number of American forces into a position where they could attack Iraq might convince the Iraqis to end their defiance” (105). According to Condoleezza Rice, the Bush administration had two options: increase international pressure and force Hussein to turn over his WMD or overthrow his regime by force (109). However, Leffler highlights the limitations of this “coercive diplomacy,” which was the possibility that Saddam might not possess weapons of mass destruction. For President Bush, compliance on the part of Hussein was essential, but he needed consensus across all U.S. agencies; Hussein was still a gathering threat in Bush’s estimation, which again, was driven by assumptions and fears rather than concrete and verifiable intelligence, according to Leffler.

Such passages provide the necessary context and

remind the audience that shotty intelligence mixed with anxiety, fear, anger, and political expediency easily warped cabinet priorities and views to make the world more peaceful. While Bush will have his critics regarding the invasion of Iraq, Hussein's record of brutality, aggression, and obstinance were significant enough to influence Bush's priorities, aims, and calculations. Along with Leffler, Charles Duelfer, a former inspection monitor with close links to the CIA and the State Department observed the following, "[Saddam Hussein] 'was not a cartoon. He was catastrophically brilliant and extremely talented in a black, insidious way,' [Leffler added] much like Joseph Stalin, the leader Hussein most wanted to emulate. He was obsessed with his legacy, eager to be seen in the tradition of Nebuchadnezzar and other great Iraqis. His aspirations were clear: thwart Iran, defeat Israel, and dominate the region. To achieve his goals—to bequeath his imagined legacy—he still yearned to acquire weapons of mass destruction (240–241).

Even while highlighting Hussein's resolve, Leffler astutely calls strict attention to Bush's patience in not being eager for war, still, Bush was devoted to the strategy of "coercive diplomacy," which he genuinely believed could alter Hussein's defiant behavior. It is important to note that these were unprecedented times for the entire Bush administration when it came to Saddam Hussein. Even in this respect, President Bush's miscues and shortcuts cannot be forgotten, which is where Leffler ends *Confronting Saddam Hussein*.

While *Confronting Saddam Hussein* does not introduce anything revelatory to the audience, Leffler does offer two things that stood out to this reviewer: as more and more information is published about America's invasion of Iraq, it still may be too early to tell how history will judge George W. Bush as a wartime president. Lastly, when it comes to the conversations surrounding a compelling and dysfunctional era of war and terror, Leffler's analysis of this critical event is refreshing and furnishes a window into the complexities of early 21st century politics and war without making his book political.

Review of Melvyn P. Leffler, *Confronting Saddam Hussein: George W. Bush and the Invasion of Iraq*

Nathan J. Citino

Long ago, as a first-year graduate student at Ohio State University, I read Melvyn P. Leffler's book *A Preponderance of Power*.¹ Tackling it was a shared rite of passage for Ph.D. students in U.S. foreign relations: "a preponderance of paper," we joked, though we heaved even weightier tomes in Michael J. Hogan's seminar during the fall of 1993.² The book sought to transcend earlier debates over whether Soviet or U.S. actions were more responsible for starting the Cold War. It remains the best account of how "national security" grew into the capacious concept that animated postwar American military and foreign policy bureaucracies, defining and justifying a global anticommunist mission to safeguard a particular vision of domestic society.

Leffler's latest book, a study of George W. Bush's road to the Iraq war, also analyzes U.S. foreign policy from the perspective of the American national security bureaucracy. A less capacious study than *Preponderance*, it does not relate foreign policy to the domestic sphere except to note that Republican officials urgently desired to restore their party's reputation for protecting U.S. national security after September 11, 2001.³ The author begins with his account of being present in Washington, DC, on 9/11 and witnessing the city's response to the terrorist attacks. The book also

examines the Bush administration's reaction to 9/11, its conceptualization of the War on Terror, Bush's decision to invade Iraq as part of that effort, and the bruising internal battles over what came to be known as Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Confronting Saddam Hussein is therefore an insider's account of Iraq policy based on the library of official memoirs published over the last twenty years, as well as interviews with former Bush administration figures that Leffler arranged mainly through Eric Edelman, who was a staff member for Vice President Dick Cheney. Leffler's interview subjects included Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz; Cheney's chief of staff, "Scooter" Libby; National Security advisors Condoleezza Rice and Steven Hadley; National Security Council official Elliott Abrams; Anti-Terrorism Czar Richard Clarke; Secretary of State Colin Powell; and Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs William Burns. He also consults the report of Britain's Iraq Inquiry (the "Chilcot Report"), which underlines the lack of an equivalent official reckoning for the Iraq debacle in the United States.

The perspective that emerges is consequently how the officials who launched the Iraq war understand it in retrospect. Although critical of the president for not addressing hard questions about what would follow Saddam Hussein's removal from power, Leffler ultimately sympathizes with Bush's challenges in navigating the post-9/11 security environment and with his visceral dislike for Saddam Hussein. Interpreting the Iraq war as a distinct set of unfortunate policy errors, Leffler retains a faith in the overall benevolence of U.S. power. "We must improve," he writes in the preface (xviii), echoing previous liberal internationalist criticisms directed at the architects of the Vietnam War and other foreign policy disasters: intentions were good but mistakes were made.

Leffler sets out to correct what he regards as misconceptions about the war. The most important fallacy for him is that Bush was pushed around by advisors who were obsessed with Iraq. "This is wrong," Leffler writes (60). His argument again takes me back to my grad student days, when I read scholarship by Stephen Ambrose, Richard Immerman, and other "Eisenhower revisionists."⁴ Just as they showed that President Dwight D. Eisenhower was not manipulated by his vocally anticommunist secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, Leffler insists that Bush—rather than Cheney or the neoconservatives—made the crucial decisions about Iraq. He credits Bush with pursuing "coercive diplomacy," the policy of preparing and even mobilizing for war in order to compel Saddam to disarm and comply with United Nations resolutions (111). He also points to Bush's initial reluctance after 9/11 to go after Saddam.

However, the evidence suggests that unlike Ike, Bush showed a lack of presidential leadership. Leffler repeatedly notes that Bush "knew his top Cabinet officers were feuding" but preferred not to adjudicate disputes between his subordinates and "for the most part did not interfere" (237). Leffler writes, for example, that "[Condoleezza] Rice and [Stephen J.] Hadley seemed unable or unwilling to overcome divergent views, and the president did not intercede and resolve the disputed issues" (154). He concludes that "Bush stood atop the morass of postwar planning and did little to uplift it" (237).

Seen in this light, "coercive diplomacy" seems less like a calculated strategy of military preparation in order to avoid war and more like bureaucratic drift toward it. Relations between the State Department and Cheney's office became so dysfunctional, Edelman revealed, that he had to meet discreetly with Undersecretary of State Marc Grossman at the Corcoran Gallery of Art. Grossman asked, "has the president decided for war? Edelman said he did not think so" (155).

The bureaucratic clashes over Iraq that Leffler describes mostly concerned which principals within the administration would dominate policymaking. Despite internal conflict, there were no strong administration voices arguing against war. Leffler notes that Powell's well-known "Pottery Barn" warning about invading Iraq was based on a memo drafted by William J. Burns entitled "Iraq: The Perfect Storm." But Powell did not oppose war in a crucial meeting with Bush on August 5, 2002, and infamously made the case for it later at the United Nations. The establishment voices cautioning against invading Iraq were outside the administration. These included Brent Scowcroft, the national security advisor for George H.W. Bush; the senior Bush's secretary of state, James A. Baker III; and even Henry Kissinger (154–55).

Leffler targets other "misconceptions" without challenging more important administration claims. For instance, he questions accounts of the war that stress the importance of ideology. He distinguishes hawks Cheney and Rumsfeld from neoconservatives such as Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith and Wolfowitz. Yet even Feith supported war not out of an ideological commitment to remake the Middle East in America's image but "to eliminate a regime that engages in and supports terrorism and otherwise threatens US vital interests." Feith's "motive was simple: 'self-defense,'" Leffler writes. "Whether a good or bad idea, there was little idealism here; not much missionary fervor" (98).

Leffler notes that officials cited the danger posed by Saddam's weapons, rather than democracy promotion, as the main rationale for the invasion. Once no significant WMDs were found, Bush "shifted to a more ideological discourse, stressing that the United States had to make democracy work in Iraq" (248). Leffler reserves his most negative assessments for the administration's failure to plan for the postwar occupation. That is low-hanging fruit, to be sure, and ground covered early on by journalists.⁵ In the chapter "Mission Awry," Leffler recalls how General David Petraeus "asked what he was supposed to do when he got to Baghdad. What then? He got no answer" (212).

My principal criticism of *Confronting Saddam Hussein* is that it accepts the administration's packaging of the Iraq invasion as part of the post-9/11 "War on Terror." Leffler can therefore give Bush the benefit of the doubt by presenting a completely unrealistic estimation of Saddam's aims and capabilities: "Might he seek again to annex Kuwait? Might he try to destroy the Zionist state he despised? . . . Might he seek to gain leverage over the region's petroleum pricing and shape world oil markets? . . . Might he coordinate with terrorist groups who were seeking their own WMD and hoping to kill Americans, challenge American power, and expel the United States from the Middle East?" (20).

This framing emerges from Leffler's parallel biographies of Bush and Saddam, which obscure the disparity in power between the two leaders. He partially excuses Bush because of the "poorly assessed" intelligence provided to the president by his briefer, Michael Morell, although he notes that the president and his advisors were "already predisposed" to believe alarmist reports (85). These claims were questioned at the time: "the president had every reason to believe, based on the intelligence he was receiving, that Hussein possessed biological weapons, could develop chemical weapons rapidly, and aspired to restart his nuclear programs. He had every reason to worry about Hussein's dealings with terrorists, regardless of whether or not the Iraqi dictator had a collaborative relationship with [Osama] bin Laden" (145–46).

In short, Leffler's "War on Terror" framing yields a sympathetic account of Bush's earnest yet ultimately flawed and tragic attempts to grapple with unprecedented threats. He does not consider how 9/11 provided officials with a political opportunity to push through a long-sought,

bipartisan policy of regime change. Nor does he situate this policy within a historical pattern of imperial American relations with Iraq and the Middle East. He mentions pre-9/11 U.S.-Iraqi relations, but these are offhand references not really incorporated into the analysis. For instance, in his biography of Saddam he notes that the Iraqi leader "may . . . have garnered support from CIA agents" (3) following his botched 1959 assassination attempt on Iraqi prime minister 'Abd al-Karim Qasim at a time when the Ba'ath party was violently purging communists.

Actually, the Eisenhower administration formulated the first U.S. policy of regime change in Iraq. Advocates of regime change back then compiled questionable intelligence into a National Intelligence Estimate⁶ to make their case, just as Bush administration officials did in 2002 (165). John F. Kennedy regarded the Iraqi Ba'ath as a modernizing, anti-communist force friendly toward Western oil interests, though nearly a decade later, under a new Ba'athist government, Iraq would prove otherwise by nationalizing its petroleum industry in cooperation with the Soviets.⁷ The CIA then cooperated with Israel and the Shah of Iran in supporting a Kurdish revolt in northern Iraq.⁸ Saddam proved useful to Washington in the brutal war against revolutionary Iran until he claimed Kuwait and American officials discovered that he was an evil dictator.⁹ This context is essential to assessing the intent behind reports about Saddam's "affinity for torture" (97) and Bush's signature anti-Saddam remark: "After all, he gassed his own people" (83).

Neither the torture and killing of communists and suspected communists during the first Ba'athist government in 1963, nor the use of chemical weapons by Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war, including the 1988 Halabja attack, particularly troubled U.S. officials when Iraqi actions were seen as advancing American interests.¹⁰ Over half a century, patronage and coercion defined the pattern of U.S.-Iraqi relations. Intervention of one kind or another had a long history. Bill Clinton's administration imposed sanctions with catastrophic humanitarian and economic consequences, patrolled no-fly zones, nurtured a Kurdish quasi-state, carried out punitive bombings, and gave support to Iraqi exiles intent on overthrowing Iraq's government.¹¹ This history challenges the portrayal of the Iraq invasion offered by Leffler's interlocutors and frames it not as a new departure for the "War on Terror," but as the culmination of a long-term imperial relationship.

Since my grad school days, many U.S. foreign relations historians have developed the desire and capacity to more fully study the consequences of American power for other societies. To his credit, Leffler addresses the horrendous consequences of the war, including the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, although he thinks mostly in terms of the implications for American prestige. His statement that Bush "did not achieve his goals at acceptable cost" seems more appropriate to a public-policy seminar and misplaced given the human toll of the administration's actions (249). Ghaith Abdul-Ahad has vividly captured the destruction of Iraqi society by the United States in his memoir, *A Stranger in Your Own City*. The author contests the logic used by Bush to justify the war: "why were the only options for us as a nation and a people the choice between a foreign invasion and a noxious regime led by a brutal dictator?"¹² Leffler's book confirms the obvious truth that unless we confront these more fundamental questions, something like the Iraq invasion will happen again, perhaps soon. We won't improve.

Notes:

1. Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, CA, 1992).

2. See Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War*, vol. 2, *The Roaring of the Cataract: 1947–1950* (Princeton, NJ, 1990).

3. For a study that addresses domestic politics and culture after 9/11, see Mary Dudziak, *War-Time: An Idea, Its History, and Its Consequences* (New York & Oxford, UK, 2012).
4. See Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, vol. 2, *The President: 1952–1969* (New York, 1984); and Richard H. Immerman, “Confessions of an Eisenhower Revisionist: An Agonizing Reappraisal,” *Diplomatic History* 14 (Summer 1990): 319–42.
5. See, for instance, Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq’s Green Zone* (New York, 2006).
6. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v12/d210>.
7. See Weldon C. Matthews, “The Kennedy Administration, Counterinsurgency, and Iraq’s First Ba’thist Regime,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43 (November 2011): 635–53; and Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicut, *The Paranoid Style in American Diplomacy: Oil and Arab Nationalism in Iraq* (Stanford, CA, 2021), cited by Leffler on p. 253, n. 2.
8. See Roham Alvandi, *Nixon, Kissinger, and the Shah: The United States and Iran in the Cold War* (New York & Oxford, UK, 2014), 65–125.
9. On the “Myth of the Middle East Madman,” see R. Stephen Humphreys, *Between Memory and Desire: The Middle East in a Troubled Age*, rev. ed. (Berkeley, CA, 2005), 83–112.
10. See Joost R. Hiltermann, *A Poisonous Affair: America, Iraq, and the Gassing of Halabja* (Cambridge, UK, 2007), 183.
11. See Joy Gordon, *Invisible War: The United States and the Iraq Sanctions* (Cambridge, MA, 2010); and Douglas Little, *Us versus Them: The United States, Radical Islam, and the Rise of the Green Threat*, 2d ed. (Chapel Hill, NC, 2022), 107–113.
12. Ghaith Abdul-Ahad, *A Stranger in Your Own City: Travels in the Middle East’s Long War* (New York, 2023), 35.

Review of Mel Leffler, *Confronting Saddam Hussein: George W. Bush and the Invasion of Iraq*

Molly M. Wood

After agreeing to participate in this roundtable, I spoke with *Passport* editor Andy Johns about approaching my contribution as if I was assessing the book for possible adoption for my “9/11 and the Global War on Terror” course. As co-chair (with Justin Hart) of the SHAFR Teaching Committee and the first Teaching Institution representative on SHAFR’s Council, I believe that our organization can do more to support our members in our roles as teachers, especially at the undergraduate level, since many of us end up at institutions that do not have graduate programs in history.

Accordingly, as I read Mel Leffler’s new book, *Confronting Saddam Hussein: George W. Bush and the Invasion of Iraq*, I considered how I might use it in my course for upper-level history majors. What sort of framework could I develop so that students, most of whom now have no living memory of 9/11 and the aftermath leading to the war in Iraq, will understand not only what happened, how it happened, why it happened, and what happened next, but also how we go about discovering what happened. Leffler’s preface provides a good starting point for discussions about sources and methods—and motives—for tackling a topic of recent history as challenging as U.S. policy and decisions after 9/11.

In his preface, Leffler describes his initial experiences in the United Kingdom, in 2002–2003. He struggled to interact with students at Oxford University, who raised legitimate questions about U.S. post-9/11 policy decisions in real time. He admits his own discomfort in the role of “American foreign relations scholar” expected to explain, and “often forced to defend, the logic of policies I did not fully grasp nor necessarily support” (xii). After returning to the United States he continued to think about the Bush administration’s responses to 9/11 in the wider historical context of U.S. foreign policy through the twentieth century. This explanation of his initial interest in the topic, and some discussion about his previous work as a historian, would

allow me to initiate a conversation with students about what, exactly, Leffler means by “historical context” or “historical perspective,” concepts that are often difficult for undergraduates to grasp at first.

As Leffler notes, the dearth of declassified primary documents available even more than ten years after 9/11 likely meant we were still years, perhaps decades, away from the first initial round of detailed historical analysis based on government documents. But then he met Eric Edelman, a foreign service officer who had worked in the State Department during the Clinton and Bush administrations and in Vice President Cheney’s office in 2001–2002. Edelman, a longtime student of U.S. foreign relations, provided access to key individuals Leffler needed to interview to make this project possible. It is those personal interviews, conducted between 2010 and 2021, that make this book a valuable reassessment of the Bush administration’s responses to 9/11, especially the decision to invade Iraq in 2003.

Understanding the research and interview process and looking through the book’s bibliography provides useful topics for discussion with students about the challenges and methodology of writing recent foreign relations history, the limitations of classification, the use of memoirs written by key players, the value of journalistic accounts of key events and the differences between journalism and history, and the methodology associated with conducting personal interviews. Ultimately, how do historians put their sources and evidence together and make sense of it?

After the useful preface, Leffler begins with two background chapters on Saddam Hussein and George W. Bush. The chapter on Hussein reveals much about the Iraqi leader’s rise to power that will be new to general readers and especially students, most of whom do not even recognize the name “Saddam Hussein.”¹ Leffler stresses Hussein’s poverty-stricken background, his ambition, his steady consolidation of power, his brutality, and his pragmatism, which might be better characterized as an opportunistic lack of ideological conviction. It was his acquisition of weapons of mass destruction (initially biological and chemical), his proven willingness to use them, and his increasing support of terrorist groups that kept him on the national security radar even after the disastrous Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s and the American-led coalition’s overwhelming defeat of Iraq’s military in 1991.

Hussein not only remained in power, but he consistently obstructed U.N. mandated weapons inspectors through the Clinton and first Bush administrations. He also increased his support for international terrorist groups. This chapter will be crucial for students to begin to understand the urgency the Bush administration would later feel about the potential dangers posed by Hussein.

The chapter on George W. Bush introduces students to Bush’s foreign policy team and the general climate in the administration when Bush was inaugurated. While the CIA and counterterrorism experts stressed the growing danger of terrorism from Al-Qaeda, Bush’s advisors generally did not see the same threat level before 9/11. Our students should be provided with the appropriate context and background on the origins and growth of Al-Qaeda in order to assess the Bush administration’s responses to 9/11 and to understand Leffler’s findings and the arguments he is building.

Leffler acknowledges, for instance, that initial assessments of the Bush administration’s response to 9/11 and onset of the “Global war on Terror” tended to downplay Bush’s role in decision-making, stressing instead the influence of some of his advisors, particularly Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and their apparent preoccupation with Iraq and Saddam Hussein. Leffler’s findings largely discredit

that assumption. He emphasizes instead the shock and atmosphere of fear caused by 9/11 and Bush's deep sense that he was responsible for preventing another attack and protecting the American people.

Bush, of course, decided to pursue Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, though he was frustrated by a lack of planning and slow forward movement. In spite of the widely reported "See if Saddam did this" remark about 9/11 that Richard Clark attributes to Bush, Leffler instead focuses on Bush's initial caution and resistance to action against Hussein. Increasingly, however, in the atmosphere of tension after 9/11, which was exacerbated by the anthrax scare, Bush worried about Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction program. The fear was not that Hussein would attack the United States directly but rather that he would make those weapons available to terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda.

While there will much new material for students to absorb, what I would want to emphasize through much of the book is the process that Leffler has followed and historians in general undertake in questioning and challenging initial assumptions about how and why foreign policy decisions are made and how those initial understandings and explanations can be revised and re-evaluated when additional information becomes available (in this case, via the extensive personal interviews).

As he was in the process of decision-making about Hussein and Iraq and gauging the threat level posed by terrorists, Bush was receiving mixed messages from advisors. The examples Leffler cites will provide another opportunity to discuss with students how presidents receive information from various advisors and then decide on a course of action. As Leffler notes, Bush received many contradictory assessments. Among other things, he "was told that Iraq was not linked to 9/11 and that Hussein's relations with al Qaeda were probably spasmodic and opportunist, yet he was receiving information that those ties might be more extensive than previously realized and that al Qaeda's quest for weapons of mass destruction more earnest than anticipated" (92-93). Leffler is not excusing Bush's apparent unwillingness to make a decision about Iraq; rather, he is presenting a convincing volume of evidence from multiple sources about Bush's thought processes and the strategy described as "coercive diplomacy."

It is helpful that Leffler stresses Bush's mindset. He was not at all eager to go to war, but he was haunted by fears that Hussein's weapons of mass destruction would fall into the hands of terrorists. He was also deeply offended by Hussein's brutality. An exploration of this analysis of Bush and his advisors with students might benefit from some comparisons with other decision points about sending American soldiers into combat in the modern era.

In the aftermath of 9/11, and even after strong action had been taken against the Taliban in Afghanistan, there was still no clear consensus on Iraq. But the fear of "what if" remained strong. The 9/11 Commission Report would find after several years of work that a "failure of imagination" in the national security community was one of the reasons why the 9/11 plot was successful. Noting that I have students read the abridged version of the 9/11 Report in my class, it is likely I would use this opportunity to make the comparison to Pearl Harbor and perhaps challenge with this counterfactual: What if Bush "failed to imagine" Saddam Hussein successfully building nuclear weapons and teaming up with Al-Qaeda in the future? And did not decide to invade Iraq? And then that very scenario occurred?

We now know, of course, that no weapons of mass destruction were found. Domestic terrorism is now deemed a higher national security threat than foreign-born terrorism, and American troops remained in Iraq and Afghanistan for essentially twenty years with little to

show for it. But then there is that "historical perspective" that Leffler emphasizes. He has impressively captured the atmosphere in the White House and the cautious approach Bush took, which remained mostly hidden from the public at the time events were unfolding. He has been able to do this because when he conducted his interviews, as he explains in his preface, he

invited officials to tell me what they thought they were trying to do and why. I encouraged them to describe the environment in which they were working, the emotions they felt, and the pressures they encountered. I asked them about the policy process, about who was making policy, and how decisions were shaped.

I questioned them about President Bush, his role, and his strengths and weaknesses (xv).

The final chapters of Leffler's book analyze what went wrong in Iraq, and why things went wrong so quickly. Leffler covers familiar territory when he examines the failure of the administration and the military to plan for what some have referred to as "catastrophic success" on the battlefield. In other words, no one in the administration or the Pentagon seemed much interested in what would happen in Iraq once Hussein was removed from power. Bush and his advisors were certainly aware of this problem, but Bush was more focused on the search for weapons of mass destruction. As Leffler comments, "President Bush stood atop the morass of postwar planning and did little to uplift it" (237).

Bush's administration, Leffler concludes, was animated by fear, and Bush himself was acutely aware of his responsibilities as president and his failure to protect Americans from the attacks on 9/11. By all accounts, however, Bush acted with a calm that others around him noted, as well as a reassuring self-confidence. And above all, he remained certain that Hussein was truly an evil tyrant who remained a threat as long as he was in power. Leffler writes tellingly, "Bush decided to confront Hussein—not to invade Iraq" (245). Was this decision hubris? Or genuine confidence in American power and global responsibility? Leffler's conclusions will challenge students to embrace the complexities of history and historical understanding of decisions made by real people living in a particular time and place.

Will I assign this book for my course? Yes. It helped me to achieve greater clarity on the Bush administration's decision-making after 9/11, and it presented a more nuanced assessment of Bush himself, all of which will hopefully make me more effective in the classroom. Moreover, the book is filled with opportunities to discuss not only the events under consideration, but the methods associated with researching and writing foreign relations history. We need to keep teaching those skills to our students.

Note:

1. Information such as this would be helpful to undergraduate teachers, as students' knowledge about the principals involved in 9/11 has declined in recent years. In the first ten to fifteen years after 9/11, the students I taught in my U.S. survey had some memory of the event, were familiar with the names George W. Bush, Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein, and had heard the word "Al-Qaeda" but did not know what it was. A significant majority of them believed Saddam Hussein was connected in some way to 9/11, whether or not they knew of Bin Laden's role in it.

Orthodoxy Without Archives: Review of Melvyn P. Leffler, *Confronting Saddam Hussein: George W. Bush and the Invasion of Iraq*

Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicut

Melvyn P. Leffler is one of the most eminent scholars working in the field of American diplomatic history. His most famous book, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (1992), has been described as “a field-defining work that analyzed how and why the postwar policymakers acted as they did.”¹ In writing *Confronting Saddam Hussein*, Leffler notes that he hoped to write a “big book” about George W. Bush “resembling the volume [he] had written about the transformation of American foreign policy during the Truman years” (xiii).

In positing Bush as a figure analogous to Truman, Leffler seeks to offer a corrective to “too many accounts that stress the lying, the manipulation, and the preconceived predilections” of the president’s advisers.² Instead, Leffler focuses on the sincerity of the president’s “fears, his sense of responsibility, and his concern for homeland security” (xvii). However, in this review I would like to raise the question of whether it is even possible, in this day and age, to write a book about the origins of the Iraq War that is comparable to one about the origins of the Cold War. At the very least I would like to suggest that the methodology employed in *Confronting Saddam Hussein* is far inferior to what we have come to expect from traditional diplomatic history.

The limits of Leffler’s methodology may be most apparent when we examine the issue of “threat inflation” in the period leading up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Threat inflation refers to the tendency among political actors to overstate threats in order to advance particular interests.³ It operates through “lying, spinning, and withholding information,” all of which are “forms of deception” that can be “contrasted with truth telling,” as the international relations scholar John Mearsheimer has observed.⁴ The question of threat inflation, therefore, speaks directly to Leffler’s thesis regarding the sincerity of the president and his top advisers.

The question of threat perception and representation presents itself immediately in Leffler’s first substantive chapter on the Bush administration’s response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. That chapter places a particular focus on a mysterious series of anthrax letter attacks that began almost immediately after the 9/11 hijackings. According to Leffler, it was not the “predilections” of Bush or his advisers that turned the administration’s attention to Iraq in the fall of 2001, but rather these anthrax attacks. One attack included the statement “Death to America. Death to Israel. Allah is great” (68).

According to Leffler, such statements proved that “Al Qaeda’s interest in anthrax was real” (69). Moreover, they confirmed what American intelligence officials already “knew from their own lived experience”—that Saddam Hussein, equipped with weapons of mass destruction, was an unacceptable danger to the world (86). “Eric Edelman, Cheney’s national security expert, put it this way: civilian policymakers thought Saddam had WMD; al Qaeda wanted WMD; Saddam celebrated 9/11: hence, attention naturally gravitated to Iraq” (87).

Leffler’s use of Edelman’s statement as evidence of the administration’s good faith is instructive in that it cues readers to questions of methodology. In his preface, Leffler notes that “Eric” (Edelman) is not just a historical actor in the play that he is narrating, but rather a personal friend in real life. It was Eric that “strongly encouraged” Leffler to write a book on the Bush administration’s response to 9/11. Leffler notes that as a diplomatic historian trained in the

old style, he was reluctant to write about the recent past, especially because of the “paucity” of declassified primary source documents. To get around this methodological problem, Eric assured “Mel” that “he would help secure interviews with many of the leading policymakers in the Bush administration” (xiv). Still, Mel demurred. He had “not relied on interviews” for his earlier scholarship and he questioned how much he could “gain from talking to former policymakers whose ability to spin” might exceed his “ability to probe” (xiv).

But Eric was persuasive, and Mel went through with the book. However, the anthrax episode represents a case in point about the reliability of interviews as historical sources. While Edelman insists that “attention naturally gravitated to Iraq” as the source of the anthrax attacks, that association was anything but natural. It was rather carefully orchestrated. For example, on October 14, 2001, the *Guardian* ran a story claiming, on the basis of anonymous government sources, that Iraq was responsible for the attacks.⁵ The next day, the *Wall Street Journal* ran a column claiming the same.⁶ On October 18, Senator John McCain took to the airwaves of *The Late Show* with David Letterman to report there was “some indication” that the anthrax came from Iraq, and that if that should turn out to be the case then “some tough decisions are gonna have to be made.”⁷ A week later, ABC chief investigative correspondent Brian Ross reported that “four well-placed and separate sources” had informed him that the anthrax included bentonite, a “potent additive [that] is known to have been used by only one country in producing biochemical weapons—Iraq.” Bentonite was, Ross, added “a trademark of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein’s biological weapons program.”⁸

In October 2001, the American public was traumatized by the awesome spectacle of the crumbling World Trade Center playing on endless repeat on American news networks. In this highly sensitive moment, a frightened public was desperate for a demonstration of power to allay its fears. McCain, along with so many anonymous government sources, gave the public a locus upon which to fix their anxiety.

Subsequent FBI investigations uncovered no evidence that Iraq or Al-Qaeda were involved in the attacks. On the contrary, an August 2008 FBI report concluded that Bruce E. Ivins, a virologist working for the U.S. chemical weapons program at Fort Detrick, had been solely responsible.⁹ However, rather than plainly stating the facts of what happened, Leffler invokes standpoint epistemology and defers instead to the “lived experience” of his official informants. As a consequence, the line between what happened and what the Bush administration believed or said becomes quite murky before disappearing all together.

Leffler’s credulity in accepting at face value official accounts of the source of the anthrax attacks is of a piece with his larger approach to the idea of “intelligence failures” leading to the Iraq War. To present the administration’s case in the most sympathetic light possible, Leffler repeatedly conflates Hamas and Al-Qaeda, and conflates threats to Israel with threats to the United States. The logic of Leffler’s analysis runs essentially like this: Israel is a U.S. ally, Hamas is a threat to Israel, and Iraq supports Hamas; therefore, Iraq is a threat to the United States.¹⁰

In addition to Iraqi support for Palestinian militant groups, Leffler also stresses the existence of an Al-Qaeda-affiliated Ansar al-Islam training camp in Iraqi Kurdistan (120), without noting that that part of Iraq was in a U.S. no-fly zone and therefore not under Iraqi sovereignty), and that Ansar al-Islam had been founded in 2001 for the express purpose of overthrowing Iraq’s secular regime and establishing an Islamic state.¹¹ Leffler also emphasizes the presence of future Al-Qaeda leader Abu Mu’sab al Zarqawi in Baghdad for medical treatment for a few weeks in the spring of 2002, but he presents no evidence of Zarqawi

meeting with or having any operational ties to Iraq's government (134).¹² In what may be the most specious claim of all, Leffler conflates *accusations* with *evidence* when he writes that "some new evidence, however wrongheaded, accelerated anxieties, such as claims that Iraq sought uranium from Niger" (107).¹³

Much of Leffler's analysis of the prewar intelligence revolves around the question of whether the administration's disaster scenarios constituted mere "flights of fancy" or realistic assessments of actually existing threats (135). Though Leffler does not mention it, the phrase "we can't wait for the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud" was the constant refrain of Bush administration officials as they built their case for war.¹⁴ It was through such rhetorical sleights of hand that seven in ten Americans came to believe that Iraq was responsible for 9/11.¹⁵

Leffler makes no effort to explain how so much of the public could become so deeply misinformed. On the contrary, his thesis disqualifies from the outset the notion that the administration engaged in any lying or manipulation. He does, however, eventually concede that "the president and his advisers often exaggerated the 'intelligence' they had about Iraqi nuclear programs and the regime's links to al Qaeda" (173). Logically, it is hard to see how exaggerating "intelligence" doesn't constitute lying or manipulation.

The question of whether the administration was being cynical or naive in presenting its case to the public receives very little analysis in Leffler's book. Indeed, the whole question of the causal force of ideology is rather confused in Leffler's analysis. In his prior emphasis on the president's sincerity, he emphasizes the depth of Bush's ideological convictions. At various points in the book we learn that Bush was "spurred by his faith in God and American values" (77); that he was "inspired by religious conviction [and] convinced that God wanted all humankind to be free" (203); that he had "zeal for freedom" (204); and that "he read his Bible and believed that freedom was God's gift to humanity" (246).¹⁶ Leffler even goes so far as to describe Bush's "faith and his beliefs about the superiority of democratic capitalism and American institutions" as "beautifully captured in his introduction to the National Security Strategy Statement of 2002" (308, n. 20).

However, when it comes time to narrate the decision for war, Leffler's emphasis displaces the "president from the center of the policymaking process where he unquestionably belongs" (xvii) and shifts instead to the supposedly non-ideological, realist concerns of his advisers. Here we learn that the president's advisers were not in any way "motivated by missionary fervor or idealist impulses." On the contrary, "their motives were more pedestrian and more compelling" than that. They were in fact the hardheaded national security concerns that they "have emphasized again and again in their memoirs and interviews." In short, their "motive was simple: 'self-defense'" (98).

There seem to be two obvious problems with Leffler's simple self-defense thesis. The first is that the emphasis on this supposedly non-ideological motive stands in contradiction to Leffler's other claims about the president's "zeal for freedom" and the like. Late in the book, Leffler seeks to resolve this contradiction by claiming that Bush only "shifted to a more ideological discourse" about freedom after the post-invasion failure to find WMD (248). Not only does this "discursive shift" call into question the supposed sincerity of the president's rhetoric, but Leffler's timeline does not check out. All of the quotes above are descriptions of Bush's ideology prior to the invasion and subsequent failure to find WMD.

A more significant problem with Leffler's theory of a simple self-defense motive is that it understates the degree to which the concepts of national security are in and of themselves ideological. In other words, as a general rule aggressors don't think of themselves as aggressors. The

government of Iraq could undoubtedly have put forward a rationale for its 1980 invasion of Iran or its 1990 invasion of Kuwait in which it made a case that it was simply acting in "self-defense." For many scholars, ideology is what allows actors to believe whatever it is that is most convenient to believe at any given time.¹⁷ But rather than probing whatever discursive or material structures underlay this or that statement of what constitutes "American national security," Leffler is content to accept the administration's public rhetoric at face value.

In theory, a historian could gain some analytical leverage on historical actors by comparing what officials say in public with what appears in the contemporaneous record of private meetings and interagency communications. This, of course, can and should make historical actors nervous. It suggests that they might at some point be held accountable for their decisions and actions. (One can only dream of a universal jurisdiction in which legal accountability might be possible.) This nervousness explains why, as Leffler reports in his preface, "most of Bush's advisers were eager to talk and inform." For these advisers, "the written record would never illuminate precisely what they had experienced" (xv).

As someone who "spent most of [his] academic career examining documents in archival boxes," Leffler states that he disagreed and still disagrees with his informants on this point. He insists that he remains a "firm believer in the power of written evidence" and therefore resolved to employ interviews and memoirs "to supplement and complement the written record, not replace it" (xv). But while Leffler claims this in the preface, the question remains: what written record?

Secrecy is not only the "first refuge of incompetents," it was the guiding philosophy of the Bush administration's theory of a "unified executive."¹⁸ As historian Matthew Connelly observes, "To get at the true motivations animating American foreign policy, historians typically discount what politicians say in public and read lots of once-secret documents. The most important of which are gathered together and published by the State Department in *The Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*."¹⁹ However, in the case at hand, there are exactly zero *FRUS* documents pertaining to the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Nor does it appear that Leffler dug in many archival boxes.²⁰ He did not visit any presidential libraries, nor did he employ the general records of the departments of state or defense—sources usually considered the gold standard of evidence for diplomatic history.

The question of research methodology speaks directly to the issue of historical accountability. Leffler's collaboration with Bush administration officials to produce an account of Bush administration policies has the effect of absolving those officials of historical responsibility for the harm they caused in the world.²¹ On this score, Leffler concedes that "it is appropriate to blame Bush and his advisers" for the catastrophic outcomes that attended the decision to invade Iraq. But he insists that "the failures in the aftermath of 9/11 should not be attributed to the president alone or exclusively to his administration. The failures were the nation's failures, the failures of the American people—not all, but many" (250–51).

But in making this argument, Leffler pays no attention to the ways in which public opinion can be shaped by those in power. Rather than attributing the catastrophic outcomes that befell Iraq, the region, and the world to the poor judgment of the Bush administration, Leffler seeks to cast the invasion as an act of nature for which no one in particular can or should be held responsible. In his view, "Tragedy occurs not because leaders are ill-intentioned, stupid, and corrupt; tragedy occurs when earnest people and responsible officials seek to do the right thing, and end up making things much worse" (252). This conclusion from one of the country's most eminent historians might bring

great comfort to those who wield great power and influence, but it will hardly do as an effort to “grapple earnestly with the dilemmas of statecraft” (252). A dilemma of statecraft is when a state has to choose between two options—in this case between force and diplomacy. Knowledge experts (not to mention an overwhelming international consensus), clearly, consistently, and publicly warned of the utterly predictable consequences that would flow from choosing war.²² The Bush administration clearly made the wrong choice and should have been held to account. *Confronting Saddam Hussein* fails utterly to provide this account.

Historian Jeffrey Kimball once described Cold War post-revisionism, the school of interpretation with which Leffler is associated, as “orthodoxy plus archives.”²³ However, in this case, Leffler has presented a new orthodoxy regarding the U.S. invasion of Iraq, but without so much as the benefit of an archival source base. *Inshallah*, other interpretations employing a more rigorous methodology will still be forthcoming.

Notes:

1. Charles Edel, “Introduction: Truth, Justice, and the American Way” in “Reflections on Melvyn Leffler’s Long Career,” *Texas National Security Review* (Sept 6, 2018): 4.
2. Leffler does not cite these accounts or otherwise situate his own interpretation within the historiography.
3. Christopher J. Coyne and Abigail R. Hall, *Manufacturing Militarism: U.S. Government Propaganda in the War on Terror* (Palo Alto, CA, 2021), 19.
4. Coyne and Hall, *Manufacturing Militarism*, 7.
5. David Rose and Ed Vulliamy, “Iraq ‘behind US anthrax outbreaks,’” *Guardian*, Oct 14, 2001.
6. “The Anthrax Source,” *Wall Street Journal*, Oct 15, 2001.
7. “One Month After 9/11, McCain Said Anthrax ‘May Have Come From Iraq,’ Warned Iraq Is ‘The Second Phase,’” *Think Progress*, Aug 1, 2008, <https://web.archive.org/web/20080804231243/http://thinkprogress.org/2008/08/01/mccain-anthrax-iraq/>.
8. “Anthrax Investigation/ Bentonite,” ABC Evening News, Sunday, Oct 28, 2001, <https://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/broadcasts/716233/>; “Troubling Anthrax Additive Found; Atta Met Iraqi,” ABC News, Oct 29, 2001, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/story?id=92270&page=1>.
9. Transcript of Amerithrax Investigation Press Conference, Washington, D.C., Aug 6, 2008, <https://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/2008/August/08-opa-697.html>.
10. Note, for example, the formulation in Leffler’s conclusion, where he accuses critics of the Bush administration of ignoring “Hussein’s links to terrorists and the ongoing havoc caused by acts of suicidal terror” (252). The “acts of suicidal terror” in question were directed at Israel and not the United States.
11. Chaim Kaufmann, “Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas: The Selling of the Iraq War,” *International Security* 29, no. 1 (Summer 2004):19.
12. In his February 2003 UN address, Colin Powell made the Iraq-Zarqawi connection a central piece of his argument for war. In the days following that speech, “there was a 30-point jump [from 38 to 68 percent] in the number of Americans who felt convinced of a link between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda.” See Amy Gershkoff and Shana Kushner, “Shaping Public Opinion: The 9/11-Iraq Connection in the Bush Administration’s Rhetoric,” *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 3 (2005): 531. Powell later walked back the Iraq-Zarqawi claim. See Christopher Marquis, “Powell Admits No Hard Proof Linking Iraq to Al Qaeda,” *New York Times*, Jan 9, 2004.
13. Approximately half of Isikoff and Corn’s *Hubris: The Inside Story of Spin, Scandal, and the Selling of the Iraq War* (New York, 2006) is devoted to untangling the sordid effort to fabricate evidence of Iraq seeking uranium from Niger.
14. On the origins of the “smoking gun/mushroom cloud” metaphor, see Isikoff and Corn, *Hubris*, 35.
15. Dana Milbank and Claudia Deane, “Hussein Link to 9/11 Lingers in Many Minds,” *Washington Post*, Sept 6, 2003.
16. For an alternative take on Bush’s brand of “Self-help Methodism” as mere campaign gimmick, see Jacob Weisberg, *The Bush Tragedy* (New York, 2008), 82.
17. See, for example, Christopher McKnight Nichols and David Milne, eds., *Ideology in U.S. Foreign Relations: New Histories* (New York, 2023), 1–7.
18. On the secrecy as the “first refuge of incompetents,” see the

broader discussion of the sociology of government secrecy in Matthew Connelly, *The Declassification Engine: What History Reveals About America’s Top Secrets* (New York & London, 2023), 327. On the centrality of official secrecy to the Bush administration’s philosophy of government, see Weisberg, *The Bush Tragedy*, 157–58, 173–79.

19. See Connelly, *The Declassification Engine*, 252.

20. Leffler does frequently cite declassified documents databases such as the National Security Archive and various online reading rooms. But as Connelly observes, “every time we cite an online source as if we found it in a library and read it on paper, we are denying reality.” See Connelly, “What I Learned from Thirty Years at the Bleeding Edge of Historical Research,” in Richard H. Immerman (ed.), *H-Diplo Forum on Scholars and Digital Archives: Living the Dream?* (October 6, 2021), 11. This methodological problem is particularly pronounced in Leffler’s frequent references to the “Rumsfeld Papers.” By Rumsfeld Papers, Leffler does not mean the Rumsfeld Papers that are housed at the U.S. Library of Congress in Washington, DC. Whereas the Library of Congress collection contains 345,000 separate items in 946 containers for a total of 398 linear feet and 35 microfilm reels, Leffler refers instead to the “archive” that can be found at Rumsfeld.com. That commercial website was assembled by Rumsfeld himself and features a collection of documents “hand-selected” from Rumsfeld’s “personal collection” for the express purpose of supporting the claims advanced in his 2011 memoir, *Known and Unknown*.

21. The extent to which the book absolves decisionmakers of historical responsibility for the consequences of their actions may explain why it has been received so enthusiastically by neoconservative ideologues such as John Bolton and Robert Kagan. In this connection, the book might usefully be situated within what historian Samuel Moyn describes as the ongoing project of ideological restoration in the wake of the Trump presidency. See Kagan’s endorsement on the book jacket; Bolton’s review in the *Wall Street Journal*, Feb 21, 2003; Moyn, “Robert Kagan and Interventionism’s Big Reboot,” *The New Republic*, Feb 14, 2023.

22. As the Bush administration prepared its invasion, Patrick Tyler of the *New York Times* observed that “the fracturing of the Western alliance over Iraq and the huge antiwar demonstrations around the world this weekend are reminders that there may still be two superpowers on the planet: the United States and world public opinion.” See “A New Power in the Streets,” *New York Times*, Feb 17, 2003. On world opinion surveys, and the Bush administration’s misrepresentation thereof, see Coyne and Hall, *Manufacturing Militarism*, 57–60.

23. Orthodoxy in this instance denotes interpretive deference to the official view in Washington. On post-revisionism as “orthodoxy plus archives,” and Leffler as an exponent of post-revisionism, see Bruce Cumings, “‘Revising Postrevisionism,’ or, The Poverty of Theory in Diplomatic History,” *Diplomatic History* 17, no. 4 (Fall 1993): 551, 561–63.

Review of Melvyn Leffler *Confronting Saddam Hussein*

Aaron O’Connell

Melvyn Leffler has been a giant in the field of international history for years, and his latest work is likely to influence debates over the Iraq War for a generation to come. The book’s principal purpose, the preface explains, is twofold: to understand “why the United States decided to invade Iraq and why the war went awry so quickly.”¹ On the first question, he finds most of the popular explanations of the Bush administration’s motivations overly simple—or dead wrong—and resolves to correct them.

In Leffler’s telling, the war in Iraq was neither a war for oil nor a war of revenge. Bush did not come into office hoping to topple Saddam Hussein or to convert Iraq into a democracy, although he campaigned for, and sincerely wanted, a more confrontational policy than Democrats had pursued under President Clinton. Nor was Bush uninformed or passive in the war-planning process; neither Vice President Dick Cheney, nor Secretary of Defense Don Rumsfeld, nor their hawkish staffers pushed an inattentive chief executive into war, as some have previously alleged.²

Rather, Leffler concludes, President Bush drove the decision-making from the outset with one overarching goal: to prevent another terrorist attack on the American homeland. Invading Iraq was one step towards that goal, and Leffler thinks Bush earnestly believed that toppling Hussein would decrease the threat of another attack. That is why he first pursued a deliberate strategy of coercive diplomacy to convince Hussein to disarm while always making it clear to his advisors and the American people that if he did not, a war could follow.

Leffler's analysis of Bush's motivations is fair up to a point, but his case would have been strengthened considerably had he taken up the counterarguments more directly and either refuted them or placed them in a broader context. Take the issue of whether Bush wanted to remove Hussein prior to al Qaeda's attacks. A number of high-level aides and Cabinet officials were present at the president's early NSC meetings on Iraq -- the first of which occurred just ten days after his inauguration -- and later alleged that Bush's national security team was developing plans to go after Iraq as soon as he took office. What of Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage's remarks to then-RAND researcher Seth G. Jones that "from Day One, it was Iraq, Iraq, Iraq"?³ What of the statements of Bush's first treasury secretary, Paul O'Neill, who later argued that "from the start, we were building the case against Hussein and looking at how we could take him out and change Iraq into a new country. And, if we did that, it would solve everything. It was all about finding a way to do it. That was the tone of it. The President [was] saying, 'Fine. Go find me a way to do this.'"⁴

Secretary of Defense Don Rumsfeld also had a pre-9/11 plan for regime change in Iraq—or at least a notion of one. "Sanctions [against Hussein] are fine," he told Colin Powell and National Security Advisor Rice on February 2, 2001, "but what we really want to think about is going after Saddam. . . . Imagine what the region would look like without Saddam and with a regime that's aligned with U.S. interests," he argued. "It would change everything in the region and beyond it."⁵

Rumsfeld may only have been exploring options but his senior staffers started drafting plans. On April 24, 2001, some five months before the 9/11 attacks, Rumsfeld's special assistant for policy matters sent Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz an eight-page memo with the unambiguous title "A Strategy to Liberate Iraq." The memo's three-phase plan sought to overthrow Saddam by arming the now-discredited Iraqi National Congress (INC) with advanced tank-killing missiles (TOWs and Javelins) and supporting their operations with "aggressive U.S. military responses" that could "inflict maximum damage on Saddam, key regime forces and other pillars of support."

This was much more than quiet encouragement for a coup, which the memo rejected as infeasible. Rather, "A Strategy to Liberate Iraq" called for "positioning US (and allied) military forces to support and exploit opportunities," and included an initial target list for U.S. air strikes: "Special Republican Guard, Special Security Office, Presidential Security, Republican Guard units deployed against opposition enclaves." It noted that Saddam might deploy tanks in response, but should he move against INC forces, Iraq's "massed armor makes an inviting and lucrative target for U.S. (and allied) forces."⁶

Aren't these documents and statements evidence of a pre-9/11 desire to remove Hussein? Isn't this more than just a more aggressive policy, but early indications that Bush's top advisors and perhaps the president himself, were considering toppling the Iraqi government before the 9/11 attacks? Two of the three speakers above (O'Neill and Armitage) later became outspoken critics of the Iraq war, so their recollections may be suspect, but Rumsfeld was as much of an administration insider as it is possible to be.

He not only discussed these ideas generically; under his watch, Defense Department senior officials took early steps to make them a reality, all before the planes hit the Twin Towers and the Pentagon.

Leffler next turns to the immediate post-911 period, when the administration declared the Global War on Terror and established its goals and priorities. He rightfully notes that Afghanistan, not Iraq, was the president's primary focus in those early days, even though Wolfowitz pressed for an attack on Iraq at Camp David just five days after 9/11. Bush demurred, and for Leffler, this is important evidence that "the president did not think Saddam Hussein was the source of the attack" or "linked to 9/11."⁷ For additional evidence on this critical point, Leffler offers statements by close aides and Cabinet officials: Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet; Bush's CIA briefer, Mike Morrell; National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice and her deputy, Steve Hadley—all of whom told the president repeatedly that Al Qaeda, not Iraq, were the perpetrators, and all of whom believed the president accepted those conclusions.

Here too, addressing the counter-evidence more directly would have strengthened Leffler's case. What of the president's remarks to his War Cabinet on September 17 saying that he believed "Iraq was involved [in the 9/11 attacks], but I'm not going to strike them now"?⁸ What of Bush's remarks to counterterrorism advisor, Richard Clarke, on the evening of September 11—after the CIA director had already attributed the attacks to Al Qaeda—to "see if Saddam did this. See if he's linked in any way"? (Leffler notes this exchange but does not make much of it.) What of Bush's remarks to the press more than a year after 9/11 that "you can't distinguish between al Qaeda and Saddam when you talk about the war on terror" because the two "work in concert"? Aren't these pretty good indications that the president wrongly thought Hussein was connected to the 9/11 attacks or, at least, to the attackers?

The president's motivations are again front and center as Leffler explores whether Bush's march towards war stemmed from a reasonable desire to prevent more terrorist attacks or a less reasonable missionary impulse to democratize Iraq. Leffler is clear where he stands on this issue: throughout the summer of 2002, he writes, "Bush rarely engaged in idealistic talk about democracy-promotion. If he took military action to enforce Iraq's compliance with UN resolutions, he hoped that regime change would lift the shackles on the Iraqi people and nurture freedom throughout the region. But he was motivated by his perception of threat, not by dreams of a democratic Iraq."¹⁰

After several years of researching this issue, I am convinced that President Bush was motivated by both goals. Despite his assertion in the 2000 campaign that the United States should avoid nation-building, Bush committed himself to precisely that policy immediately after 9/11 and spoke of it regularly. This wasn't just starry-eyed idealism; it was his explicit plan for ensuring Iraq would not pose a threat to the United States after Saddam was ousted. Simply removing Saddam or his WMD was never the president's only goal. He wanted to make Iraq a democracy and a partner in the War on Terror, and he thought invasions and then elections were the best way to accomplish that goal.

We know this because the president spoke about it before the war began. "As our troops advance, we'll be behind the lines, improving everything," he told an aide shortly before the war. "And they're going to embrace freedom. And they'll also demand that their lives be made better. And we're ready. We're not just going to end the terror. We're going to reconstruct Iraq."¹¹

The president didn't just say he wanted democracy in Iraq; he ordered the Pentagon, State Department, and other elements of the executive branch to plan for its

implementation a full eight months before the war began. In August 2002, Bush signed a National Security Policy Directive (effectively, written orders from the president to the relevant departments and agencies) titled “Iraq: Goals, Objectives, Strategy,” which named eight goals for a post-Saddam Iraq and outlined a strategy for achieving them. Only one of the goals concerned weapons of mass destruction; most of the others were transformative, nation-building goals, such as creating an Iraq that “respects the basic rights of all Iraqis—including women and minorities; adheres to the rule of law and respects fundamental human rights, including freedom of speech and worship; and encourages the building of democratic institutions.” To accomplish these goals, the NSPD continues, the United States must “demonstrate that the US and coalition partners are prepared to play a sustained role in providing security, humanitarian assistance, and reconstruction aid in support of this vision” in a way that “prepares for the transition to an elected Iraqi Government as quickly as practicable [emphasis added].”¹²

These are not just dueling quotes. NSPDs are about the most formal statements of policy a White House can produce; once issued, they are effectively marching orders for the executive branch. Given what the “Iraq: Goals Objectives Strategy” NSPD says, it seems incontrovertible that turning Iraq into a democracy was one of those end states. And lest there be any doubt that a democratic transition was an explicit war goal, let us leave this point with a quote from President Bush himself, who stated as much in an interview in 2015. “Remember, we’re trying to win—and the definition of win, by the way, we said this all along, is [for Iraq to be] an ally in the war on terror and a functioning democracy.”¹³

Leffler again pushes against the popular consensus when discussing the motivations of Bush’s top advisors, who he claims were singularly focused on preventing another attack, with no ulterior motives in pressing for the invasion. “Hawkish advisers like Rumsfeld, Cheney, and Libby and their neoconservative friends, like Wolfowitz and Feith, were not inspired by missionary fervor or idealistic impulses,” Leffler asserts. “Their motives were more pedestrian and more compelling, ones they have emphasized again and again in their memoirs and their interviews.” In the end it was all about “self-defense.”¹⁴

Well, maybe. But the key to this claim is how one defines “self-defense,” and Bush and his top advisors did so expansively. Take Secretary Rumsfeld’s “Strategic Thoughts” memo, penned less than three weeks after the 9/11 attacks, which Leffler references as proof that preventing another attack was the only relevant motive. I read that document very differently. It is “widely assumed that U.S. will strike soon and exclusively at Al-Qaida in Afghanistan,” the memo begins. “It would instead be surprising and impressive if we built our forces up patiently, took some early action outside of Afghanistan, perhaps in multiple locations” to topple “another key State (or two) that supports terrorism.” This strategy, Rumsfeld claimed, would do much more than target the Al Qaeda network in Afghanistan, it would “strengthen political and military efforts to change policies elsewhere.” Syria would end its military occupation of Lebanon. Other countries (names redacted) would dismantle their WMD programs or risk their destruction. The entire region would be transformed. “If the war does not significantly change the world’s political map,” Rumsfeld told the president, “the U.S. will not achieve its aim.”¹⁵

Is re-organizing the world’s map really self-defense? Only in the most attenuated sense of the word. The references to Syria, Lebanon, and at least two other states whose names are redacted make it clear that the Bush administration’s goal was larger than removing the Al Qaeda terrorist threat; it was to communicate to the world

that supporting terrorism might invite a violent American response. By this logic, the president could have struck Iran too, or Syria, or North Korea, for that matter, to achieve Rumsfeld’s demonstration effect. Had he done so, would anyone think that counted as self-defense too?

Besides these questions of interpretation, there are also a few small errors in the book that require correction but do not diminish the argument or the author’s credibility. First, Hamid Karzai did not “take Kandahar” in December 2001; in fact, while Karzai was negotiating the surrender of the city, his rival, Gul Agha Sherzai, seized the governor’s palace and installed himself there. (American special operators were ordered not to accompany Sherzai, but the on-site Green Beret commander violated his orders and did so anyway.)

Second, Leffler alleges that by the fall of 2001, Al-Qaeda terrorists “had murdered almost 4,000 Americans,” but that number is off by roughly 1,000, as the 9/11 attacks killed 2,902 Americans and Al Qaeda’s two other successful attacks—the 1998 East Africa embassy bombings and the 2000 USS Cole bombings—killed twenty nine.¹⁶ Third, General Petraeus was the commanding general of the 101st Airborne Division, not the 82nd Airborne Division. Finally, a minor typo: footnote 10 in chapter 4 references the 9/11 Commission Report, page 236, as evidence that General Franks was denied permission to do early war planning on Iraq, but that information comes from page 336 of the 9/11 Commission Report, not page 236.¹⁷

It’s often said that journalism is the first draft of history, and if that is true, then Leffler’s *Confronting Saddam Hussein* is perhaps the second draft—better than what came before, but still incomplete, since most of the sources remain classified. Nonetheless, his book is a service to all scholars of international relations and military history, as it casts a skeptical eye on the conventional wisdom of the war, and links arguments with evidence better than most earlier accounts. As more documents become available, future scholars will decide for themselves whether Leffler’s take on Bush’s motives is too generous or a useful corrective to the war’s early polemicists. Personally, I incline toward the former.

Notes:

1. Melvin P. Leffler, *Confronting Saddam Hussein: George W. Bush and the Invasion of Iraq* (New York & Oxford, UK, 2023), xvii.
2. These allegations may be found in Lou Dubose and Jake Bernstein, *Vice: Dick Cheney and the Hijacking of the American Presidency* (New York, 2006); and in Michael Moore, dir. *Fahrenheit 911* (2004; New York: Dog Eat Dog Films, Miramax).
3. For Armitage’s remarks, see Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America’s War in Afghanistan* (New York, 2010), 124–5.
4. Ron Suskind, *The Price of Loyalty: George W. Bush, The White House, and the Education of Paul O’Neill* (New York, 2004), 86.
5. Suskind, *The Price of Loyalty*, 85.
6. All of the quotes in this paragraph come from Chris Williams, special assistant for policy matters to Undersecretary of Defense Wolfowitz, “A Strategy to Liberate Iraq,” April 24, 2001, Digital National Security Archive, George Washington University.
7. Leffler, *Confronting Saddam*, 57, 80.
8. Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York, 2002), 99.
9. “Remarks by President Bush and President Alvaro Uribe of Colombia,” September 25, 2002, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020925-1.html>.
10. Leffler, *Confronting Saddam Hussein*, 172.
11. Robert Draper, *To Start a War: How the Bush Administration Took America into Iraq* (London & New York, 2020), 350.
12. The NSPD is summarized in Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York, 2004), e-book, 302–5 of 974. A copy of the unclassified version of the memo may be found in “From Condoleezza Rice re Principals’ Committee Review of Iraq Policy Paper,” October 29, 2002, Rumsfeld Papers, <https://papers.rumsfeld.com/library>.
13. Interview with President George W. Bush, December 1, 2015, in Timothy Sayle et al., eds., *The Last Card: Inside the George W. Bush’s Decision to Surge in Iraq* (Ithaca, NY, 2019), e-book, Apple

Books, Chap. 8. Loc. 516 of 1,147.

14. Leffler, *Confronting Saddam Hussein*, 98.

15. Donald Rumsfeld, "Memorandum for the President: Strategic Thoughts," September 30, 2001, National Security Archive Briefing Book, No. 358, Doc. 13, National Security Archive, George Washington University. See also Douglas Feith, *War and Decision* (New York, 2008), 66, where Rumsfeld pushes for an attack on "at least one non-Al Qaeda target—e.g. Iraq."

16. Deaths from specific terrorist attacks may be queried in the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), Global Terrorism Database (GTD), <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/about/>, accessed May 29, 2023. A summary of attacks by year may be found at GTD, "American Deaths in Terrorist Attacks," START, 2015, https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_AmericanTerrorismDeaths_FactSheet_Oct2015.pdf.

17. National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, *The 9/11 Commission Report* (New York, 2004), 336.

Author's Response

Melvyn P. Leffler

I want to express my appreciation to Andrew Johns for orchestrating this roundtable. I also want to thank the participants for taking the time to review *Confronting Saddam Hussein*.

Before addressing the specific remarks of the commentators, I want to summarize the essential themes of my book. I do so because the conclusions in the book are not highlighted in any of the reviews. I stress four key themes: fear, power, hubris, and dysfunction. These themes should not escape the attention of readers, because the conclusion of the book is entitled "Fear, Power, Hubris." Fear, power, and hubris shaped Bush's decisions, and dysfunction helps to explain why the effort to confront Saddam Hussein turned into a tragedy. I show that the president feared another attack, one that might be more catastrophic than the one that had occurred on 9/11. I go on to stress that "fear alone did not shape the president's strategy of confrontation. Bush's sense of American power—its capacity to achieve what it needed to do—was equally important." I then say that "fear and power were an intoxicating brew when reinforced by hubris, a sense of exceptional goodness and greatness" (245–46).

Readers of this roundtable might also miss my overall assessment of Bush. Throughout, I show that Bush was in charge of Iraq policy, but this does not mean that I argue he did a good job. Quite the opposite! I conclude that "he failed because his information was flawed, his assumptions inaccurate, his priorities imprecise, and his means incommensurate with his evolving ends." Although I stress that his advisers did not deliver the help he needed, I also emphasize that "personally, he was unable to grasp the magnitude of the enterprise he was embracing, the risks that inhered in it, and the costs that would be incurred." In sum, his strategy was flawed, and it led to tragedy (249, 244, 237).

At the same time that I hold Bush responsible for the tragedy that unfolded, I seek to explain why he acted as he did. I show that Iraq was not a major preoccupation of his when he assumed the presidency, although he did despise Saddam Hussein and did embrace the strategy of regime change that had been adopted by the Clinton administration in 1998 (and was so dear to some neoconservative advisers like Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz). Nonetheless, Iraq was not a priority matter for George W. Bush prior to 9/11, and regime change, even for his neoconservative advisers, did not mean an American invasion of Iraq.

I illuminate the president's fears after 9/11, his feelings of guilt over the attack that had occurred, and his sense that he had a responsibility to prevent another one. I

describe and analyze the information and "intelligence" he was receiving, and I highlight its ambiguities and challenges. I depict the options he had before him, and I explain the strategy of coercive diplomacy he embraced. I emphasize that that strategy was flawed. But I also stress that Bush hoped that Saddam Hussein would invite back the inspectors, reveal and relinquish his (alleged) weapons of mass destruction, flee, or be assassinated.

In other words, I also argue that the Iraqi dictator had agency. He could have acted differently. After 9/11, he could have immediately allowed UN inspectors to return; he could have condemned the attacks on 9/11 rather than applaud them; he could have stopped cheating on the sanctions; he could have ceased challenging U.S. planes enforcing the no-fly zones; he could have terminated his links to terrorist groups and his support of suicide bombers; and he could have done much more to clarify that his regime had destroyed its weapons of mass destruction. He chose not to do these things. His defiance mattered.

My book cuts against the grain. It empathizes and criticizes; it seeks to explain, not simply to condemn. I recognize that my account is a first cut at the history of the decision-making that led to the invasion of Iraq. I assume that mountains of classified material will someday be available to my successors. And I readily acknowledge that these new archival materials might show that I am mistaken about any number of things. Meanwhile, however, I hope readers will take the time to ponder the texture and complexity of my account, and not simply react to defend predilections that might not be as well founded as they think.

In this regard I especially appreciate Molly Wood's thoughtful review of the book. I am delighted that she thinks the volume will serve her students well and will make them think about both methodological and substantive questions. She correctly highlights my emphasis on the fears and emotions of policymakers, and she wisely emphasizes the mixed messages that Bush was receiving from his advisers. There was no clear consensus on what to do with Iraq after 9/11, although there was agreement that Saddam Hussein was a ruthless dictator and a dangerous opportunist. Wood stresses, correctly, how important it is for students to ponder what would have happened if Bush did nothing to confront Hussein—and then the Iraqi dictator decided to "team up" with terrorists who attacked the United States again or who murdered Americans abroad.

Although these scenarios were unlikely, they remained more likely than the events of 9/11 had been when 19 terrorists with boxcutters flew jet planes into the twin towers and the Pentagon, killing about 3000 people. Unlikely scenarios haunted U.S. officials, and Molly Wood is smart to use the book as an instrument to prod students to think carefully about the roles of emotion, memory, experience, and "intelligence" in the making of American foreign policy.

Given my respect for his work, I am gratified that Aaron O'Connell acknowledges that my book is better than previous accounts, but hardly dispositive. I agree that my account "is incomplete," because most of the sources are still classified. But I do not agree that the book suffers from a failure to deal with the "counter-arguments"—that is, a failure to dwell on evidence that has often been repeated in popular accounts but is not (in my judgment) very convincing.

For example, O'Connell criticizes me for not considering the evidence that Bush wanted to topple the regime in Iraq from the time he took office. Actually, I do think Bush wanted to topple Saddam Hussein, but it was not a priority of his and it was not deemed feasible. Prior to 9/11, the risks and costs outweighed the anticipated benefits. When Christopher Meyer, the British ambassador, went to

Texas to talk to Bush's advisers before the administration took office, he found that Iraq was simply a "grumbling appendix" (31–32).

While O'Connell alludes to Rumsfeld's comments to Secretary of State Colin Powell, as recited by Secretary of Treasury Paul O'Neill, and criticizes me for not grappling with this evidence, he does not inform readers about the written memoranda, congressional testimony, and interviews that I actually do employ to outline Rumsfeld's position regarding Iraq (44–47). I point out that pre-9/11, both Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz were concerned with Iraq (and Iran and Libya and North Korea) because of missile developments in those countries and their alleged aspirations to develop, or their assumed possession of, weapons of mass destruction. I emphasize that Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz were concerned about the ability of the United States to wield its power in a future crisis and their fear of "blackmail" and self-deterrence.

Yet I also stress that Rumsfeld had no acceptable plan, even by his own admission. And although I do summarize Wolfowitz's position about toppling Hussein's regime (44–45, 81), I do not dwell on his eight-page memo of April 2001 because that memo was never considered by the president or his principal advisers and never acted upon by the military planners. Instead, I chose to dwell on the memorandum that was written by Zal Khalilzad, Condoleezza Rice's NSC expert on Iraq, a memo that was actually considered by the president's principal advisers and then put aside. The memo, according to Khalilzad, "laid out a series of options **short of full-scale invasion** that the president **could consider** if he decided to topple Saddam's regime [my emphasis]" (46–47). But the principals could not resolve their differences, and the president had nothing to decide. There were no orders to update war plans, and no indication that Iraq had become a top priority for the president. The point in my book is that 9/11 made a big difference.

O'Connell also implies that Bush was obsessed with Iraq after 9/11 and that I do not pay much attention to the evidence suggesting that obsession. He selects a quotation from Bob Woodward's book, *Bush at War*, in which the president was quoted as saying "I believe Iraq was involved, but I'm not going to strike them now." However, he conveniently leaves out the next sentence: "I don't have the evidence at this point."¹

In *Confronting Saddam Hussein*, I actually dwell on the evidence that the president was receiving, and I fully explain what he was thinking, doing, and saying immediately after 9/11 (I include his comments to Dick Clarke, the counterterrorism expert). I point out, among other things, that in the initial days and weeks after 9/11, Bush had many opportunities to link Iraq to 9/11 publicly, but he carefully refrained from doing so. At the same time, I also show that Bush said privately that he would come back and address the issue of Iraq after he dealt with Al Qaeda and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. He declared both privately and publicly that his Global War on Terror would make no distinction between terrorists who wanted to kill Americans and humiliate America and the regimes that harbored them. Addressing the issue, however, did not mean that Bush had then decided to invade Iraq (51–98).

O'Connell also criticizes me for stressing that Bush was principally motivated by his fears of another attack and for not acknowledging that democracy-promotion and nation-building were his goals from the outset. Here again, O'Connell simplifies my argument. I do argue that fear and security were the president's principal motives, but I also state again and again throughout the book that Bush did believe that, if the United States invaded Iraq, it should promote freedom and democracy. In other words, I make a careful distinction between motives and goals.

Bush went to war because of his concerns about

protecting the American homeland, safeguarding U.S. security, projecting American power, and maintaining credibility, but he did hope to produce a more democratic and free Iraq as a result. If the United States had to act out of self-interest and use its awesome power to overthrow an evil dictator, he took comfort in believing that he would offer something superior to the benighted Iraqis whose lives Americans would be enriching (201, 245–46).

That was Bush's hubris, a point I stress again and again throughout the book (although the reviewers almost completely ignore it). But Bush's attitudes about the benefits of democracy and freedom were not shared by some of his most important advisers, including Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. This is why O'Connell is mistaken when he stresses the importance of the NSC paper titled "Iraq: Goals, Objectives, Strategy." I carefully deal with this paper (152–54, 204ff.) and show that, although it was approved by the president, it was not executed with any commitment or proficiency.

O'Connell believes this NSC directive constituted "marching orders," but Bush's subordinates did not march. They feuded, argued, and procrastinated. There was no real money assigned for reconstruction or nation-building. There was no agreement on who would run Iraq after the invasion. There was no decision on what to do with the Iraqi army. The confusion was palpable. Bush's top NSC advisers—Condoleezza Rice and Stephen Hadley—understood this, and Hadley decided in January 2003 to try to iron out the command relationships with a new National Security Policy Directive (NSPD 24).

This directive, however, assigned oversight to Rumsfeld, who cared not a whit about promoting democracy and freedom and nation-building. Here again, I present a complicated picture indicating that President Bush did care about democracy and freedom (although that was not what motivated his decision to invade), yet he did little to prepare for the nurturing of democracy, freedom, or nation-building. Key issues were not addressed until March 2003, just a few weeks before the invasion, and even then, the most critical issues were not resolved. I fault Bush precisely because he took command but executed poorly. He relied too much on Rumsfeld. And it is critical to keep in mind that Rumsfeld ran the Defense Department, not Wolfowitz, and that Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz had very different concerns and priorities (204–37, 244).

In some respects, Nate Citino's critique overlaps with O'Connell's. Citino thinks that my problem is that I retain too much "faith in the overall benevolence of American power." That is a misreading of *Confronting Saddam Hussein*. While I do believe that policymakers' fears were real, and I empathize with them, that does not mean that I believe that U.S. power was employed wisely. Power can be used prudently or imprudently. It can do good and it can do harm. My book argues that too much fear and too much hubris inspired the imprudent use of American power. Citino errs when he says that I am concerned primarily with American prestige. Tragedy occurred not because American prestige was damaged, but because of the loss of lives—mostly Iraqi—and because of the geostrategic, economic, political, and social consequences that befell both countries (246–52).

I also believe that the tragedy was not simply the product of U.S. decisions. The Iraqi regime had agency; Saddam Hussein had agency. Citino blames the invasion of Iraq on America's imperial past and hegemonic disposition. He thinks that U.S. covert operations against Iraqi communists in the 1960s, Washington's indifference to Hussein's use of chemical weapons in the 1980s, and its application of sanctions in the 1990s explain the invasion of Iraq. "Over half a century," he writes, "patronage and coercion defined the pattern of U.S.-Iraqi relations." The invasion of Iraq, he stresses, was "the culmination of a long-term imperial relationship."

I believe his views are simplistic. The United States has had “imperial relationships” with lots of countries, but Washington rarely deploys hundreds of thousands of troops to take over a country. What is vexing about Citino’s critique is that it denies agency to Iraqis and to Hussein and ignores the contingent nature of events—the shock of 9/11. He denounces the sanctions imposed by the United States in the 1990s, sanctions that did have terrible humanitarian consequences. But he does not mention why the United States imposed sanctions or why the United States was enforcing no-fly zones. He does not explain that Hussein purposely exploited the suffering of Iraqis to shape public opinion abroad.² He does not explain that the sanctions were the result of Hussein’s aggression, development of weapons of mass destruction, employment of chemical weapons, ruthless slaughter of Kurds and Shi’a, and violation of UN resolutions.

In my opening chapter I present a portrait of Saddam Hussein that addresses his accomplishments, brutality, egregious misjudgments, and dangerous opportunism (1–21). That portrait seeks to assign agency to the Iraqi regime as well as to the U.S. government. I think that is a good way to understand decision-making and to illuminate bilateral relations in the international arena (although I do pay much more attention to Washington than to Baghdad).

Citino faults me for not “considering” how 9/11 provided officials with “a political opportunity to push through a long-sought bipartisan policy of regime change.” Actually, his criticism is not that I fail to consider it; it is that I (mostly) reject it. I do so not because it is altogether wrong, but because I consider “political opportunism” a narrow, reductionist account of the reverberations of 9/11. The events of that day wreaked death and destruction in Washington and New York; the events of that day engendered fear, sorrow, humiliation, and outrage throughout the nation. Among officials, there was genuine fear of another attack—fear that should it occur again, the United States might gravitate toward a garrison state; worry that another attack would discredit the administration and ruin the reputation of the Republican Party as the protector of U.S. national security.

Attention gravitated to Iraq because it was regarded as a potential source of chemical or biological weapons for terrorists who were eager to attack again with even more devastating weapons. The focus on Iraq may have been misplaced, as I conclude, but the fears were genuine, based on the lived experience of grappling with Saddam Hussein’s erratic, adventurous, and ruthless behavior in the past, his actions in the present, and his prospective challenges in the future. The ongoing reporting about the erosion of sanctions and his growing self-confidence, coupled with new “intelligence” about his chemical weapons programs, however wrongheaded in retrospect, produced genuine alarm in the fall of 2001 (18–21, 44–45, 53–67, 82–92, 246).

This brings me to Brandon Wolfe-Hunnicuttt’s critique. He focuses on the anthrax scare in the weeks and months after 9/11 and boldly asserts that U.S. officials lied about it, inflated its significance, and wrongly blamed it on Iraq. He cites a few newspaper articles from the time and quotes an excerpt from a letter in an envelope that contained anthrax spores: “Death to America. Death to Israel. Allah is great.” He then asserts that “according to Leffler, such statements proved that Al Qaeda’s interest in anthrax was real.”

That is a puzzling and erroneous simplification of the evidence I present. I describe the “threat matrix” at the time, which highlighted the likelihood of additional attacks. I explain that when U.S. covert operators entered Al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan, they found unmistakable evidence that Al Qaeda did want to acquire chemical and biological weapons. I show how difficult it was to identify the sources of the anthrax and explain why attention gravitated to Iraq: because these things happened

while Hussein’s newspapers were applauding the attacks and new information was suggesting that Hussein was stepping up his programs of weapons of mass destruction.

Wolfe-Hunnicuttt cites a transcript of a press conference regarding a 2008 FBI study showing that Iraq was not involved in the anthrax episode, and he seems to think that study should have affected attitudes and perceptions in 2001.³ He accuses me of “epistemological” weakness, but his own methodological fallacies seem to far outweigh my own. Worse, he implies that policymakers attributed the 2001 anthrax scare to Iraq. That was not the case. What the scare did do was heighten fears that Iraq might be a future source of chemical or biological weapons for a terrorist attack. These fears were exaggerated, but they were very real. As I write in my conclusion, officials “conflated the evil that Hussein personified with a magnitude of threat that he did not embody” (82–92, 251–52).

Throughout his critique Wolfe-Hunnicuttt misconstrues my intentions, distorts my arguments, and shows a baffling unfamiliarity with the available sources. He asserts that my intent was to write a big book about George W. Bush that resembles the one I had written about Truman, and he faults me for not doing so. But he does not tell readers that in my preface I state that I quickly realized that I could **not** write a comprehensive overview of the administration’s policies (xiv). This book is not an effort to replicate what I did in *A Preponderance of Power*, and in no way do I try to compare Bush to Truman.

Wolfe-Hunnicuttt also claims that my analysis is distorted by my friend Eric Edelman, the former adviser to Dick Cheney and former undersecretary of defense. At the end of his critique Wolfe-Hunnicuttt alludes to my “collaboration” with Bush administration officials. These statements are a strange distortion of the facts. As I write in my preface, I did not even know Eric Edelman before I began working on this book. He had not been a friend. He was someone I met at a conference at UVA’s Miller Center and whom I knew indirectly because he was once in a discussion section led by my close academic friend Frank Costigliola. Edelman did encourage me to write this book and did help to arrange interviews with Steve Hadley, Paul Wolfowitz, Scooter Libby, and Dick Cheney. But why would one conclude that interviewing these people meant “collaborating” with them?

Edelman, moreover, did not facilitate all my interviews. Robert Jervis, the renowned scholar of international relations and U.S. “intelligence” failures, introduced me to Michael Morell, Bush’s CIA briefer; Lee Hamilton, the former congressman and head of the Woodrow Wilson International Center, introduced me to Colin Powell; my former student Richard Sokolsky introduced me to Richard Clarke, the counter-terrorist expert; my colleague Philip Zelikow helped to arrange interviews with Condi Rice and Robert Zoellick; my former grad student Eric Mahan introduced me to Seth Carus, one of Cheney’s bioterrorist experts; and Michael Schneider, a friend and former official in the USIA, helped arrange an interview with William Smullen, Powell’s close assistant.

Wolfe-Hunnicuttt goes on to criticize me for not using “the general records of the departments of state or defense” or the records of presidential libraries. This is a curious charge, since he should know that these records have not been declassified and opened for research at the National Archives or the George W. Bush Library. He condemns my use of the digital websites associated with the Rumsfeld, Feith, and Bill Burns memoirs without demonstrating that it would have been better to ignore them. He sneers at my use of the websites and reading rooms of the executive departments and government agencies, notwithstanding the fact that most scholars believe that these materials greatly enrich the history of recent American foreign relations. Overall, I suspect that his displeasure with

Confronting Saddam Hussein is not because it is history “without archives.” It more likely stems from the fact that the careful use of the accessible American, British, UN, and Iraqi documents, as well as the public statements, congressional testimony, and oral interviews of leading officials, presents a challenge to his deeply held convictions and ideological predilections.

In addition to his specious claims about sources and methodology, Wolfe-Hunnicuttt misleads readers about key aspects of *Confronting Saddam Hussein*. The book, for example, does not “absolve” George W. Bush. I conclude by underscoring his shortcomings and those of his advisers: “He delegated too much authority and did not monitor the implementation of the policies he approved. He did not order people to do things or criticize them for their failures. He did not insist on rigorous process. . . . He was indifferent to the nasty bickering among his subordinates. . . . [He] disliked heated arguments, and therefore did not invite systematic scrutiny of the policies he was inclined to pursue. He did not ask his advisers if invading Iraq was a good idea” (244, 235–37, 251–52).

And it is not just the big issues that Wolfe-Hunnicuttt gets wrong. He also errs on many small points. Illustratively, he says that I do not tell readers that the part of Iraq in which Ansar al-Islam training camps were located was not under Hussein’s control. In fact, I state this twice: once on page 107 and once on page 139. He faults me for not clarifying that the notorious terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi had no operational ties to the Iraqi government. Actually, I note on page 139 that covert CIA agents in the region specifically reported that they saw no evidence that al-Zarqawi’s followers were linked to Hussein.

While Wolfe-Hunnicuttt misconstrues much of my book, he does bring up an important point that Citino and O’Connell also mention. He criticizes “the simple self-defense thesis.” I do emphasize Bush’s desire to prevent another attack, but readers of *Confronting Saddam Hussein* will also see that I stress repeatedly that officials were not “simply” worried about an imminent threat of another attack. Key policymakers, including conservative nationalists like Cheney and Rumsfeld as well as neoconservatives like Wolfowitz and Feith, were extremely concerned with the “looming” or “gathering” threat emanating from rogue states with weapons of mass destruction, like Hussein’s Iraq. They worried that such capabilities might allow dictators to “blackmail” the United States and check the future exercise of U.S. power.

Although the president appeared most concerned with the imminent threat, he too was worried about maintaining Washington’s capacity to wield power in the future. His Global War on Terror and his decision to confront Saddam Hussein were inspired by a fear of additional attacks and by the need to defend the United States, but concerns about the long-term exercise of U.S. power were ever-present. Mine is not a simple analysis. By stressing self-defense, I do not exclude other compelling considerations. That is why I write that when officials launched the Global War on Terror and focused on confronting Saddam Hussein, “they were seeking to safeguard the nation from another attack, save American lives, avoid the opprobrium that would come from another assault, and preserve the country’s ability to exercise its power in the future in behalf of its interests” (quote on 98; see also 44–45, 87–89, 155–56, 158, 247–88).

This observation brings me back to O’Connell’s critique. Like Citino, he thinks that I overstate the self-defense thesis, and he cites Rumsfeld’s “Strategic Thoughts” memo as evidence of imperial ambitions. O’Connell deploys the much-used quotation from that memo: “If the war does not significantly change the world’s political map, the U.S. will not achieve its aim.” But what was Rumsfeld’s aim in this document? He began the memo by saying that “the U.S. strategic theme should be aiding local peoples to rid

themselves of terrorists and to free themselves of regimes that support terrorism”; and he concludes by stating that “a key war aim would be to persuade or compel states to stop supporting terrorism. The regimes of such States should see that it will be fatal to host terrorists who attack the U.S. as was done on September 11.”

I would not say that this memorandum denies America’s global ambitions, but I do think it emphasizes that the objective was to wield power in order to prevent another terrorist attack. In fact, the last two bullets of the memo underscore the goals: “End of [redacted] support of terrorism; End of many other countries’ support or tolerance of terrorism.”⁴

This Rumsfeld memorandum is also useful to address the issue of “ideology.” Readers should note that although Rumsfeld wanted to change more than the government in Afghanistan (he wanted to change “another key state or two”), he said nothing about promoting democracy or freedom. He stressed that the goal was to dismantle or destroy WMD capabilities and terminate support for terrorism. Similarly, when Rumsfeld subsequently began to draw up a war plan for Iraq, he and General Tommy Franks, the head of CENTCOM, agreed that the assumptions about goals should be “regime change and WMD removal.” There was nothing about freedom or democracy—no missionary fervor (100–101).

This is why throughout my book I use the word “hubris” rather than ideology. “Hubris,” in fact, was the title of a scathing book written by two of the administration’s fiercest journalistic critics.⁵ The notion of hubris emanates from Greek mythology and highlights a dangerous mixture of over-confidence, over-ambition, arrogance, and pride. The Greeks often noted that excessive pride was a tragic flaw in human behavior. For the Bush administration, it was hubris to believe that there was only one system (democratic capitalism) that could prove its utility to humankind; it was hubris to think that Iraqis would embrace American occupation forces; it was hubris to assume that people regarded freedom as more important than security and safety and identity. Bush did believe these shibboleths. His naiveté about the goodness of his own country was palpable (74–77, 251).

Although an ideological argument might capture some of the thinking of Bush, Wolfowitz, and Feith, it does not help much to explain officials like Cheney, Rumsfeld, Tommy Franks, and many others. Hubris, however, is something they all shared; hubris and a sense of victimhood. They all believed the United States had been unfairly attacked. They all believed that they could overcome their fears and protect American security (broadly defined) by exercising U.S. power. They all believed that Iraqis would be thrilled by their liberation. They miscalculated. They failed. Their hubris led to tragedy.

I hope readers will take the time to read my book carefully and discuss it with their students. I hope they will reflect on the interplay of four key factors: fear; power; hubris; dysfunction. Although it is easy to criticize Bush and his advisers for the tragic invasion and occupation of Iraq – and we should, I think it is pedagogically more useful to examine their motives, actions, and aspirations -- and to ponder why the results turned out so badly. *Confronting Saddam Hussein* seeks to clarify the challenges that inhered in the assessment of threats. It also illuminates the difficulties encountered in the conduct of coercive diplomacy and the employment of American military force. My goal is neither to champion the use of coercive diplomacy and military power or to denounce their utility. Rather, I hope to encourage discussion about **when** and **how** to use them wisely, effectively, prudently.

Notes:

1. Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York, 2002), 99.
2. Samuel Helfont, *Iraq Against the World: Saddam, America, and the Post-Cold War World* (New York and Oxford, UK, 2023); Amatzia Baram, "The Effect of Iraqi Sanctions: Statistical Pitfalls and Responsibility," *Middle East Journal* 54, no.21 (Spring 2000): 194–223.
3. While the FBI study was carefully done, Wolfe-Hunnicuttt seems unaware of the comprehensive reassessment of the anthrax episode undertaken by the National Academy of Sciences in 2011 that I cite in note 64 on p. 269.
4. Memo for the President, September 30, 2001, by Donald Rumsfeld, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB358a/doc13.pdf>.
5. Michael Isikoff and David Corn, *Hubris: The Inside Story of Spin, Scandal, and the Selling of the Iraq War* (New York, 2006).

THE TONOUS AND WARDA JOHNS FAMILY BOOK AWARD



The Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association invites submissions for the 2024 **Tonous and Warda Johns Family Book Award**.

The prize honors Tonous Hanna and Warda Paulis, who immigrated to the United States from Syria in 1900, married in 1906, and became U.S. citizens along with their children in 1919. Tony and Warda Johns, as they became known, emphasized the importance of education, hard work, and philanthropy to their children and grandchildren, and had a deep and abiding love for their adopted country and its history. These values—shared by so many other immigrants to the United

States—profoundly shaped the lives of their descendants. In celebration of these ideals and in recognition of Tony and Warda’s continuing influence on their family, the Johns family created this endowment in the hope that Tony and Warda’s legacy will be felt and appreciated by the PCB-AHA community and that the award will encourage and recognize excellent historical scholarship.

The **Tonous and Warda Johns Family Book Award** will recognize the outstanding book (monograph or edited volume) in the history of U.S. foreign relations, immigration history, or military history by an author or editor residing in the PCB-AHA membership region.

Copies of books submitted for consideration for the award should be sent directly to each of the three members of the prize committee by **February 15, 2024**. More information is available at <https://www.pcbaha.org/tonous-and-warda-johns-family-book-award>.

Questions about the award or inquiries regarding donations to the endowment should be directed to Michael Green, PCB-AHA executive director, at michael.green@unlv.edu.

The Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association was organized in 1903 to serve members of the American Historical Association living in the western United States and the western provinces of Canada. With over 4000 members, it is one of the largest professional historical organizations in the United States.

A Roundtable on Kristina Shull, *Detention Empire: Reagan's War on Immigrants and the Seeds of Resistance*

David-James Gonzales, Hardeep Dhillon, Michelle Paranzino, Danielle Olden, Jason Colby, and Kristina Shull

Roundtable Introduction

David-James Gonzales

The past twenty-five years have witnessed an explosion of scholarly attention on the deep and multi-faceted history of immigration restriction and migrant criminalization in the United States.¹ In addition to overturning popular myths and paradigms that uncritically celebrate America as a “nation of immigrants” welcoming the world’s “huddled masses,” this scholarship proves emphatically that xenophobia and exclusion are hallmarks of the nation’s immigration system. Kristina Shull’s *Detention Empire: Reagan’s War on Immigrants and the Seeds of Resistance* represents an emerging trend among im/migration scholars that interweaves the histories of restriction and exclusion with the rise of the modern carceral state.²

As Shull explains in the preface, *Detention Empire* emerged from a personal need to answer two questions: 1) what is the connection between immigrant detention and mass incarceration? and 2) why were the first federally contracted private prisons immigrant detention centers? (xiii). The search for answers to these questions led her to investigate the early years of Reagan’s presidency, a period that remains understudied by im/migration historians whose publications tend to favor US-Mexico migration and the legacy of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, a signature piece of comprehensive immigration reform passed during Reagan’s second term.

Examining the administration’s response to Caribbean and Central American migration resulting from its Cold War foreign policy, Shull asserts that Reagan’s first term in office has much to teach us about the proliferation of privately run immigrant detention centers in recent years. Although immigrant detention formed part of what Shull calls a “carceral palimpsest” that preexisted Reagan’s administration, it was during his tenure, she asserts, that the practice was “weaponized” into a form of counterinsurgent warfare essential to the maintenance of U.S. empire (1). Shull is equally interested in magnifying the voices of refugees, asylum-seekers, undocumented immigrants, and im/migrant rights activists who resisted and mobilized in response to “Reagan’s Cold War on immigrants.” It is their voices, she argues, that form the “seeds of resistance” that not only uncover the lies used to sustain borders, walls, and prisons but also comprise the “blueprints for building a world free from state violence” (233).

The reviewers in this roundtable applaud the interdisciplinary and ambitious scope of Shull’s project. Michelle D. Paranzino says that Shull “demonstrates the inextricability of foreign and domestic policies and helps to lay the theoretical groundwork for understanding the

causes and consequences of Reagan’s war on immigrants.” Similarly, Hardeep Dhillon writes that *Detention Empire* “presents a different version of the Cold War that is rooted in immigration history but...dovetails with US measures of federal aid and proxy wars targeted at procuring greater control in Central America and the Caribbean.” Danielle Olden identifies one of the book’s “most significant contributions [as] its insistence on and demonstration of the interconnectedness of covert warfare, immigration, and the origins of the carceral state.” And Jason Colby praises Shull’s “compelling analysis of the interplay between the rise of large-scale, repressive detention of migrants, especially in the for-profit carceral sector, and the extensive on-the-ground resistance to those policies.”

Overall, the reviewers agree that Shull largely succeeds in demonstrating the Reagan administration’s pivotal role in initiating a new era of punitive immigration policies towards Caribbean and Central American migrants fleeing the impacts of US Cold War imperialism. Further, they admire her remarkable ability to interweave stories of migrant agency and solidarity throughout the book, highlighting “the intersecting landscapes of resistance to Reagan that originated within and transcended detention sites” (11).

While *Detention Empire* has much to appreciate, the reviewers are mixed in their assessment of Shull’s use of concepts and terminology. For Paranzino, the main issue is Shull’s “overly broad” definition and use of the term “counterinsurgency,” which does not account for the different iterations of the “doctrine and practice” in “specific historical contexts.” Similarly, Colby points to Shull’s tendency to use “inaccessible” and “imprecise” language, which comes across as “rhetorical excesses.” Likewise, Dhillon invites Shull to more clearly “distinguish the methods” used to form her analysis and cautions against “ascribing intention” amidst “countless gaps and omissions” in the historical record. In response, Shull acknowledges that her use of “less accessible language” presumes readers are familiar with how scholars of US im/migration, racial empire, and mass incarceration interpret and use terms like “revanchism,” “total war,” and “counterinsurgency.”

Despite their concerns, the reviewers believe *Detention Empire* is a “must read,” a “revelation,” and an “indispensable” book that deserves “wide readership.” And I agree. While the book will be a challenge for most non-specialists, it prompts a critical re-assessment of Reagan’s so-called liberal legacy on U.S. immigration policy. As evidenced by this roundtable, *Detention Empire* promises to generate lively debate and future scholarship in immigration, foreign policy, and carceral studies.

Notes:

1. Some exceptional examples of this scholarship include Joseph

Nevins, *Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the 'Illegal Alien' and the Remaking of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary* (New York: Routledge, 2001); Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Daniel Kanstroom, *Deportation Nation: Outsiders in American History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); *Migra! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Hidetaka Hirota, *Expelling the Poor: Atlantic Seaboard States and the 19th-Century Origins of American Immigration Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); S. Deborah Kang, *The INS on the Line: Making Immigration Law on the US-Mexico Border, 1917-1954* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Katherine Benton-Cohen, *Inventing the Immigration Problem: The Dillingham Commission and its Legacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018); Adam Goodman, *The Deportation Machine: America's Long History of Expelling Immigrants* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).

2. César Cuauhtémoc García Hernández, *Migrating to Prison: America's Obsession with Locking Up Immigrants* (New York: The New Press, 2019); Elliott Young, *Forever Prisoners: How the United States Made the World's Largest Immigrant Detention System* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021); Jessica Ordaz, *The Shadow of El Centro: A History of Migrant Incarceration and Solidarity* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021).

Review of Kristina Shull, *Detention Empire*

Hardeep Dhillon

In a photo on page 75 of Kristina Shull's *Detention Empire*, a Black girl sits on a chair, heels resting on the floor, toes pointing upward. Her hands are on her thighs, and she looks directly at you. Behind her, a Playboy bunny on the wall and next to that, a U.S. Army recruitment sticker. A stuffed doll sits on the table beside her bed.

This image captures the everyday life of a minor waiting to be released from detention at the Krome Detention Center in Miami, Florida, in 1980. It is symbolic of the carceral history of immigration detention and evokes its relationship to America's wars. It shows a child in the military barracks of a former nuclear base—barracks designed for male personnel who are trained in nuclear war and gun violence. She is sitting in a room decorated with an emblem of their sexual fantasies. The image reveals that the United States has made no effort to ease the burden of detained children. Instead, the government found a largely vacant facility and recommissioned it without putting a fresh layer of paint on its walls.

The Krome facility in which the unnamed young woman was detained in 1980 continues to be critical to the growing detention apparatus of the United States. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) oversees the operations of the facility, with private contractors handling all guard operations. Today, the Krome Detention Center is one of the nation's largest detention processing sites, and it continues to make national news for its rampant mistreatment of asylum seekers and refugees from nearly every part of the world. In response to its sporadic visitation hours, violations of due process and administrative processing, unhygienic and overcrowded conditions, prolonged detention under the looming threat of deportation, and family separation, detained immigrants and their allies across the nation have planted what Shull conceptualizes as the "seeds of resistance" to demand public visibility and improvement of the dreadful conditions they are detained in.

While these protests have spread across the country, the United States refuses to abolish or shrink immigration detention. Early in his presidential term, President Joe Biden issued Executive Order 14006, officially titled "Reforming Our Incarceration System to Eliminate the Use of Privately

Operated Criminal Detention Facilities." Executive Order 14006 was the Biden administration's response to the nation's growing carceral system which disproportionately impacts people of color while enabling private companies to make millions—in some cases billions—of dollars. The order, however, did not affect facilities managed on behalf of ICE and state governments. As a result, private detention is not ending at the federal level; it is only changing. Since Biden issued EO 14006, private companies are converting federal prisons into immigration detention spaces. For example, GEO Group, one of the nation's largest private prison firms, has shifted its focus to immigration detention with the aim of securing continued revenue through for-profit incarceration.

In part, Kristina Shull's *Detention Empire* is a history that explains this national moment—how the United States' inability to create a humane system of immigration processing and the transition to for-profit incarceration has produced a major increase in the number of immigrants detained and deported by the United States. Turning back four decades to the Reagan administration, *Detention Empire* provides a footprint for the history of detention in the United States.

In her analysis, Shull underlines how categories and architectures of war are marshaled in the expansion and reshaping of immigration detention. Hers is a project of the many U.S. empires, both at home and abroad, that elucidate the hierarchies of race, class, sexuality, and labor and that build different sorts of histories between refugees and asylum seekers from Central America and the Caribbean. She compels us to consider what it means to think of different imperial projects as interconnected sites of a "global crimmigration regime" through "new, counterinsurgent enforcement measures" adopted by the Reagan administration (5).

Reagan's Cold War on immigrants—by nature a "total war," as Shull describes it—relied heavily on enabling detention as a deterrent while expanding maritime drug and interdiction programs, the militarization of U.S. borders, and prison privatization (5–6). The scandal of the Reagan administration is not that it brought war home onto local populations of color and immigrant communities—that has been an undeniable feature of U.S. history stretching much farther back than the Reagan administration. U.S. history is replete with examples of how war came home and reshaped policing and incarceration with prolonged detainment, the movement of military personnel into the immigration system, the use of military infrastructure for immigrants, and manufactured crises.

Rather than analyzing the Reagan administration as either a historic departure or continuation of the past, Shull insists on reading the history of immigration detention as a "carceral palimpsest." She writes that "the term 'palimpsest' describes a re-inscription of new writing or design practices over old ones. Old patterns are not entirely obscured but still visible. Today's US immigration detention system sits atop entangled roots of settler colonialism, nativism, and war. Its implementation draws upon preexisting practices and spaces of incarceration" (5).

Most significantly, "carceral palimpsest" as an ordering concept enables Shull to reckon with the long legacies of slavery, Jim Crow segregation, Native American removal, and imperial expansion integral to immigration and carceral history without exceptionalizing the Reagan administration. She is modest in her explanation of the conceptual weight the concept holds, and further explanation of how the concept differs from more recent conceptualizations of detention and deportation that have gained traction among immigration scholars—using terms such as remote controls, machines, regimes,

and gatekeeping—would be welcome. Similarly, further explanation of her conceptualization of empire would be appreciated.

Detention Empire contributes to a range of historiography. For scholars familiar with the Cold War as a period of geopolitical tension between the United States and Soviet Union, of struggle for global influence fought through nuclear arms buildup, technological competitions, foreign aid as form of diplomatic persuasion, and deadly proxy wars, *Detention Empire* provides a new, multi-faceted understanding of the ways in which immigration detention was reconstructed through war tactics used against Central American and Caribbean refugees and asylum seekers. It details how the nation's expansion of immigration detention was reshaped by the Cold War through overlapping infrastructure, legal rationales, wartime measures, and military personnel.

For scholars acquainted with the Reagan administration's War on Drugs and the history of mass incarceration in the 1980s, *Detention Empire* details the centrality of immigration detention to the production of mass incarceration in this period. We also find new insights into Reagan's Mass Immigration Emergency Plan. Moreover, for scholars of immigration, *Detention Empire* provokes an important reconfiguration of the scale and scope of immigration detention through the lens of empire with an eye towards Central American and Caribbean refugees and asylum seekers. *Detention Empire* is also a timely addition to the growing body of scholarship on racial capitalism.

Shull underlines how immigration detention did not expand in relation to a singular immigrant community or war concern or tactic, but in response to multiple immigration crises that the Reagan administration manufactured and then "managed." In this analysis, relational race formations remain ever-present as we read how corporal and legal violence was employed most boldly against Black Haitian refugees and Indigenous communities from Central America.

I would like to provide a short summary for readers who are new to these bodies of scholarship. *Detention Empire* places the Sun Belt at the center of immigration history, shifting our focus from the far more studied U.S.-Mexico borderland and Pacific and Atlantic seaboard. The Sun Belt region, as Shull details, is home to the largest incarcerated population in the United States as a result of for-profit prisons and contracts that historically emerged at the intersection of war and imperialism during the Reagan era.

The first chapter of *Detention Empire* describes how detention during the Reagan era was an enhanced iteration of carceral practices in the United States. Shull conceptualizes this framework through the notion of the carceral palimpsest. Chapter 2 analyzes how Cuban detention "ushered in a monumental, punitive shift in the politics and architectures of asylum" (32). As an increasing number of Cubans arrived on the nation's shores during the Mariel boatlifts, discourses of compassion shifted; Americans began to fear refugee criminals and demand greater public safety. Cuban refugees were relocated to military bases such as Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, as rumors of their criminal activity and involvement in the drug trade proliferated.

Chapter 3 details the Reagan administration's creation of the world's first extraterritorial maritime interdiction program to thwart the arrival of Haitian refugees and the employment of a former nuclear missile site to "process" Haitians who managed to arrive in the United States. In reading the chapter on the Krome facility in Miami, Florida, one is confronted by the harrowing conditions Black Haitian refugees endured on the nation's borders and in its detention centers, where physical abuse, family

separation, and violations of due process were rampant. In addition to Krome, Shull focuses on the Fort Allen Detention Center, located on a former U.S. Navy base in Puerto Rico. Her descriptions of conditions there underline how Black immigration has been integral to the nation's expansion of carceral spaces overseas.

Chapter 4 presents an insightful analysis of the U.S. asylum system. Shull contends that the US asylum system "was an extension of Reagan's counterinsurgent warfare in Central America—with the denial of state-sponsored violence as a central feature" (133). She details how the government denied its violent involvement in U.S.-backed proxy wars and dismissed the allegation that it supported foreign governments that abetted genocide. At the same time, it justified increasing the militarization of the southern border by stressing the need for a new "War on Drugs" and stronger crime enforcement. While it was doing that it was denying asylum applications for those who fled from Central America, particularly Guatemala, Nicaragua, and El Salvador.

Shull's attention to Indigenous communities is a reminder for many of us that immigration history must remain attuned to Indigenous histories. Chapter 5 follows this history through the sanctuary caravan to Seattle, detailing the creation of a New Underground Railroad to church sites where the Reagan administration attempted to undermine solidarity through covert tactics such as paid informants, private investigations, intimidation, and raids. The final chapter describes in detail the two of the longest prison uprisings in U.S. history: one at Oakdale, Louisiana, and another in Atlanta. Led by Mariel Cubans, the uprisings were a response to the atrocious conditions created in the prisons as ideas about fiscal austerity, the privatization of prison budgets, and the practice of incarceration for profit took hold.

From one perspective, *Detention Empire* is inevitably a history of the U.S. administrative state and its power over the lives of immigrants through new private channels that enabled the state to shape and construct borders, interject itself into new jurisdictions and spaces, and unravel lives. The book presents a history of the racial formations that were central to the treatment of discrete refugee and asylum communities during the Reagan era, but it raises questions about the myriad actors that are central to this history as the United States expanded immigration detention and deportation within and beyond its borders.

From prison guards to bureaucrats hired to lead immigration commissions, U.S. consuls and diplomats, the Bureau of Prisons, and the Department of Justice, the reader is asked to consider the complicity of various wings of the U.S. government in creating a regime of immigration and border enforcement that operates with and through regimes of racial capital. This story comes together powerfully but leaves the reader asking where immigration enforcement begins and ends. Where do power structures of immigration detention slip, elide, or change? How can an integration of histories from the global South retell histories of immigration, including immigration detention, without unilaterally projecting the United States, and by default U.S. history, onto the world?

Even as these regimes solidify and take new forms, there is resistance to them: hunger strikes led by Cubans at Fort Chaffee; the intervention of religious leaders, communities, and leading civil rights organizations such as the NAACP and ACLU; protests by feminist activists (including a number from the newspaper *Off Our Backs*) and detained prisoners (including women and children); fact-finding missions conducted by students and faculty in Central America; and citizens using the courts and public campaigns to draw attention to horrendous detention conditions and a violation of basic legal ethics.

These seeds of resistance, Shull insists, “defin[ed] a new era of public, transnational protest surrounding exceptional forms of discrimination and due process violations in detention—especially as escalating violence in detention reflected new expressions of US global power” (11). Making the stories of persecution and terrible conditions in refugee and asylum centers visible was a task that was taken on by members of a transnational network that sought to publicize the plight of individuals that the state hoped to keep invisible behind the walls of detention or through deportation. Shull, through rigorous archival research into such groups, provides us with yet another example of the role history has to play in the production of abolitionist frames.

Given the many methods scholars have employed to read resistance and agency in history, and the wide range of poetry, drawings, photography, public performance, and speech acts that Shull analyzes, I would like to invite her to describe the methods that underpin her own reading practice and address the difficulties of reading the past without ascribing intention, all the while balancing countless gaps and omissions, on the one hand, and an occasional overabundance of archival material, on the other. In what ways are the stories we tell of marginalized persons still produced through the state?

In pondering this question myself, I am reminded of a quote Shull cites from John Lewis, the Atlanta-based politician and civil rights activist. Lewis, in analyzing a prison uprising by Mariel Cubans during a House hearing in February 1988, noted that it took place “in a country that has prided itself in welcoming oppressed people yearning for freedom. The last seven years have been wasted for these Cuban detainees. We have wasted a significant portion of their lives” (226). In a single quote, Lewis eloquently captured the harsh realities of immigration detention and compelled the nation to recognize precisely what refugees and asylum seekers were protesting: the willingness of the United States to squander human lives.

Conceptualized through Lewis’s perspective, the history of immigration detention and resistance is a history not only of resistance but of lives. The detained have lost far more than their history of resistance. How do we account, then, for all that they have lost? And what they have inherited instead?

In the spirit of the voices that echo across the pages of Shull’s indispensable *Detention Empire: La lucha sigue*. The struggle continues.

Review of Kristina Shull, *Detention Empire: Reagan’s War on Immigrants and the Seeds of Resistance*

Michelle D. Paranzino

The end of the Cold War has traditionally loomed large in historical accounts of the Ronald Reagan presidency, and for good reason. It was a momentous development that fundamentally transformed the international strategic environment, and Reagan himself played no small role in bringing it to pass. Though historians have debated the scope and significance of that role, few have denied Reagan some measure of credit in finding common ground with his Soviet counterpart, Mikhail Gorbachev, and in possessing the degree of emotional intelligence and tactical flexibility that allowed negotiations to go forward. It is fair to say that with regard to the end of the Cold War, Reagan’s statesmanship has typically been judged favorably. Since it has been widely considered the pivotal development of the Reagan era, it is no wonder that the man himself is

popularly remembered as one of the greatest presidents in U.S. history.

When it comes to overall U.S. foreign policy in the Reagan era, however, a more critical view emerges, particularly in reference to regions like Africa and Latin America, where U.S. support for apartheid and repressive right-wing governments (and non-state actors like the Contras) was fundamentally at odds with Reagan’s rhetoric of liberty and democracy.¹ Kristina Shull joins scholars like Doug Rossinow and Daniel S. Lucks in rethinking Reagan’s domestic and foreign policies and their legacies for the present day.² Her book creates a bridge linking histories of the Reagan era and biographies of Reagan himself to a burgeoning literature on the roots of mass incarceration.³ In *Detention Empire*, she presents a thoroughly researched and thought-provoking account of Reagan-era U.S. policies toward immigration, especially immigration from the Caribbean and Central America. In doing so, she demonstrates the inextricability of foreign and domestic policies and helps to lay the theoretical groundwork for understanding the causes and consequences of Reagan’s war on immigrants.

The introduction begins by centering the Mariel Cuban migration of 1980 in what Shull calls “the Reagan imaginary,” which she defines as “a vision and strategy of white nationalist state-making.” Not only did this imaginary create a “blueprint for mapping new frontiers of imperial expansion and carceral landscapes,” but it “still undergirds the false logic of US bordering practices today.” One of the book’s fundamental premises is that “immigration detention operates as a form of *counterinsurgency*, a strategy of preemptive warfare targeting those deemed enemies of the state.”⁴ The criminalization of migration—what scholars have referred to as “cimmigration”—has paralleled other developments in the growth of mass incarceration, especially the increasing privatization of detention facilities and the profits accumulated from the prison industrial complex (3).

Shull defines “Reagan’s Cold War on immigrants” as “a suite of new, counterinsurgent enforcement measures adopted by his administration during its first term that cemented in place a globalized cimmigration regime” (5). She contends that “immigration control became a thread tying together the Reagan administration’s reassertion of US hegemony and white supremacy in its domestic, foreign policy, and neoliberal economic agendas” (10). She also demonstrates that the Reagan administration’s anti-immigration policies were part of an overarching neoliberal economic agenda via an examination of the Caribbean Basin Initiative, a bipartisan regional program explicitly seeking to staunch migration flows from the region (85). The administration promoted what was in effect a new form of economic imperialism as a “security shield against the twin threats of migration and political subversion” (90).

Reagan’s war on immigrants was thus bound up in the larger Cold War. His “calls to stem migration from the Caribbean and Central America” went “hand in hand with halting ‘evil empire’ Soviet-Cuban communist insurgency across the hemisphere” (52). In addition, he portrayed the domestic national security threat posed by Soviet-Cuban-Nicaraguan relations as an unstoppable flow of migrants to the United States seeking freedom from the red menace. In order to combat this perceived threat, the Reagan administration created “the world’s first extraterritorial maritime interdiction program” (78). Not only were the results of the program’s implementation catastrophic for migrants themselves, but the program itself “legitimized the expansion of US executive authority in immigration enforcement on the high seas, allowing for ‘anti-smuggling,’ ‘anti-communist,’ ‘anti-drug,’ and later ‘anti-terrorist’ efforts across contexts” (81).

An important part of Shull’s book is devoted to exploring

the “seeds of resistance” that sprang up to oppose ever harsher treatment of migrants. Although U.S. immigration policies enjoyed overwhelming bipartisan support, vocal critics did emerge. Jesse Jackson was one of the most visible opponents, and he used his public platform to point out the hypocrisy of U.S. treatment of Haitian migrants. In an opinion piece, he juxtaposed the Reagan administration’s embrace of anticommunist refugees with its rejection of Haitian asylum-seekers: “Polish refugees, Soviet Jews, and Nicaraguans, just to mention a few, are welcomed because they suit the Cold War foreign policy needs of the Reagan Administration. . . . To admit that the Haitians are escaping repression would be to admit that the United States is party to the oppression” (98). Interestingly, Jackson apparently opposed the Carter administration’s immigration policies as well, as he organized a march to an INS detention site in Miami in the spring of 1980, before Reagan was elected (97).

The seeds of resistance also sprouted into organizations like the Sanctuary Movement and the Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America (CRTFCA). The “inside-outside” resistance used by such groups involved the collaborative efforts of those suffering inside detention facilities and people outside who often had some sort of personal relationship with detainees. This resistance became the focus of executive-level efforts to discredit and disrupt these organizations, in the COINTELPRO tradition of destroying dissident groups through surveillance, harassment, and infiltration.

Shull posits “detention itself as a counterinsurgent set of practices and narratives of erasure and denial” (184). But doing so raises the larger question of whether immigration policies and practices can properly be characterized as counterinsurgency. Not only is Shull’s definition of counterinsurgency as a strategy of preemptive warfare overly broad, but she does not devote much intellectual energy to tracking the evolution of U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine and practice as it arose within and responded to specific historical contexts. Nor does she parse the differences between the arguments of counterinsurgency theorists and actual developments on the ground in places like Vietnam or El Salvador.

Instead, Shull deploys these terms almost interchangeably. For instance, she describes the Sandinista government in Nicaragua as a “leftist insurgency” during a period when the former insurgents were already in power, and she characterizes the *contras* as “counterinsurgents” (118), when they were in fact counter-revolutionary *insurgents* battling a constituted government that enjoyed a significant degree of international legitimacy. Moreover, counterinsurgency in both theory and practice has not typically been considered a preemptive strategy, but rather a response to the rise and spread of an insurgency. Shull appears to view low-intensity conflict doctrine as essentially a rehash of counterinsurgency, but she neglects to examine the definitional components of each or to explore their evolution.

Does it make sense to characterize U.S. immigration policies as a form of counterinsurgency? Did U.S. officials view migrants as a potential counterinsurgent threat, or did their concerns reflect a more deeply rooted urge to protect the border against “undesirables” and keep America white? Surely the Reagan administration’s white nationalist state-making project has antecedents stretching back in U.S. history. There is nothing new about the culture wars over how to define the role of the United States in the world and what it means to be American. But whether this can profitably be analyzed as a form of counterinsurgency is a case that still needs to be made. In this regard, Shull could have profited from drawing on the work of Brian D’Haeseleer, whose book on U.S. counterinsurgency in El Salvador might have helped her construct a more solid theoretical foundation for her arguments.⁵

Another of the big questions that emerges from the book is to what extent the Reagan administration pioneered ever harsher policies toward and treatment of immigrants and to what extent it merely built on the legacy of its predecessor. This question tracks a broader historiographical debate over change and continuity from the Carter to the Reagan administration.⁶ Many of the trends in U.S. immigration policies and procedures predated Reagan, including a long-standing politicization of immigration from Cuba and Haiti, with the “wet foot, dry foot” policy toward Cubans intended to showcase the horrors of Castro’s communist regime, and a much more neglectful attitude toward Haitians that clearly demonstrated Haitian migrants were not welcome in the United States.

Indeed, as Shull notes, “Haitians stand out as being overwhelmingly denied refugee status”—to the extent that of the 50,000 or so Haitians seeking asylum between 1972 and 1980, only 25 were successful (68). The Mariel boat lift created a class of Cuban migrants in the United States—the Mariel Cubans—who were the subjects of an “astounding proliferation of narratives of Cuban deviance in US media” (39). This raises a crucial question that Shull does not directly engage: What is the role and responsibility of the U.S. news media in manufacturing domestic consent to strip migrants of their human worth and dignity? Were U.S. immigration policies a driver or a consequence of these popular attitudes toward migrants? Shull suggests that “both humanitarian calls to protect vulnerable refugees and xenophobic anger over migrant deviance served to justify the institutional solutions the Carter and Reagan administrations sought in mitigating the media and political fallout of Mariel” (45). The American public clearly bears some of the moral responsibility for the deeply immoral treatment of migrants, but how much exactly, and is it possible to force a moral reckoning?

Shull demonstrates that “the extraordinary forms of violence and discrimination targeting Haitians since the 1970s paved the way for Reagan’s detention and interdiction policies, as Carter-era rhetorics of humanitarianism gave way to counterinsurgent responses to those deemed threats to the nation” (101). Yet again, the continuity in U.S. treatment of Haitians across presidential administrations reveals the necessity of distinguishing more carefully between rhetoric, intentions, and consequences. Whereas humanitarian rhetoric may have masked or disguised violence toward Haitians, the shift toward the rhetoric of national security in one of the most confrontational and crisis-ridden periods of the Cold War may have unleashed even greater violence—violence similar to that produced by Trump’s success in tapping into (and ultimately emboldening and empowering) a deep vein of racism and misogyny running through American society.

Detention Empire is a must-read for anyone interested in the broader moral ramifications of U.S. foreign relations and the inextricability of foreign and domestic policies. Shull’s arguments deserve wide readership and can help inform the way we think about the role of the United States in the world and the scope of state power at home. Though the book is often tough to read, as it deals with a subject most Americans would likely prefer to remain ignorant of, this is precisely why it needs to reach an audience broader than the community of U.S. foreign policy scholars. The American public must grapple with the human consequences of its demands upon the state.

Notes:

1. See, for instance, Jonathan R. Hunt and Simon Miles, eds., *The Reagan Moment: America and the World in the 1980s* (Ithaca, NY, 2021).
2. Daniel S. Lucks, *Reconsidering Reagan: Racism, Republicans, and the Road to Trump* (Boston, MA, 2020); Doug Rossinow, *The Reagan Era: A History of the 1980s* (New York, 2015).

3. See, for instance, Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (Cambridge, MA, 2016); and Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York, 2010).
4. Kristina Shull, *Detention Empire: Reagan's War on Immigrants and the Seeds of Resistance* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2021), 1.
5. Brian D'Haeseleer, *The Salvadoran Crucible: The Failure of US Counterinsurgency in El Salvador, 1979–1992* (Lawrence, KS, 2017); see also his article, "'Drawing the line' in El Salvador: Washington confronts insurgency in El Salvador, 1979–92," *Cold War History* 18:2 (2018): 131–48.
6. See Aaron Donaghy, *The Second Cold War: Carter, Reagan, and the Politics of Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, UK, 2021).

Review of Kristina Shull, *Detention Empire*

Danielle Olden

Kristina Shull's *Detention Empire: Reagan's War on Immigrants and the Seeds of Resistance* is a revelation. Combining histories of foreign policy, political culture, migration, detention and resistance, the book gives historians and other scholars a model of historical scholarship that will inform discussions of U.S. history for years to come. One of its most significant contributions is its insistence on and demonstration of the interconnectedness of covert warfare (both at home and abroad), immigration, and the origins of the U.S. carceral state. Historians increasingly have been drawing such connections, and their work has revealed the centrality of U.S. empire-making in increasing migration flows from Latin America and the corresponding growth of detention for undocumented migrants.

In its contribution to this scholarship, *Detention Empire* argues that immigration detention is a form of counterinsurgency that operated on multiple levels to construct migrants as "enemies of the state," both as criminals in violation of U.S. border policy and holders of on-the-ground knowledge about U.S. foreign policy and empire-making during the Cold War. Such intimate knowledge, if revealed to the U.S. and global publics, had the potential to stymie U.S. foreign policy goals. The modern immigration detention system thus emerged out of a "dialectic of resistance and retaliation," as migrants from Cuba, Haiti, and Central America challenged their imprisonment and attempts at silencing them. Shull shows that the Reagan administration responded to these threats by expanding the nation's immigration detention system and, in the process, waging a total war against immigrants.

Conceptualizing this war on immigrants as both a Cold War and a total war enables Shull to develop her provocative argument. Here, she makes the critical move of transposing concepts typically reserved for discussing U.S. foreign engagements—*counterinsurgency* and *total war*, but also *Cold War*, to some extent—to the domestic realm. More precisely, she articulates the mutually constitutive nature of the foreign and the domestic when it comes to U.S. immigration policy, mass incarceration, and war during and after the Cold War.

Shull defines Reagan's "Cold War on immigrants" as "a suite of new counterinsurgent enforcement measures adopted by his administration during its first term that cemented in place a globalized crimmigration regime" (5). Crimmigration, a concept developed by immigration scholars, is central to understanding modern American immigration politics and, in particular, the ways that immigration policies have criminalized undocumented migrants within the context of an increasingly xenophobic, nativist, and racist U.S. political culture. This suite of new measures included the detention of asylum-seekers, drug and immigrant interdiction programs, prison privatization, and the militarization of not just the U.S.-Mexico border but,

as Reagan liked to say in speeches from the era, the third and fourth borders (the Caribbean and Central America) as well. Conceiving of each new flow of asylum-seekers from Cuba, Haiti, and Central America as an immigration emergency in need of quick solutions, "Reagan's war on immigrants normalized crisis as a mode of governing, cementing new detention structures in response to, and in anticipation of, crises of the U.S. government's own making that today appear perpetual" (6).

Uncovering how this narrative of crisis was constructed and deployed in the late 1970s and 1980s, Shull astutely pinpoints the ways that political messages and the subsequent public circulation of those messages often build on older ideas that are rooted in long-standing debates over who the United States is as a nation. "American," writes Eric Foner, "is what philosophers call an 'essentially contested concept'—one that by its very nature is subject to multiple and conflicting interpretations."¹ Yet even while Americanism is contested, much of what foregrounds these debates are mythologies about the nation's founding, its expansion, and its role in the world—mythologies grounded in notions of American exceptionalism.

Who qualifies as American has always been about race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, and national origin. Those deemed undesirable have often been cast as particular problems for the nation, crises that demand policy solutions. Immigration scholars have demonstrated the ways these policies restricted not only particular bodies from crossing the nation's borders; they also recast the borders of belonging and citizenship for those within them. Shull's work builds on these histories to highlight how the system of immigrant detention was developed and sold to the American public as a response to the immigration emergencies supposedly spawned by Cubans, Haitians, and Central Americans in the 1980s.

Immigration crisis narratives merged with preexisting carceral practices and ideologies in what Shull characterizes as a "carceral palimpsest" (5, 14–28). *Detention Empire* details how the system of immigrant detention was constructed using blueprints from earlier state control projects rooted in settler colonialism, racial domination, labor exploitation, and imperialism. Following Kelly Lytle Hernandez's influential work, Shull considers Indigenous removal, slavery, Jim Crow, wars of imperial expansion, and Japanese incarceration during World War II to be central to the development of systems of "mass elimination," including incarceration.²

The Reagan administration used these blueprints while also creating new methods of state control. Shull describes that process as "empire-in-action."³ The Cold War accelerated the use of covert warfare exercises abroad, exercises that included various counterinsurgency measures. These military practices were brought home in U.S. efforts to infiltrate and sabotage various civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Shull's innovation is to demonstrate how Reagan's war on immigrants, a war that resulted in the expansion of detention as deterrence, was also marked by the same kinds of subversion and retaliation that characterized U.S. proxy wars abroad. As migrants challenged their treatment in the United States—particularly INS processes for determining qualifications for asylum, family separation, detention, detention conditions, and deportation—federal actors (who, it should be noted, almost always had state and local approval) punished them with increasingly harsh measures.

The 1980 arrival in south Florida of Cuban migrants, who came to be known as the Mariel Cubans, the resulting public outcry, and governmental responses to this "crisis" established patterns and policy proposals that became integral to Reagan's 1982 Mass Immigration Emergency Plan. Occurring during the last year of Jimmy Carter's presidency, the Mariel crisis played a key role in the

November elections that year, helping to usher Reagan into his first term.

Shull shows how these migrants, fleeing Communist Cuba, came to be constructed as threats to the nation. Unlike earlier Cuban refugees, the Mariel migrants did not conform to U.S. expectations of immigrant respectability. As a group, they were darker. Approximately 30 to 50 percent of them were Afro-Cuban. Of those who were imprisoned long-term in U.S. detention facilities, 75 percent were Afro-Cuban. In contrast, only 8 to 10 percent of those who were quickly resettled after arrival were Black (33). Moreover, most of the 1980 migrants were single men. Some defied gender and sexual norms: they were queer, trans, and gender nonconforming (QTGNC), or at least presented themselves that way to gain asylum in the United States.⁴

Once the rumor began that Fidel Castro had opened his prisons and put criminals and social pariahs on the boats, it spread like wildfire, and even the humanitarian Jimmy Carter had to respond. Not even three weeks after the first Mariel Cubans arrived, he declared a state of emergency in south Florida. The idea that the Communist Cuban president was unleashing “undesirables” upon the United States contributed to the racialized and sexualized idea that these Cubans were dangerous. The specter of large numbers of Black, sexually deviant male criminals, a narrative that local and national media helped develop and reproduce, legitimized the punitive turn toward indefinite detention that Reagan embraced once in office.

As a historian of race, racial formation, and Latinxs in the United States, I can say confidently that *Detention Empire* stands out for its attention to the global dimensions of the U.S. racial project that positions non-European migrants as problems in need of policy solutions. These “solutions,” in turn, have further entrenched “neo-conservative politics, neoliberal economics, and long-standing mythologies of settler colonialism,” a process that has enabled the continuation of racist, homophobic, and gendered U.S. immigration policies and the rise of a “detention empire” (1). An important dimension of this racial project, as of all U.S. racial projects, was anti-blackness. Shull’s sustained attention to the social, cultural, and political dynamics of anti-blackness and its gendered and sexualized components highlights the pervasiveness and intractability of long-standing anti-Black ideologies in U.S. culture and society.

On the surface, it would seem that the Haitian case would present the most revealing examples of anti-Black U.S. policymaking. Indeed, Shull writes that “Haitians have suffered some of the detention system’s most extreme injustices” (69). As Haitian “boat people” fled the right-wing dictatorship of Jean-Claude Duvalier and arrived in the United States, successive efforts to delegitimize their asylum claims, force them into detention, and/or deport them highlighted U.S. geopolitical aims during the Cold War and revealed a larger context of anti-Black racism. Almost all Haitian asylum claims were denied, a result of the argument that these people were not refugees fleeing persecution but “economic migrants,” simply seeking better opportunities for economic advancement. Immigration authorities conveniently ignored both Duvalier’s human rights abuses and American complicity in perpetuating those abuses.

Interdiction, moreover, put the U.S. Coast Guard to work in the name of stopping Haitian migrants before they even arrived in the United States. The Reagan Justice Department legally justified this policy—“the world’s first extraterritorial maritime interdiction program”—in 1981 by noting that there was no precedent for such action (78). The attorney general’s Office of Legal Council instead legitimized interdiction by citing certain sections of the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act and a Supreme Court case, *Knauff v. Shaughnessy* (1950).⁵ “The exclusion of aliens is a fundamental act of sovereignty,” the court stated

in that opinion. “The right to do so stems not alone from the legislative power but is inherent in the executive power to control the foreign affairs of the nation” (80).

As Shull demonstrates, White House memos reveal mixed opinions and reservations about interdiction and the dubious legal justifications supporting it. Yet in the end, Reagan implemented the policy as an emergency measure, one put in place to deal with yet another so-called immigration emergency. While interdiction targeted Haitians alone, its creation led directly from contingency plans drafted by Reagan’s Task Force on Immigration in response to the Mariel Cuban “crisis.”

Here is where Shull’s analysis is most significant and revealing in terms of its contribution to our understanding of the operation of anti-blackness in U.S. policymaking in the 1980s. By showing how the Reagan administration linked Cubans and Haitians in its construction of a broader immigration problem facing the nation, *Detention Empire* documents the ways that anti-Black ideologies work to erase important differences both within and outside the U.S. Cuba and Haiti occupied similar positions vis-à-vis the United States. Both had histories of U.S. colonialism and military occupation, and both had substantial black populations. In 1980, when large numbers of Cuban and Haitian immigrants began arriving in south Florida, much of the American public and its policymakers understood them as intimately connected. For Reagan, these *combined* migrations represented the same (black and criminal) danger and led to his hyper-focus on the Caribbean as both a Cold War hot spot and immigration emergency.

While outlining the broad contours of this anti-Black policymaking, Shull remains cognizant of the different and unequal ways Cubans and Haitians were treated in detention. Conditions were poor for both groups but remained much more dire for Haitians. Cubans, moreover, could not be deported, according to Reagan’s orders. Haitians, conversely, were often deported. Anti-Black thinking was flexible; it distinguished one group as more deserving than the other yet united them in the service of propelling and validating Reagan’s war on immigrants.

As powerful and unyielding as this war on immigrants was, resistance to it reminds us that humanity still has room to grow within even the most inhumane of systems. *Detention Empire* handles Cuban, Haitian, and Central American resistance stories with compassion and care, while maintaining critical perspective. Migrants arriving from El Salvador and Guatemala, for example, were “living testimony of U.S. foreign policy failures.” Their stories of survival in the face of extreme violence enacted by U.S.-trained, U.S.-funded, and U.S.-backed state forces in their home countries resonated with increasing numbers of Americans and others who criticized Reagan’s hardline anti-communist approach in Central America. As the death count mounted, the Reagan administration continued to deny U.S. collusion with right-wing death squads and state-sponsored torture.

The Sanctuary Movement emerged in this context, bringing people of faith, human rights advocates, migrant rights supporters, and Central American peace movement participants together in a social movement that defied U.S. border policy and its attendant carceral turn. This “New Underground Railroad,” as the Sanctuary Movement network was called, ferried Central American refugees from the U.S.-Mexico border to sanctuary sites across the United States, often stopping to allow refugees to publicize their *testimonios*. These testimonies, provided by migrants who fully understood the precariousness of their situations and the potential dangers they faced by going public, were the most poignant weapons they had in their struggle for safety, justice, and humanity for themselves and their families. Speaking their truths in direct defiance of Reagan’s attempts to erase them was a powerful method of

resistance that helped legitimize the Sanctuary Movement in the eyes of many Americans who had taken their president at his word. As one family in Sanctuary reported, "It is impossible for you to imagine how much I wish to put the truth in your hearts and take off the blindfolds that keep you from seeing" (168)⁶.

Exposing difficult truths is always contested, yet it is one of the most profound responsibilities of a historian. *Detention Empire* takes up this challenge with intention and skill. It is expertly researched, intelligently argued, and well written. Shull's journey into the United States' immigrant detention system began with a personal entanglement within it, a trauma that deeply informs their perspective and analysis. This only enriches the book and showcases how history can become, in the author's words, "its own form of organizing" (xiii). Ultimately, the book succeeds at providing the kind of critical analysis that is necessary to challenge what has become common sense policymaking: detention as deterrence. In this sense, I join the author in seeing this book as a building block for the imagining of abolitionist futures. Just as a system of mass incarceration can be constructed, so too can it be deconstructed.

Notes:

1. Eric Foner, "Who Is an American?" in *Who Owns History? Rethinking the Past in a Changing World* (New York, 2002), 151.
2. Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771–1965* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2017).
3. "Empire-in action" includes "exercises of state control over migrant bodies, denial, and erasure in detention" (15).
4. Shull explains that "although it is impossible to know the overall number of QTGNC . . . Mariel migrants because of misreporting and the state's lack of record keeping, this group received a disproportionate amount of media attention" (33).
5. United States ex rel. Knauff v. Shaughnessy, 338 U.S. 537 (1950).
6. *Sanctuary Perspectives, Darlene Nicgorski Papers on the Sanctuary Movement*, Honnold/Mudd Library, Claremont University Consortium, Claremont, CA.

Review of Shull, *Detention Empire*

Jason Colby

The Central American wars have largely faded from U.S. memory. While the Vietnam War continues to loom large in popular culture and George W. Bush's War on Terror still shapes the American worldview, U.S. policy toward Central America and the Caribbean inspires few discussions or feature films these days. Thus it is easy to forget that Reagan's sponsorship of conflict in Central America was the most controversial foreign policy issue of the 1973–2003 period and that it sparked the largest protest movement against U.S. foreign policy since the Vietnam War.

Throughout the 1980s, El Salvador and Nicaragua, in particular, were constantly in the news. Reagan's obsession with overthrowing the leftist Sandinista government in Nicaragua led directly to the Iran-Contra Scandal of 1987, which nearly brought down his administration. Not coincidentally, the decade witnessed an outpouring of writing on the conflict, not only by journalists but by luminaries such as Joan Didion and leading historians such as Walter LaFeber.¹ Yet the related targeting of immigrants—not only Central American but also Cuban and Haitian—failed to generate nearly the same attention among journalists or scholars. In his study of the U.S. Central America peace movement, for example, sociologist Christian Smith touched upon the migration from war-torn El Salvador and Guatemala that drove the Sanctuary

movement, but it was not his focus.²

In recent years, leading scholars have returned to the Central American wars to explain current issues and policies. Greg Grandin has explored the connections between Reagan's Central America policy and the war on terror as well as the roots of U.S. racial nationalism. For her part, leading immigration historian Maria Cristina Garcia has compared the response of Canada, the United States, and Mexico to Central American migration. Even more recently Aviva Chomsky has examined the role of the wars of the 1980s in driving that migration.³ Yet none of them has framed their study around the origins and ramifications of the Reagan administration's immigration policies. This is the task Kristina Shull sets for herself in *Detention Empire*.

Shull begins with a breathtaking and heartwrenching preface to which no summary in a book review can do justice. Suffice it to say, she has very good reasons for having personal and political stakes in her research, and she never hides her conviction that the Reagan administration's treatment of immigrants from Central America and the Caribbean, which continues to shape present policy, represents a stain on the nation's history. In her words, *Detention Empire* explores "how intertwining histories of US imperialism, mass incarceration, and a resurgence of white nationalist state-making under the Reagan administration define today's US immigration detention system" (xiv).

Along with this political edge, Shull brings strong storytelling skills and painstaking attention to detail. The result is a compelling analysis of the interplay between the rise of large-scale, repressive detention of migrants, especially in the for-profit carceral sector, and extensive on-the-ground resistance to those policies. Drawing upon a wide range of archival research, oral history, and community-based scholarship, Shull produces a powerful indictment of what she calls "Reagan's war on immigrants." In the process, she reminds us of the high stakes of doing history, which she clearly views as a form of activism and counter-hegemonic action. Whether a scholarly monograph can achieve such heavy political lifting is debatable. As a historian who thought he knew quite a bit about the topic in question, however, I can say that most readers won't view the 1980s in the same way again after reading this book.

Organizing her material into six richly detailed chapters, Shull makes a number of original and critical contributions to our understanding of the period. First, she traces how the language of "crisis" created a template for U.S. officials to expand the long-term detention of undocumented immigrants and connected it to the for-profit private prison industry sector that exploded in the 1980s and beyond. The inception point for this trend was the controversy surrounding the Mariel boatlift from Cuba in 1980, which, she argues "was a galvanizing event for these transformations, ushering in a sea change in border policing and prison policy making" (1).

It was the controversy over the housing of Mariel Cubans in Fort Chafee, Arkansas, as well as debates about their release, that revealed the efficacy of rhetoric focusing on an immigration "crisis"—first utilized by the Carter administration and then greatly expanded under Reagan. Yet Shull consistently emphasizes that such rhetoric was always about building public support for repressive measures. "The real crisis is not migration itself but the racism underwriting the rise of a global crimmigration regime," she asserts (16). Ultimately, the Reagan administration decided to move the Mariel Cubans to other facilities in response to local resentment against their presence. As she explains, "The legacy of the Reagan administration's handling of Fort Chafee was the criminalization of Mariel Cubans and the buildup of a more permanent immigration detention system that led to the unprecedented use of private contract facilities beginning in 1983" (59).

Second, Shull does a superb job of underscoring the interwoven nature of U.S. foreign and immigration policy. Because of Cold War politics, for example, Cubans fleeing Castro's regime were defined as political refugees, whereas Haitians escaping a nation that was a U.S. ally were defined as economic refugees. Yet she also explores how immigration policy and concerns influenced U.S. foreign policy—something diplomatic historians often miss. The administration's expansive effort to interdict Haitian immigrants in cooperation with the Haitian government, for example, "marked a new extension of executive authority beyond US borders to affirm state sovereignty over migrant rights" (69). At the same time, racialized fears of large-scale Haitian migration fed the rhetoric of crisis. "Ultimately," she notes, "the administration justified Haitian interdiction through the specter, not the reality, of mass migration" (83).

Shull also examines the very real mass migration crisis of the period—the human tragedy of Central America migration. And like Chomsky, she highlights how Reagan's support of conflict in Central America drove the very migration that his administration abhorred. By 1984, she notes, the State Department estimated that "around 500,000 Salvadorans, one-tenth of the country's population, had entered the United States without papers" (106).

Third, Shull makes a strong case that we should view Reagan's policies toward Central American migrants as a form of counterinsurgency. Central American migrants faced policies in the United States that were aimed at erasing their existence and silencing their narratives—much like those of the repressive governments from which they fled. "In sum," she argues, "despite the stated intent of operational procedures, transfers, segregation, isolation, and other counterinsurgent security measures used in jail keeping, such as counts and shakedowns, ultimately served the dual purpose of retaliating against migrants and silencing them in the system" (177).

Fourth, and in a related vein, Shull explores how these repressive measures generated various forms of resistance, not only from well-known U.S. activist groups such as Sanctuary, but also among imprisoned migrants and their families. Rooted in oral history work with former activists and migrants, this is one of the most important contributions Shull makes, particularly in how she connects migrant resistance, including prison takeovers, to more well-known forms of activism in the period. "Mounting protests did not just target specific conditions and civil rights abuses in detention" she emphasizes, "but also connected them to Reagan's foreign policies to challenge the logic of detention itself" (150).

Shull's fifth contribution may seem subtle, but it represents a key historiographical and political intervention. In consistently circling back to the fates of detainees, particularly the long detentions of Haitians and the Mariel Cubans, she prevents readers from doing what the American media and public did in the 1980s (and much of historiography has since): forgetting about migrants suffering under indefinite detention in U.S. facilities. Among the most striking examples of this is her detailed discussion of the transfer of Haitians from the Rome facility in Miami to Fort Allen in Puerto Rico. In effect, such committed storytelling counteracts the historical efforts of the Reagan administration to erase such people from public view and consciousness.

Last, but not least, Shull draws both definitive and suggestive connections between the policies of the 1980s and the more recent controversies surrounding the treatment of immigrants under the Trump administration. Among the connections she highlights are the roles played by individual policymakers in both eras. For example, she shows how Rudolph Giuliani had a pivotal role in framing and justifying many of the detention policies of the 1980s. More broadly, she reveals earlier practices of family

separation and child detention that many have viewed as unique to the Trump presidency.

Despite these key contributions, *Detention Empire* does have weaknesses. The first is its academic, sometimes inaccessible language, which often clashes with its activist aspirations. Shull clearly hopes that her work will speak to the experiences of the migrants with whom she has worked, as well as have an impact on policy debates. Yet one wonders if her consistent use of phrases such as "imperialism," "revanchism," "racism," "anti-Indigenous," and the "carceral palimpsest" will drive away the very readers she most hopes to connect with and convince. This shortcoming is present at the outset, as she argues that the "Reagan imaginary" created a specter of Central American and Caribbean migration that was defined as "an anti-Black, anti-Indigenous, and heterosexist crisis of white nationalist reproduction" (2).

And such problems continue with passages such as "I define Reagan's Cold War on immigrants as a suite of new, counterinsurgent enforcement measures adopted by his administration during its first term that cemented in place a globalized crimmigration regime" (5). In another opaque sentence she argues that "as overlapping episodes of violence and erasure both characterized US imperialism and were foundational to the carceral palimpsest, Reagan would rely on these foundations to employ new tactics of erasure in his Cold War on immigrants at home and abroad" (107). Perhaps this tension is inevitable. After all, like many politically engaged scholars, Shull is attempting the difficult task of balancing the professional requirements of academic publishing against the moral imperative of calling out and confronting injustice. Nevertheless, such jargon can turn off specialists, to say nothing of lay readers.

A second shortcoming is the lack of a comparative framework for Shull's claims. "Prison camps are not exceptional, aberrations in US history," she declares. "Rather, they extend from the continued maintenance of a white settler nation—through the forced removal and disappearance of bodies deemed foreign and through the stories we tell that erase these histories" (15). Such an assertion certainly has a basis in historical evidence, but the racialization, repression, and removal of immigrants is hardly unique to the United States, and one wonders how exceptional she considers it. To be sure, Shull could reasonably respond that this lies outside of the scope of her study, but it is never entirely clear to what degree she considers U.S. immigration and border practices unique.

In a connected vein, she offers no background discussion of the deep and violent histories of racialized immigration exclusion in the nations from which many of these immigrants have come—particularly Central American countries, which have a long history of anti-Black and anti-Asian policies. This gap is related to the reductive and imprecise turn Shull's analysis sometimes takes. Consider, for example, her passing assertion that the United States has its origins "as a white settler colony" (15). Such a claim condenses and simplifies the rich work done by colonial historians over the past four decades.

Likewise, Shull's consistent use of "revanchist" to describe Reagan's policies is puzzling, as the term normally implies revenge or the desire to recover lost territory. Revanchism may indeed be a useful term for this study, but Shull never defines how she is using it. There are other distracting rhetorical excesses. In discussing the U.S. government's effort to repress and intimidate Sanctuary, for example, she refers to "the Reagan administration's total war on Sanctuary" (182). One wonders how that phrase slipped past her editors.

Finally, Shull's claims of ideological and policy continuity undermine her emphasis on the Reagan administration as the key to her argument, even as they will likely raise the eyebrows of more than a few fellow

historians. Take, for example, her interpretation of Jimmy Carter: “By adopting diplomatic and humanitarian language to obscure the racism in US foreign and immigration policy, Carter played a central role in developing language surrounding migration and asylum-seekers that avoided race—a politics of denial that Reagan would double down upon” (52). She goes on to assert that the U.S. response to the Mariel crisis in 1980 was part of a larger “continuity of an anti-Black undercurrent running through the Carter and Reagan administrations” (67). At the very least, such claims require greater engagement with the scholarship on the Carter administration.

Such critiques aside, Shull’s monograph represents the most complete and important study of Reagan’s immigration policies that we have available. It is essential reading for those interested in the history of U.S. immigration policy, as well as those interested in U.S.-Latin American relations more broadly. Although too dense for undergraduate assignment, it will make for rich reading for graduate students and other specialists, none of whom will now be able to regard Reagan’s immigration policy as relatively benign or Trump’s war on Central American migrants as a departure from previous practices.

Notes:

1. Joan Didion, *Salvador* (New York, 1983); Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America* (New York, 1983).
2. Christian Smith, *Resisting Reagan: The U.S. Central America Peace Movement* (Chicago, 1996).
3. Greg Grandin, *Empire’s Workshop: Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (New York, 2006) and *The End of the Myth: From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America* (New York, 2019); María Cristina García, *Seeking Refuge: Central American Migration to Mexico, the United States, and Canada* (Berkeley, CA, 2006); Aviva Chomsky, *Central America’s Forgotten History: Revolution, Violence, and the Roots of Migration* (Boston, 2022).

Author’s Response

Kristina Shull

I first want to extend my deepest gratitude to Jason Colby, Hardeep Dhillon, Danielle Olden, and Michelle Paranzino for their thoughtful and critical engagement with *Detention Empire*. I am honored by the opportunity to participate in this roundtable, and I would also like to extend special thanks to Andrew Johns and *Passport*’s editorial staff. SHAFR has been an intellectual home for me since I first presented work relating to this project at the SHAFR annual meeting in 2009 as a graduate student.

Detention Empire opens with two stories. One is about a hunger strike at an immigration detention facility in California 2017. Located in the desert outside of Los Angeles, the Adelanto Detention Center is one of the largest facilities in the United States. It is run by a for-profit operator, the GEO Group, which was one of the world’s first private prison operators and is today one of the largest. It was awarded its first contract to detain migrants by the Reagan administration in 1983.

In the spring of 2017, nine men who had been part of a Central American refugee caravan that arrived at the U.S.-Mexico border in search of asylum launched a hunger strike at Adelanto. They were met with swift retaliation—a brutal assault, solitary confinement, and for some, deportation. Their story is a microcosm of Sunbelt carceral geographies and patterns of resistance and retaliation in detention that I trace in the book and that have played out across decades. A coalition of actors inside Adelanto leading the strike and allies on the outside also introduces connections between

Caribbean and Central American asylum-seeking groups who have faced exceptional discrimination in the system since the 1980s. These events also raise questions about the role and impacts of activism on the outside.

The other story opening the book is my own. In 2007, in the same month I was accepted into UC Irvine’s Ph.D. program to work with Emily Rosenberg, my former husband was detained in a for-profit facility in New Jersey, then soon deported. For me, studying the history of detention has always been personal, as my own journey of loss and development as a scholar intertwined with the trajectory of the detention system’s continual growth over time. I am heartened by Olden’s assessment that this “only enriches the book,” as my difficulty in telling and situating my own story alongside those in *Detention Empire* raises other questions the book attempts to address about the relationship between trauma and historical silences.

Since 1985, migrant detention rates in the United States have increased a thousand-fold. By early 2020, 55,000 people were detained per day across a network of over 200 state and private-run facilities. Although the COVID-19 pandemic curbed detention numbers, which are again rising, it worsened already horrific conditions in detention and sparked a new wave of hunger strikes and a growing movement to #AbolishICE. Although abusive conditions in detention and at the border continue to make headlines across Republican and Democratic administrations, they always recede into a business-as-usual background. Interrogating how and why this came to be was a central impetus for writing *Detention Empire*.

Beyond the public, political, and policy impacts I hope the book might contribute to, my scholarly goals for the book are three-fold. The first is to expose the inner workings of immigration detention from the inside and show how it functions as a mechanism (or “workshop,” to borrow Greg Grandin’s term) of empire through the central role it plays in the manufacturing of migration crisis and public consent. The second goal is to bring scholars of immigration, race, war, and carceral studies into more conversations with each other by showing how immigration and foreign policy are mutually constitutive. And my third, overarching goal, as Dhillon writes, is to demonstrate “the role history has to play in the production of abolitionist frames.” Doing history, especially from within academic institutional spaces, is not the same as community organizing or activism, but mobilizing testimonies and addressing gaps in the archives can play a crucial role in what Colby calls “counterhegemonic action.”

I initially set out to tell the story of the rise of private prisons and why they emerged in the 1980s in an immigration context. I first consulted the Reagan Library in California and the National Archives in Maryland to seek a top-down understanding of the United States’ embrace of a policy of detention as deterrence in this era. As I researched, I began to support and organize with people in detention and communities facing deportation, and a larger story emerged “from below.”

I encountered patterns of resistance and retaliation in archival documents and news reporting from the 1980s that mirrored my own witnessing in real time in the 2010s. I was struck by how repetitive these patterns are across time and place. I saw a pattern of official lies emerge; I saw how detention was a site of solidarity and resistance, but also of silence. Yet I also began to see how top-level policy was shaped in direct response to acts of resistance and truth-telling coordinated by people in detention and “outside agitators,” as Reagan’s Associate Attorney General Rudy Giuliani dubbed them—including Jesse Jackson and people who collaborated with the Central American peace and Sanctuary movements.

I am humbled by the reviewers’ generous articulations of the contributions *Detention Empire* makes to immigration

and foreign policy history. They call it “the most complete and important study of Reagan’s immigration policies that we have available” (Colby); “a model of historical scholarship” (Olden); “indispensable” and “a project of the many U.S. empires—those at home and abroad—that elucidate the hierarchies of race, class, sexuality, and labor” (Dhillon); and “a must-read for anyone interested in the broader moral ramifications of U.S. foreign relations and the inextricability of foreign and domestic policies” (Paranzino).

I am especially glad about the reviewers’ recognition of my core argument that the Reagan administration played a formative role in weaponizing a raced and gendered migration crisis, which became a “template” for subsequent carceral expansion. *Detention Empire* gives, in Olden’s words, “sustained attention to the social, cultural, and political dynamics of anti-Blackness and its gendered and sexualized components.” And, as Dhillon adds, my “attention to Indigenous communities is a reminder for many of us that immigration history must remain attuned to Indigenous histories.” Reagan’s preoccupation with the political optics of the Mariel Cuban migration and with connecting the Caribbean to Central America underlines the anti-Black and anti-Indigenous core of Reagan foreign and immigration policymaking. This what I call the “Reagan imaginary,” which I define as “a vision and strategy of white nationalist state-making” that is “shaped by neoconservative politics, neoliberal economics, and long-standing mythologies of settler colonialism”(1).

I also appreciate the way Paranzino draws out the importance of the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) in my analysis of Reagan’s embrace of neoliberalism. There was more than a mere profit motive behind the formation of new private prison industries (although that was surely present). The Reagan administration’s emphasis on “trade and aid” as a tool of migration control speaks to Reagan’s broader vision of a U.S.-led global capitalist order. The CBI also laid the less-recognized foundations of subsequent free trade agreements, namely the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement and the 2004 Central American Free Trade Agreement, which reinforced U.S. economic hegemony while exacerbating the political violence and the displacement of migrants that such agreements were supposedly intended to alleviate.

Reagan’s establishment of the Haitian interdiction program and the CBI’s pairing of aid requiring participating nations’ cooperation with U.S. drug and immigrant interdiction efforts also served to expand off-shore enforcement efforts and were a blueprint for the 2010 Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, a cooperative security agreement between the United States and twelve Caribbean Basin nations. “Touted as a weapon against communism and a salve for wealth inequality,” I write, “aid has more often served as a vehicle for empire by accompanying counterinsurgent and military agendas” (22).

While I am not able to respond to all of the reviewers’ comments in full, they raise a series of key questions that are important to address. The first question is, how exceptional is the United States and its racist bordering practices? According to Erika Lee and other historians of immigration restriction in earlier U.S. history, the United States is the “global leader in the enactment of racist immigration laws.” Today it maintains the largest system of detention and deportation in the world.¹ Dhillon and Colby rightly suggest including more historical perspectives from the Global South and considering how anti-Black, anti-Asian, anti-Indigenous (and homophobic) governments and politics in Latin American nations also persecute and displace populations in the calculus of *Detention Empire*. I wholeheartedly agree that this is a limitation of my U.S.-centric project, and I continue

working to incorporate stories from the Global South in my more recent collaborative storytelling work on climate migration.²

That leads to the question of how exceptional the Reagan administration was and how much Reagan’s immigration policies departed from Carter’s. Here, the concept of *carceral palimpsest* is helpful, because it allows for an understanding of how under Reagan, some policies and practices continued from the past, others ramped up sharply, while others—namely, Haitian interdiction, private prisons, border militarization, and the systematic use of detention with an explicit intention to deter asylum seekers—marked a departure from the past.

Next, I acknowledge, as Colby points out, that there is an ongoing tension in my work between my use of less accessible language and terminology and my targeted audience and intended impact. For example, I align myself with immigration historians who argue, as Carl Lindskoog does in a recent article in the *Journal of American History*, that “immigration detention and other forms of incarceration are tools of state violence that have been used to advance ongoing projects of U.S. settler colonialism and racial empire.”³ Taking for granted that these are the founding principles of our nation, I may lose some readers—especially undergraduates and general readers—without establishing this idea more intelligibly in my introduction, as Colby cautions. One way I have attempted to address this tension is by reading chapters or pages of the book with my undergraduate students and enlisting their feedback in making the book, and its terms, more accessible.

Terms that may require further unpacking include *revanchism* and *total war*. Colby claims that I do not adequately define *revanchism*, a term usually referring to a politics of revenge or attempts to regain lost ground. This is indeed how I intend the term to be understood in reference to domestic political trends. I was inspired not only by Jordan T. Camp’s use of it in *Incarcerating the Crisis* to refer to rising conservatism in response to the “crisis of legitimacy” the civil rights movement wrought upon the U.S. racial project, but also Dylan Rodríguez’s conception of the post-civil rights era as one of “White Reconstruction.”⁴ As for *total war*, I define it on page 6 as “a bundling of counterinsurgent, covert operations, psychological tactics, and public relations vying for hearts and minds,” with a footnote explaining that I borrow the concept both from the language of the Sanctuary movement itself, which labeled Reagan’s offensive against them as a “total war,” but also from Kenneth Osgood, who uses the term in his work on the Eisenhower administration’s global Cold War propaganda campaign (6).

Paranzino also questions my use of *counterinsurgency* as an appropriate concept to apply to detention and, more broadly, border militarization. This is worthy of a lengthier discussion, and, as Paranzino recommends, deeper engagement with the genealogy of counterinsurgent warfare both in theory and on-the-ground practice. Although it can refer more specifically to foreign “internal-defense efforts” in military doctrine, I extend an application of it to immigration detention in much the same way Timothy J. Dunn applies the “low-intensity conflict” (LIC) doctrine to an immigration context in his 1996 book, *The Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1978–1992*.

One example of LIC doctrine that is reflected in Reagan’s immigration enforcement efforts is his administration’s immediate revision of the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878. The original act prohibited military involvement in domestic crime control, but the 1981 Military Cooperation with Civilian Law Enforcement Act and Congress’s passage of the Department of Defense Authorization Act in 1982 allowed for a new merging

of military and local law enforcement cooperation.⁵ Frustrations over prior Posse Comitatus law preventing military officers from suppressing Mariel Cuban unrest on military bases after the 1980 boatlift largely inspired this policy shift, which then enabled subsequent cross-agency cooperation in border enforcement and the formation of a militarized Border Patrol Tactical Unit (BORTAC) used to quell subsequent uprisings and hunger strikes in detention.

In *Detention Empire*, counterinsurgency can be understood as a tactic within LIC doctrine, alongside contingency planning; police, paramilitary, and military integration; the use of military bases to detain migrants; surveillance, intelligence, and special operations; and psychological operations—all components of Reagan's "total war" on immigrants. Yet I am especially preoccupied in the book with counterinsurgency as a rhetorical tactic, inspired by Ranajit Guha's theorization of how a "prose of counterinsurgency" operates to define and delegitimize enemies of the state.⁶

In response to Paranzino's question on whether U.S. officials viewed migrants as a potential counterinsurgent threat or whether their concerns reflected a more deeply rooted urge to protect the border against "undesirables" and keep America white, my answer is that both concerns were factors. The work that Greg Grandin, Carly Goodman, and Kathleen Belew have done on the Reagan administration's embrace of white nationalist think-tank immigration policy recommendations and paramilitary border vigilantism helps further establish the connections between the racial anxieties underlying counterinsurgent rhetoric and practice.⁷ One example I discuss in *Detention Empire* is Reagan's classified Rex84 plan (short for Readiness Exercise 1984) to mobilize mass detention in the event of an insurgency of undocumented migrants and civilian war resisters in response to U.S. intervention in Central America.⁸

What lessons might be drawn from *Detention Empire*? What can readers and students see differently about the 1980s from the vantage point of detention, about the ongoing legacies of Reagan-era wars, including the global-migration dimensions of the War on Drugs and how they shape immigration debates today?

By showing how Reagan's rhetoric departed from reality, *Detention Empire* challenges persistent misperceptions among both the left and the right that Reagan was "soft" or softer on immigration than his successors. One important imprint of these histories on the present is how Reagan infused immigration politics with divisive narratives of "good" versus "bad" immigrants, especially through the criminalization and targeting of Mariel Cubans through their indefinite detention and in the War on Drugs.

Another takeaway is the importance of questioning current refugee rights and bordering regimes organized around state sovereignty. In this I am inspired by approaches in critical refugee studies that foreground migrant journeys and lifeworlds as subjects of critique and

include perspectives on decolonization and reparation. I am also inspired by the work of E. Tendayi Achiume, who "looks to the history and legacy of the European colonial project to challenge this status quo." Achiume calls for a different conceptualization of migration, "one that treats economic migrants as political agents exercising equality rights when they engage in "decolonial" migration."⁹

I do have a final *mea culpa* to offer: I wish I had done more to draw out environmental and climate connections that were emergent in my research in *Detention Empire*. One example is the Reagan administration's internal acknowledgement of how the "disequilibrium" of land distribution and a U.S. consumer demand for cattle exacerbated violence in El Salvador, leading the Department of Justice to emphasize the importance of disentangling "political reasons from demographic/ecological causes" in justifying Central American asylum denials.¹⁰ In my current and future research, I examine detention as a locus of ecofascism and climate denial.

The U.S. government's recent labeling of the COVID-19 pandemic as a national security threat, as seen in mass expulsions under the Trump administration's enforcement of Title 42, and now, the Biden administration's continued asylum restrictions and warnings about the specter of climate migration-induced border crisis echo the pre-emptive logic of Reagan's Mass Immigration Emergency Plan. The rise of border militarism, in turn, has had grave implications for fueling climate crises and exacerbating the disparate impacts of climate change.

Notes:

1. Erika Lee, *America for Americans: A History of Xenophobia in the United States* (New York, 2021), 79.
2. See, for example, the Climate Refugee Stories project at <https://www.climate-refugeestories.com/>.
3. Carl D. Lindskoog, "Migration, Racial Empire, and the Carceral Settler State," *Journal of American History* 109, no. 2 (September 2022): 388.
4. Jordan T. Camp, *Incarcerating the Crisis: Freedom Struggles and the Rise of the Neoliberal State* (Berkeley, CA, 2016), 4; Dylan Rodríguez, *White Reconstruction: Domestic Warfare and the Logic of Genocide* (New York, 2021).
5. Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (Cambridge, MA, 2016), 311; and Kristina Shull, *Detention Empire* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2022), 30, 115, 142.
6. Ranajit Guha, "The Prose of Counter-Insurgency," *Selected Subaltern Studies* (Oxford, UK, 1988), 45–84.
7. Greg Grandin, *The End of the Myth: From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America* (New York, 2019); Carly Goodman, "Unmaking the Nation of Immigrants: How John Tanton's Network of Organizations Transformed Policy and Politics," in *A Field Guide to White Supremacy*, ed. Kathleen Belew and Ramon A. Gutierrez (Berkeley, CA, 2021); Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America* (Cambridge, MA, 2018).
8. Shull, *Detention Empire*, 145.
9. E. Tendayi Achiume, "Migration as Decolonization," *Stanford Law Review* 71, issue 6 (June 2019): 1509.
10. Shull, *Detention Empire*, 130.



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Research Opportunities Before, During and After the 2024 SHAFR Conference

Sam Eberlee

The upcoming Conference of the Society for American Historians of Foreign Relations will be held in Toronto from June 13-15, 2024. Ontario's archives offer a range of opportunities to study the history of the United States in the world, broadly conceived, from neighbors' unique vantage points.

The host **University of Toronto's Archives and Records Management Services** (<https://utarms.library.utoronto.ca/>) are an excellent place to start. SHAFR historians interested in, say, turbulent chapters in Canada-US nuclear relations, or academic, Quaker and women's resistance to the Vietnam War, can consult the Sidney Earle Smith and Ursula Martius Franklin fonds. Researchers can submit questions and retrieval requests to **UTARMS** at <https://utarms.library.utoronto.ca/contact-form>. The Archives' Reading Room is in U of T's Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.

Some U of T colleges maintain their own archives. **Trinity College** holds particularly rich diplomatic records. Papers in the George Ignatieff, J. Blair Seaborn, John W. Holmes, and William C. Graham fonds are windows into American diplomacy, statecraft and strategy. For instance, as Ursula Franklin was protesting the Vietnam War, Seaborn was singled out as an ideal back channel between Lyndon B. Johnson and Ho Chi Minh. For more information about Trinity holdings, contact archives@trinity.utoronto.ca or +1 (416)-978-2019. **Victoria College** maintains special collections like the Kenneth D. Taylor fonds, which document the foreign service career of the Canadian Ambassador in Tehran during the Iranian Revolution and hostage crisis. Questions about Victoria College's special collections can be posed at https://library.vicu.utoronto.ca/ask_us/, and requests to view specific materials can be submitted online. Both Trinity and Victoria Colleges are in the heart of the U of T campus.

The **Archives of Ontario** are a gateway to other promising avenues of research for historians of the United States in the world, from the migration effects of the American Revolution to free trade negotiations in the 1980s. The provincial archives are located at York University in north Toronto. There is a direct transit link from U of T's downtown campus (the Yonge-University subway line). Holdings can be searched at https://aims.archives.gov.on.ca/scripts/mwimain.dll?logon&application=UNION_VIEW&language=144&file=%5bao_assets%5dhtml~5chome.html&rid=home, and research inquiries can be directed to reference@ontario.ca or 1-800-668-9933.

Library and Archives Canada holds historic government records. There is an abundance of material on Canada-US relations, international issues of joint interest, and US policy in the files of government departments like National Defence, External Affairs, Immigration, and Environment and Climate Change Canada. LAC also holds the private papers of many leading Canadian politicians, soldiers, diplomats, and civil servants. The LAC collection can be searched online, and appointments with reference archivists are available in person, by telephone (1-866-578-7777), or by videoconference. LAC is located near Parliament Hill in Ottawa. There are approximately fifteen flights per day from Toronto to Ottawa, and trains depart from downtown Toronto's Union Station.

Archives at the U of T, elsewhere in Toronto, and in Canada's capital can support studies of American statecraft and Americans' broader relations with the world in fields like trade, global institutions, gender, religion, immigration, empire, and transnational movements. SHAFR members can take full advantage of these opportunities before, during and after the 2024 conference.

The Bear Awakens: A Course Project Exploring Clifford Berryman's *Cartoons about the Russian Revolution*

E. Thomas Ewing

On March 16, 1917, the *Evening Star* newspaper in Washington, DC, published a front page editorial cartoon depicting a bear wearing a peasant blouse labeled "Russia," chasing a dog, "Pro-Germanism," out of a house with a stick.¹ Published just one day after the abdication of the Russian emperor, Nicholas II, this cartoon communicated the idea that the dramatic change in Russia put an end to any fears that the Russians would make a separate peace with Germany. Two years later, on March 30, 1919, a cartoon in the same newspaper depicted Lenin, waving a gun and carrying a torch, standing in front of a devastated landscape strewn with dead bodies and declaring, "I'm fixin' things for future folks."² These two cartoons illustrate the profound change in American attitudes toward Russia as the optimism prompted by the overthrow of a despotic state in spring 1917 gradually shifted towards hostility towards the first communist government in world history in the two years that followed.

In a spring 2023 course on twentieth-century Russia, a number of my Virginia Tech students completed an innovative collaborative history project examining changing American views of Russia through the cartoons of Clifford Berryman (1869–1949), as published in the *Evening Star* (available in the Library of Congress's digitized newspaper collection, *Chronicling America*).³ This project involved primary source research using digitized newspapers, analysis of visual elements in cartoons, and an understanding of historical context in the years during and after the 1917 Revolution. Students worked in groups of three or four to examine selected cartoons and explore articles about Russia published in the same editions of the newspaper.

The outcome of this collaborative work was a series of posters, each featuring a single cartoon, selections of headlines, and an analysis of changing American perceptions of Russia. The posters were displayed in a public corridor outside the classroom located on the ground floor of the university library, thus making the project visible to students, librarians, and other visitors; all the posters are also available online. The project thus combined traditional forms of historical instruction, such as primary source analysis and contextual understanding, with innovative approaches to integrating project-based learning into the higher education classroom. This assignment was designed for a course on twentieth-century Russia, but the materials, format, and outcomes could easily be adapted to courses in American foreign policy and particularly the Cold War.

The cartoons of Berryman were ideally suited to this assignment because Russia was frequently the object of his attention, from the first Russian Revolution, which overthrew the Tsar in February 1917, to the end of the civil war and the establishment of Soviet power four years later. Already well known as the creator of the Teddy Bear cartoon, Berryman frequently used the image of the bear to symbolize Russia, which provided important visual connections among these cartoons over this period of

time. Berryman's cartoons are easy to locate on the first page of almost every edition of the *Evening Star*, which was published six days a week. Digital versions available from the Library of Congress's *Chronicling America* collection make this newspaper easily accessible to instructors and students. Each cartoon features prominent visual elements, yet most also included text that amplified and complicated the images.

Prior to the semester, I reviewed every issue of the *Evening Star* from the spring of 1917 to the fall of 1919, two critical years in the history of twentieth-century Russia. I selected eighteen cartoons as the most historically relevant, visually appealing, and complex in content. The cartoons were grouped thematically and chronologically, and each of six groups was assigned three cartoons from a distinct historical period. The chronological periods and thematic groupings included (1) the overthrow of the Tsar and the establishment of dual power in the spring of 1917, (2) the struggle for power among revolutionary parties in the summer of 1917, (3) the Bolshevik seizure of power in the fall of 1917, (4) the peace negotiations with Germany in the winter of 1918, (5) the Russian withdrawal from the war in the spring of 1918, and (6) the civil war and new Soviet state in 1919.

Students received the assignment and groups began meeting during the first week of the semester, and a portion of almost every class was set aside for continued collaboration for the next six weeks. After reviewing the



Evening Star, 11 July 1917



Evening Star, 11 August 1920

cartoons, each group researched news articles about Russia published in the *Evening Star* during the weeks before and after each cartoon was published. Limiting the research to a single newspaper and a specific date range helped the groups focus on historical events in Russia as well as changes in American foreign policy in the two years from the spring of 1917 (when the United States entered the war on the side of Russia and against Germany) to 1919 (including Russia's separate peace with Germany, the Armistice in November 1918, and the struggle for power in Soviet Russia). These research materials were incorporated into the posters in two ways. First, images of key headlines were used to illustrate the posters, and second, the content of the articles was used to prepare the written sections on each poster.

The poster included a title, introduction, historical context, and analysis. Each section had a limit on the number of words to ensure that the posters had a good balance of visual and written elements. Students wrote sections in a shared document, thus allowing for multiple participants to contribute content and revise drafts into a final text. The poster design, set by the instructor, included a single image of the cartoon, taking up about one-third of the whole poster, several headlines, and the three written sections. This format ensured that posters would be visually engaging and easily accessible to viewers, while also requiring a substantial amount of original research and collaborative writing. Designing the posters using shared presentations allowed all the students in the group to contribute to the final version, which was reviewed by the instructor and by other groups before being finalized for printing. I designed two posters to serve as bookends for the exhibit so viewers could be introduced to the exhibit regardless of which way they were walking in the hallway.

The printed posters were displayed on a wall outside the

classroom in a relatively high-traffic hallway on the ground floor of the library. Students in the course thus had the opportunity to view the posters as they entered and left the classroom twice a week, providing them with a reminder of the work they had completed in the first six weeks of the semester. The posters remained on display for the rest of the semester, exhibiting innovative work completed in a history course about twentieth-century Russia.

As part of the assignment for this project, students completed a self-assessment with questions about their contribution to the project, the nature of collaboration in their groups and the outcomes of the assignment. These responses, submitted as part of the graded assignment (and thus not anonymous) provide useful observations on cartoons as primary sources, on posters as a format for research projects, and collaboration as a desired skill to learn in college classrooms.

A recurring theme in students' comments was the challenge of interpreting cartoons as historical sources using visual imagery that integrated texts and symbols to comment on current political events. Students noted that cartoons render complex events easier to understand, yet critical reading and thinking skills are needed "to interpret the meaning behind the cartoon," as each cartoon included "a substantial amount of information in a relatively small space" and presented "very complicated and elaborate issues in a much more digestible way."

As with any primary source, cartoons provide observations on events as they happen, yet they also convey a particular, highly opinionated, often satirical, and sometimes cynical point of view on these events. As one student noted, cartoons "explain political dynamics through images that simplify complicated subjects down to the basic premises," while another student wrote that cartoons "can have a deeper level . . . rather than some goofy picture making fun of a certain event." The "exaggerated caricatures" in cartoons require an interpretation of "symbolism," so students learn to "pay close attention" to details, as everything "is there for a reason" and the artist did not "draw things randomly." Several students stated that using cartoons as primary sources can make "learning about history more interesting," and a student who self-identified as a "visual learner" commented that cartoons were more rewarding than the usual assignment of reading a textbook.

The format of the posters also promoted thoughtful assessments from students. Many students observed that the combination of images and text required students to organize and present information in a focused, limited, and targeted manner, balancing accuracy with visual appeal. The word limits for each written section encouraged them to write concisely in ways that synthesized complex concepts and extensive information into accessible presentations. Posters were contrasted with more familiar formats, such as research papers (one student referred to "the same old assignment of writing a generic paper"), because these examples of "public history" made the work available in a visible space. One student commented that the posters were available to view "in an eye-catching way," while others expressed the hope that "just a quick glance" by those walking along the hallway would "tempt them to learn something they might not have otherwise," thus leading them to learn from the history and also appreciate all the work invested in this project. One student declared that seeing posters on the wall in the library was "extremely cool—I took a picture and plan on sending it to family."

In their self-assessments, students did provide useful suggestions for revising and adjusting the assignment for future courses. While they mostly commented favorably on the structure of the assignment and the time allowed to complete each step, some students asked for more guidance on each stage and more direction in preparing

the final version, while other students recommended more flexibility to allow groups to select cartoons or locate articles. Some students recommended additional measures to ensure good communication within groups, balance the workload within the groups, and account for absent or non-responsive collaborators. For the most part they endorsed the amount of class time allocated to projects, as finding time to meet with partners outside of class often presents a challenge for students balancing coursework, jobs, and other commitments.

This project required considerable collaboration among students, which I have emphasized in all my courses as a way to connect historical content and analytical skills with future professional roles. To address this issue, the self-assessment form asked students to reflect on this question: "What do you see as the value of collaboration skills for your future career?" The responses provide further evidence of the value of integrating a poster project about political cartoons into an upper-level history course. Many students anticipated that their likely field of employment would require considerable teamwork, and thus an assignment requiring collaboration was good training for their desired career. One student wrote that "more practice in collaboration" would improve skills and help with the transition to a workplace; another wrote that "preparing students for what's next" was "ultimately" the purpose of college, so the opportunity to work collaboratively was a valued exercise. Another student wrote, "I love working alone," but could see the value in learning to work with others. One student recalled that job interviews often involve questions about collaboration skills, which suggests that this assignment was directly relevant to the challenge of preparing students for future employment.

This course was taught in the spring semester of 2023, so the project exploring cartoons about U.S. perceptions of Russia developed in the context of Russia's brutal war of conquest against Ukraine. During the course I often drew parallels between the content of the course and contemporary events, noting in particular the close geographic connections between the front lines in 1917-1918 and the current battles between Ukraine and Russia. I should note, however, that Berryman's cartoons addressed broader, recurring themes in twentieth-century Russia, including the failed pursuit of revolutionary goals of democracy, the ways in which the threat of foreign intervention led to increasingly authoritarian political structures, and the consolidation of power by a centralized political movement directed by a charismatic leader. The title of this article, "The Bear Awakens," represents both the revolutionary moment early in the twentieth century and the current situation in the twenty-first, where we are confronted by an authoritarian, imperialist, and interventionist regional state.

Notes:

1. Clifford Berryman cartoon, *Evening Star* (DC), March 16, 1917, p. 1, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1917-03-16/ed-1/seq-1/>.
2. Clifford Berryman cartoon, *Evening Star* (DC), March 30, 1919, p. 1, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1919-03-30/ed-1/seq-1/>.
3. "Clifford Berryman Political Cartoon Collection," U.S. National Archives, Center for Legislative Archives, accessed June 12, 2023, <https://www.archives.gov/legislative/research/special-collections/berryman>.

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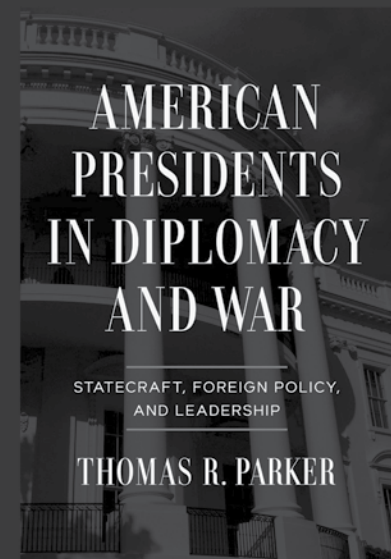
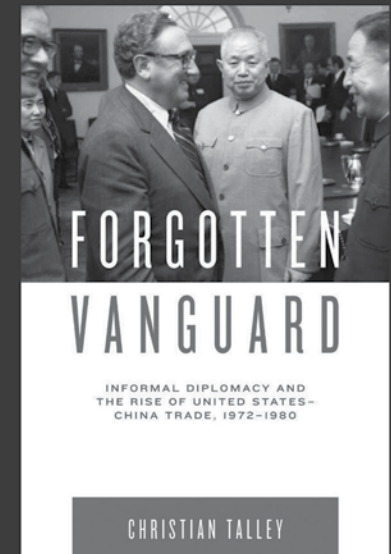
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A View From Overseas:

A Memorial of the Consular Corps in St. Pierre, Martinique

Sébastien Perrot-Minnot

Editor's note: "A View from Overseas" is an occasional column that features essays and commentary from international scholars on topics of interest in the history of international relations. AJ

On May 8, 1902, just before 8:00 a.m., the fateful eruption of Mount Pelée destroyed the city of St. Pierre (Saint-Pierre), the brilliant economic and cultural capital of the French colony of Martinique. Nearly 30,000 people died in the cataclysm—no eruption has been as deadly since—including Mayor Rodolphe Fouché, Martinique Governor Louis Mouttet, and seven consular officials.

St. Pierre had been the seat of consulates since the eighteenth century, when Great Britain and the United States sent official representatives to the "Paris of the Isles," whose port was the most important in the Lesser Antilles. Created by George Washington in 1790 and then entrusted to Fulwar Skipwith, the American consulate in St. Pierre was one of the first to be opened by the young United States of America.

By early May 1902, the city was home to ten consular missions (more than Fort-de-France, the colony's political capital). They were operated by twelve consular officials: Thomas T. Prentis, United States consul; J. Amédée Testart G., U.S. vice-consul; Michel Joseph Berne, vice-consul of Spain; Paul Borde, acting consul of the United Kingdoms of Sweden and Norway (the consul in title, Gustave Borde, being in Metropolitan France); Louis Charles-Alfred, acting consul of Haiti (the consul in title, Jean Baptiste Sainte-Colombe Reaucar, being in Haiti); Alexandre Glodon, consul of the Dominican Republic; James Japp, consul of Great Britain; Charles Alexandre Mac Hugh, consul of Belgium; Marie François Louis Meyer, consul of Denmark; Pierre Plissonneau, acting manager of the Italian consulate (the manager in title, Georges Plissonneau, being in Metropolitan France); Charles van Romondt, consul of the Netherlands; and Edgard Devers, vice-consul of the Netherlands.

Only the Americans Prentis and Testart and the English Japp were career consular officers. The others were contractual or honorary officers: they were not necessarily



U.S. Consul Thomas Prentis, his wife Clara and their daughters Mary and Christine. All perished in the 1902 eruption of Mount Pelée. Image taken from Garesché 1902.

nationals of the countries whose interests they represented and had professional (usually commercial) activities in addition to their consular responsibilities. In the latter group, most individuals had been appointed while they had relatives already engaged in the consular service. It should be noted that van Romondt had been a consular agent and then vice-consul of the United States in Fort-de-France in 1893–1894, and that Berne had been Dutch consul in St. Pierre, on a temporary basis, in 1899–1900.

Almost all the consulates were located near the St. Pierre landing stage. And with good reason: they worked primarily in connection with shipping, trade, and immigration. The British consulate and residence, however, were located on the Roxelane River, a little way from the city.

When the eruption of Mt. Pelée devastated St. Pierre on May 8, 1902, Berne, Charles-Alfred, Glodon, Meyer and van Romondt were not in the city. They may have been away on business, or they may have moved for fear of a volcanic disaster. Thomas Prentis, and even more so

his wife Clara, had expressed concern at the increasingly threatening manifestations of Mt. Pelée and had even considered leaving Martinique. They did not, however. Industrialist and politician Fernand Clerc claimed to have seen them in the early hours of May 8, and had advised them to flee St. Pierre immediately, but to no avail. He himself was leaving the scene with his family.

As news of the St. Pierre tragedy began to spread around the world, requests for information concerning members of the consular corps were sent to the colonial government of Martinique. On May 13, unaware that Governor Louis Mouttet had died in the disaster, the Belgian consul general in Havana (accredited to the French West Indies), Charles Renoz, sent him this telegram: "My government has asked me to express its condolences for the appalling misfortune that has befallen the colony; please also receive my deeply felt condolences. I would very much like to receive as soon as possible a telegram making known the fate of the Belgian consul in St. Pierre."¹

Louis Henri Aymé, U.S. consul to Guadeloupe, left for St. Pierre on May 10 and arrived at dawn the following day. For several days, with the help of Marines and a special authorization from the Martinique government, he

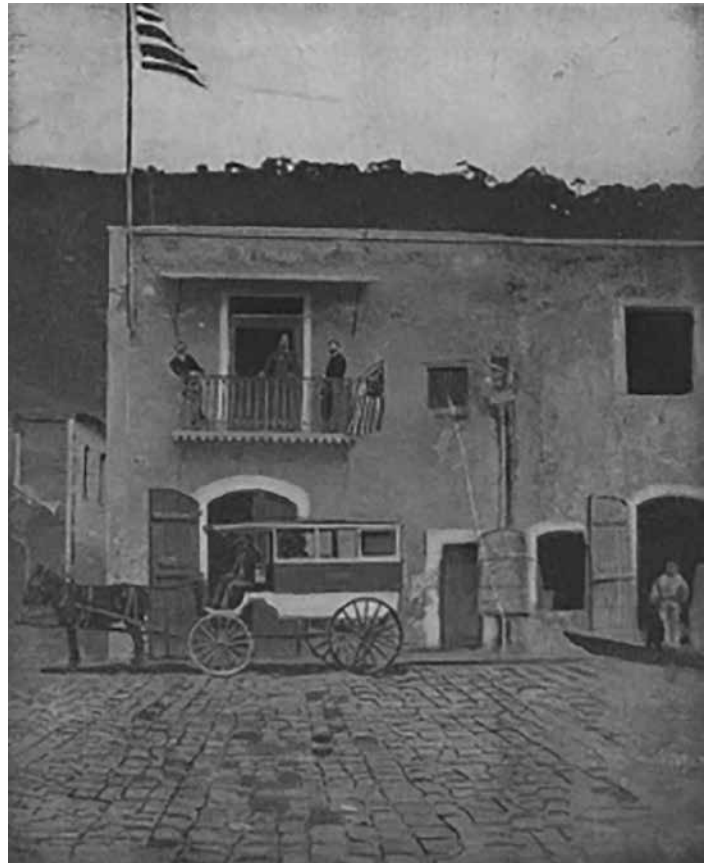
explored the ruined city, including the site of the former American consulate; he could not but conclude that his colleagues Prentis and Testart were dead. Research by Aymé and others revealed that Borde, Devers, Japp, Mac Hugh and Plissonneau were also among the fatal victims of the eruption.

However, it seems that no one could identify the remains of any of the consular officials in the martyred city, with the possible exception of those of Japp. Aymé, who was also in charge of the British interests in Martinique, wrote on this subject in a note addressed to the U.S. State Department on July 21, 1902: "May 17, with a guide, I went to the ruins of the British consulate, and there found remains believed to be those of Consul James Japp. I provided a metallic casket, incased in wood, and an attempt was made May 19 to recover the body. Captain Campbell, of H. B. M. cruiser *Indefatigable*, accompanied the expedition, and has doubtless reported fully to his Government in the matter."² While the American consular archives—like, no doubt, those of most of St. Pierre's consulates—could not be recovered, van Romondt was more fortunate: he found his safe, with its contents intact.

The tragedy of St. Pierre had worldwide repercussions, and in this context, the deaths of the consular representatives were obviously covered by the media, albeit unevenly. Prentis, Testart and Japp received particular attention from the press (which, it should be pointed out, took some liberties with the facts). Many of the countries that had consulates in St. Pierre gave generous aid to suffering Martinique: the United States was in the forefront (with the invaluable support of Consul Aymé, based in Fort-de-France), but Denmark, Spain, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden also showed solidarity.

After the destruction of St. Pierre, Fort-de-France became the seat of all the consulates established in Martinique. The May 8th disaster led to a significant reduction in consular presence in the colony, which had irretrievably lost some of its commercial and strategic importance. By the end of 1902, the United States, Great Britain, Haiti, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and Venezuela had a consulate in Martinique, with the Sweden-Norway union opening its own in Fort-de-France the following year. Of these consulates' officers, only Charles van Romondt (Netherlands) and Gustave Borde (Sweden-Norway) had previously served in St. Pierre.

The former officers of the St. Pierre consulates were obviously going through terrible times. We know that Meyer left for Trinidad on May 10 or 11, 1902, and that Sainte-Colombe Reaucar, ruined and overwhelmed, did not return to Martinique. In the United States, Prentis and



The United States Consulate in St. Pierre in the late 19th century. Photo: Garesché 1902 / L.G. Stahl.

Testart were honored by the American Foreign Service Association and the Department of State. In addition, in 1935, American engineer and volcanologist Frank Alvord Perret dedicated a memorial to Prentis in St. Pierre, and in 1984, the U.S. ambassador to France, Evan Griffith Galbraith, had a plaque affixed to that monument in memory of the Prentis family and Vice-Consul Testart.

As this monument had deteriorated over time, the current municipality of St. Pierre dedicated a memorial stone to the victims of the Prentis and Testart families in the Louis Ernoul Garden (behind the Our Lady of the Assumption Cathedral); it was inaugurated as part of a French-American ceremony on May 8, 2022. On that occasion, a stele recalling the aid provided by the United States to Martinique in 1902 and a plaque dedicated to the former American consulate were also unveiled in the town.

While Prentis, Testart and Japp had remained very much alive in the memories, their colleagues accredited in St. Pierre had practically sunk into oblivion, and with them went the richness of the consular life in the "Little Paris of the West Indies." Fortunately, this injustice has been rectified by the municipality of St. Pierre. On May 8, 2023, Mayor Christian Rapha inaugurated a memorial in the Louis Ernoul Garden to the seven consular officers who died in the disaster of May 8, 1902. In this green and serene space, volcanic stones worked by Martinican artist Hervé Beuze (including the one dedicated to the Prentis and Testart families in 2022, and the aforementioned stele) bear plaques whose texts were written on the basis of research carried out by the author on behalf of the municipality.

The inauguration ceremony was held as part of the traditional "May of St. Pierre"—a time of commemorations and celebrations—on the 121st anniversary of the 1902 disaster, but also on the centenary of the administrative



The memorial of the consular corps in St. Pierre. Photo: Sébastien Perrot-Minnot.



Inauguration of the memorial of the consular corps in St. Pierre, on May 8, 2023.
Photo: Gaspard Ferraty.

rebirth of St. Pierre (which had been removed from the list of French municipalities in 1910 and reinstated in 1923). The opportunity presented by this double anniversary was resolutely seized by the municipality to affirm the willingness of St. Pierre, labeled “Town of Art and History” by the French Ministry of Culture, to be a community open to the world.

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Notes:

1. Telegram from Charles Renoz to Governor Louis Mouttet, trans. Sébastien Perrot-Minnot, *Journal officiel de la Martinique*, no. 40 (May 20, 1902), <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5555248/f2.item>.

2. *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, with the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to the Congress, December 2, 1902* (U.S. Department of State. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903).

NATO Enlargement: The Western Pledge, Revisited

Ralph L. Dietl

Warsaw 1995. Poland's President Lech Walesa announced during talks with his Russian homologue Boris Yeltsin that Warsaw planned to join NATO. Yeltsin initially approved such a move, but soon thereafter informed the Polish president that a NATO membership for Central or Eastern European states was not in the cards. NATO membership violated a Western pledge offered during the negotiations on German unification not to enlarge NATO—even one inch—to the East.¹ Yeltsin furthermore argued, as Mary Sarotte notes, that the Two Plus Four Treaty prohibited any extension of NATO's military structures to East Germany and consequently any extension to (former) Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) countries or even republics of the post-Soviet space.²

The Russian interpretation soon haunted Western diplomacy and policymaking. Worse, Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher's public pronouncements during the process of German unification supported the Russian claim.³ The issue of a broken pledge was born. The broken promise theme has accompanied every NATO enlargement debate ever since and possibly even contributed to the decision to force Ukraine by military means to stay outside of NATO. The broken pledge theme was also instrumentalized by Moscow to justify Russian interventions in the post-Soviet space, with the aim of forestalling alignments of former Soviet republics with Western institutions like the EU and NATO.

A prominent and sometimes vitriolic politico-academic debate ensued at the end of the millennium. It involved dignitaries such as President Vladimir Putin, former General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, and former Secretary of State James Baker.⁴ Academia split on the issue. In her latest book, *Not One Inch*, Mary Sarotte reinvestigates the "one inch claim," i.e., Baker's statement that NATO structures would not move one inch to the East. The historiographical debate still remains inconclusive. Russian academics, sometimes backed by Bush Administration officials, support the broken pledge thesis. Western academics—Mark Kramer⁵ in particular—termed the Russian claim a myth. Kramer argues that there had never been a debate on NATO enlargement during the German unification process.

Kramer's statement is right and wrong. During the Two Plus Four negotiations the Warsaw Pact still existed. Baker's Nine Point Program governed behaviour, so did Eduard Shevardnadze's 20 Point Program. Both programs focused on forms of bloc co-creation. In brief, a debate on NATO enlargement was not topical at that time. The Soviets, however, had started to toy with a "big bang" enlargement scenario. The Soviet Union proper and all (former) WTO members had to become NATO members in one instance. The enlarged NATO would have to serve the future CSCE based pan-European structure. The membership of both organization would have to be co-equal. Alas, the Common House of Europe would have a layered architecture.

Mary Sarotte⁶ and Kristina Spohr⁷ in particular side

with Kramer and deny that the West had offered a legally binding pledge not to enlarge NATO. Pledges of a non-binding nature, however, were furnished during the unification process. According to Sarotte, the FRG's Dieter Kastrup considered the statement by Yeltsin of political importance. None of the public pronouncements or private insinuations, however, were legally binding the West.⁸ Spohr in particular refocuses the debate on statements by German officials. Genscher clearly aligned his public pronouncements with his diplomatic record.

Joshua Itzkowitz Shiffrin, like Michael McCgwire before him, breaks with the dominant pro-Western narrative. Shiffrin openly sides with the U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Jack Matlock and thus crosses a Rubicon. His revisionist view clearly states that pledges had been offered by German and U.S. officials and pan-European visions had been jointly developed to ease the German unification process. The West constantly reiterated that NATO structures would not be extended one inch to the east—a statement that was not bound or restricted to East German territory. The West, however, "did genuinely lack any desire to overcome the East/West divide via new pan-European constructs."⁹ Shiffrin claims that a two-level game ensued. Public pronouncements on a pan-European future were accompanied by clandestine preparations to enlarge NATO.¹⁰

In my recent monograph *The Cold War Endgame*, I stress that the broken pledges debate was artificial. Its scope disallowed real insights.¹¹ The issue at stake was NATO's transformation, not NATO's enlargement. A transformed NATO could be enlarged, but not a bloc organization. In the course of German unification both the West and the Soviet Union had agreed on a transformation of NATO. First and foremost NATO's transformation had to mirror the transformation of the WTO. Right after the finalization of the Two Plus Four Process and the dissolution of the WTO the remaining 'Western' bloc organization had solely to be aligned with an institutionalized Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). The Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) of the future should turn into a hub for pan-European Security. NATO would act as its defense arm.

This plan entailed a broadening of NATO's membership to make it correspond to CSCE membership. A "big bang" enlargement was thus debated. The debate on broken pledges should therefore not be limited to NATO's enlargement, but should be extended to the debate on the pledged transformation of NATO to allow that organization to form a real pan-European security unit under the roof of the Common House of Europe. The North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) followed this logic and aligned NATO with the CSCE framework.¹² The first steps to form a real pan-European security structure were taken in late 1991.

Recent archival research for my latest book project (*From Coup to Coup: NATO-Russia Relations, 1991–1994*)

might finally end the debate on broken pledges or limit it to a debate on Shifrinson's thesis of Western duplicity. A debate on broken promises—to borrow from the title of Sarotte's *Foreign Affairs* article—will not only have to take the advent of the Clinton administration into the equation, but also the radiating influence of the 1993 coup in the Russian Federation.¹³

The available documentation for the year 1991 clearly reveals that the West had offered more than pledges, it considered itself bound by those pledges. Foreign Minister Genscher highlights, in a conversation with Secretary of State James Baker on 1 March 1991, that the Visegrad countries—Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary—were toying with NATO membership, since the old WTO concept of a block of neutral countries from the Baltics to the Adriatic created instability.¹⁴ The power vacuum had to be closed constructively.

Genscher pleaded for an economic alignment of the Central and Eastern European states to the European Community (EC), but he openly rejected any alignment of former WTO states with NATO. "During the Two Plus Four Negotiations [the West] had indicated to the Soviet Union that no intention existed to extend NATO to the East. For Russia a NATO membership of those countries would be in-acceptable, especially today when Gorbachev was under pressure."¹⁵ There was a need to reflect about an institutional framework that would be agreeable to the Soviet Union. Secretary of State Baker "concurred with these reflections" and allowed that "a form of liaison relationship had to be considered."¹⁶

It thus appears evident that Baker did not refute Genscher's views of a pledge not to enlarge, but jointly developed with Genscher the NACC track to align all Central and Eastern European States with NATO while the OSCE emerged. This policy is in line with the Common House of Europe concept and with Baker's pronouncements on a Europe reaching "from Vladivostok to Vancouver."¹⁷

Genscher assured Gorbachev during his visit to Moscow on 18 March 1991 that a "new Europe" had to be created. The FRG sought to develop the CSCE, a forum that assured Soviet and U.S. co-creation of the new Europe. Gorbachev warned of a Europe from Brest to Brest-(Litowsk). Genscher's response was telling. Germany would not like to see a new dividing line created at the western border of the Soviet Union. The new Europe had to be co-created with and include the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev agreed, but he warned of Western currents that sought to align selected Central and Eastern European countries with NATO. This policy rejected the co-creation of new instruments. Moscow considered it necessary for NATO to transform and adapt to the emerging new pan-European structures prior to its integration and formal dissolution. Gorbachev added that if NATO remained an independent factor, it would be necessary "to include the Soviet Union [in NATO]" as the anchor of European stability.¹⁸

The coup of August 1991, which was an attempt by the Soviet cabinet to use emergency procedures to forcefully maintain the Soviet Union, revived the security threat in Europe. The power vacuum in Eastern Europe had to be closed to forestall a communist revival or a re-creation of the Soviet Empire by force. The Visegrad now knocked on NATO's door, but the vision of pan-European Security structures had the upper hand. Genscher, in an address before the joint session of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Bundesrat and the Bundestag of 26 August 1991, reconfirmed NATO's policy not to enlarge to the East.¹⁹ "The fundamental decision of the Two Plus Four Treaty that NATO will not be extended to the East had to remain untouched." The policies of the Visegrad countries could not be supported, although the situation for the Baltics might worsen.²⁰ In brief, *pacta sunt servanda*.

Genscher repeated in a conversation with Soviet Foreign Minister Yevgeny Shaposhnikov on 11 September 1991 that the coup had altered the situation in the Baltics, and he referred to Baltic independence. However, he emphasized that "the decision made in conjunction with German unification to not extend NATO's structures" remained valid and added that there was an urgent need to "create structures of co-operative security in Europe."²¹ Both Genscher and Shaposhnikov thereafter reflected about nuclear-weapon-free zones—an old WTO concept—and agreed to jointly eliminate all short-range nuclear forces (SNF) and nuclear artillery in Europe. NATO agreed to SNF elimination and the destruction of these weapon systems. Thus, stability in Central and Eastern Europe could be re-instituted through co-operative security measures guided by a common spirit: the agreement on a Common House of Europe (CHE).²²

During his visit to Moscow on 26 Oct 1991, Genscher discussed the geopolitics of the new Europe with Gorbachev. Genscher assured him that the Genscher-Baker initiative would be a corollary to the former WTO-NATO cooperation that had ended the Cold War. The WTO had disintegrated prior to the August Coup, so NATO would have to cooperate in the creation of cooperative security structures.²³ The Central and Eastern European States, the Soviet Union and NATO were obliged to co-create and institutionalize their cooperation. Shevardnadze, whom Genscher met on 26 March, confirmed the uppermost importance of creating a Europe "from Vladivostok to Vancouver." The latter concept, a European vision, would even offer guidance for the relationship between the union and the republics in the Soviet Union.²⁴

Research thus reveals that the perspective of a joint co-creation of the CHE might even have impacted the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Foreign Minister Piotr Kravchenko of Byelorussia told Ambassador Wilhelm Hoeynck in Minsk on 17 December 1991 that the formation of the CIS had opened the avenue to liquidate the old Soviet Union and to create an Eastern European community that could reach out to former WTO countries such as Bulgaria. The Western European Community would constitute itself simultaneously. By the year 2000, two European communities with centres in Brussels (the European Community/European Policy Committee capital) and Minsk (the CIS capital) would come into existence. By the year 2010, the co-creation of the communities would establish a common European future.²⁵

Given the outlined documentation, the broken pledges debate has to be broadened and revisited from a holistic perspective. Genscher's statements from 1991 firmly establish that pledges had been made that were politically binding and therefore structured Eastern policies up to the dissolution of the Soviet Union and beyond. The formation of the CIS has to be seen in the light of the CHE debate. Other currents of the Cold War East-West co-creation still mattered. The WTO concept of a non-nuclear and neutral belt of countries survived the end of the Cold War and impacted Belarus's and Ukraine's decision to join the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as Non-Nuclear Weapons States.²⁶

The Western 'cheating' finally emerged only with the Clinton administration, which did not feel legally and politically bound by the Bush legacy. Genscher's retirement might have facilitated that new orientation of Western policies. Sarotte's latest book, *Not One Inch*, might be just the first chapter in a narrative that might finally challenge the views of the Cold War victory school.²⁷ Political hick-ups might be the consequence.

Notes:

1. Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shifrinson, "Deal or No Deal? The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion," *International Security* 40, no.4 (2016): 7–44; M. E. Sarotte, "How to Enlarge NATO: The Debate inside the Clinton Administration, 1993–1995," *International Security* 44, no.1 (2019): 7–41, esp. 14; Kristina Spohr, "Precluded or Precedent-Setting? The NATO Enlargement Question in the Triangular Bonn-Washington-Moscow Diplomacy of 1990–91," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 14, no. 4 (2012): 4–54, esp. 22.
2. Sarotte, "How to Enlarge NATO," 16.
3. Kristina Spohr, "Germany, America, and the Shaping of Post-Cold War Europe: A Story of German International Emancipation through Political Unification, 1989–90," *Cold War History* 15, no. 2 (2015): 221–43, esp. 236.
4. Shifrinson, "Deal or No Deal?" 8, 13.
5. Mark Kramer, "The Myth of a No-NATO Enlargement Pledge to Russia," *Washington Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (2009): 39–61; Kramer, "NATO Enlargement—Was There a Promise?" *International Security* 42, no. 1 (2017): 186–89.
6. Mary Elise Sarotte, "A Broken Promise? What the West Really Told Moscow about NATO Expansion," *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 3 (2014): 90–97.
7. Kristina Spohr, "Precluded or Precedent-Setting? The 'NATO Enlargement Question' in the Triangular Bonn-Washington-Moscow Diplomacy of 1990–1991," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 14, no. 4 (Fall 2012): 4–54.
8. Sarotte, "How to Enlarge NATO," 16.
9. Shifrinson, "Deal or No Deal?" 8, 11; see also Michael MccGwire, "NATO Expansion: A Policy Error of Historic Importance," *Review of International Studies* 24, no. 1 (1998): 1281–1301; Spohr, "Precluded or Precedent-Setting?" 7, 22.
10. Shifrinson, "Deal or No Deal?" 8, 11.
11. Ralph L. Dietl, "Conclusion," in *Cold War Endgame: Geopolitics, Arms Control and a Planned Revolution, 1986–1991* (Lanham, MD, 2022).
12. Dietl, "Chapter 3," in *Cold War Endgame*.
13. Ralph L. Dietl, "From Coup to Coup: NATO-Russian Relations, 1991–1994," (unfinished manuscript, June 2023); see also Shifrinson, "Deal or No Deal?" 11.

14. Über das Delegationsgespräch BM Genscher mit AM Baker, am 1.03.1991, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (PA-AA) B 1 ZA 178930.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Dietl, "Chapter 3," in *Cold War Endgame*; Shifrinson, "Deal or No Deal?" 13; Spohr, "Precluded or Precedent-Setting?" Baker's remarks or recollections on pledges offered were inconsistent and often contradictory. He frequently denied that gentlemen's agreements, promises or pledges had been made during the process of German unification. (Denial is the term utilized by academia.) Genscher, however, announced on 2 February 1990, after talks with Baker, that both parties (the United States and the FRG) had agreed that there were "no intentions of extending NATO area of defense and security to the East."
18. Vermerk über das Gespräch BM Genscher–Präsident Gorbachev am 18.3.1991, 11.00 Uhr–13.50 Uhr, 19 March 1991, PA-AA, ZW 178930.
19. Betr.: Ausführungen des BM in der gemeinsamen Sitzung der Auswärtigen Ausschusses des Bundesrates und des deutschen Bundestages über die Entwicklung in der Sowjetunion am 22.8.1991, PA-AA, B 41 ZA 151618.
20. Ibid.
21. Betr.: Gespräch mit dem sowjetischen Verteidigungsminister Scha[r]poshnikow [sic], am 11 September 1991, 13 Sep 1991, PA-AA, B 43 ZA 228351.
22. Ibid.; Scheffer, Moskau-AA, 13 Sept 1991, PA-AA, B 1 ZA 178930.
23. Betr.: Besuch des Herrn Bundesminister in Moskau, Oktober 1991, Hier: Gespräch mit President Gorbachev am 26 Oct 1991, 29 Oct 1991, PA-AA, B 43 ZA 228351.
24. Vermerk, Betr.: Gespräch BM mit Eduard Schewardnadse am 26.10.1991 in Moskau, 20.10.1991, PA-AA, B 1 7A 178930.
25. Vermerk, Betr.: Gespräch Sonderbotschafter Hoeynck mit dem belaruss. AM Krawtschenko am 17.12.1991 in Minsk, 19 Dec 1991, PA-AA, B ZA 184289.
26. Sarotte, "How to Enlarge NATO," 111.
27. Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia and the Making of the Post-Cold War Stalemate* (New Haven, CT, 2002), 51.



2023 SHAFR ELECTION RESULTS

President Mitchell Lerner, The Ohio State University
Vice President Melani McAlister, George Washington University
Council (at-large) Brooke Blower, Boston University
Council (at-large) Christopher McKnight Nichols, The Ohio State University
Council (graduate student) Chris Hulshof, University of Wisconsin, Madison
Nominating Committee Jeannette Jones, University of Nebraska, Lincoln

Thank you to the 31% of SHAFR members who voted in the election this year.

Seven Questions on... The Future of SHAFR

*Jason Colby, Kelly J. Shannon, Aileen Teague, Lauren F. Turek, Carl P. Watts,
and Silke Zoller*

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

1. What drew you to SHAFR and why (and how long) have you maintained your membership?

Jason Colby: I first became aware of SHAFR as an undergraduate at Whitman College, where I studied with David Schmitz. I became a member around 1999-2000, as a first-year graduate student, and I've been a member ever since. I don't think I've ever let it lapse during that time.

Kelly J. Shannon: I have been a SHAFR member since 2003, so 20 years! That time went fast. I joined because I was an M.A. student at UConn studying with Frank Costigliola, and Frank told all of his students to join SHAFR. So I did. My first SHAFR experience was the SHAFR reception at the AHA in Washington, D.C. in 2004, and my first SHAFR conference was at NARA College Park in 2005, just after I graduated from UConn and a few months before I started my Ph.D. at Temple with Richard Immerman. I knew nobody except Frank and Richard when I went to the conference, but groups of grad students at other universities and several faculty members quickly introduced themselves and invited me to go to lunch and dinner with them. By the end of that first conference, I knew SHAFR would be a good scholarly home for me. So what drew me to SHAFR was Frank's advice, but what has kept me coming back has been SHAFR's vibrant, friendly, fun community of brilliant scholars. Being able to spend a few days each year talking about foreign relations history, hearing people present their latest research, browsing the book exhibit, catching up with old friends, and meeting new people every June just makes me happy. It's so rare for me to be able to spend time in that kind of focused intellectual environment that I really value the annual conference. SHAFR's support of its members in other ways also contribute to how wonderful this organization is: mentorship; conference travel support for graduate students and international scholars; grants and fellowships, especially for grad students; prizes and awards; meaningful committee service; the Summer Institute (while it lasted); *Diplomatic History*; *Passport*; the list goes on. I think SHAFR is a model of what a scholarly organization should be, and it's a community of genuinely good people. Most of my favorite people are SHAFR members.

Aileen Teague: The initiatives supporting grad students and junior scholars drew me to SHAFR, especially the

travel grants, the SHAFR Summer Institute, and the dissertation completion fellowship. Compared with other organizations, SHAFR seemed incredibly well-resourced. SHAFR also provided the perfect size community (not too big, not too small) of like-minded researchers that regularly attend annual meetings.

Lauren F. Turek: I joined SHAFR in my second year of graduate school in 2009 because I wanted to be sure that I was receiving *Diplomatic History* so I could at least attempt to familiarize myself with the emerging scholarship in the field; *Passport* meanwhile ended up being a great way to learn more about SHAFR as an organization, as well as to help with the goal of getting to know more about different scholars and their work. I also, of course, was excited to attend the annual meeting. I have maintained my membership since then (and am now a lifetime member) because I enjoy presenting at and attending the annual meeting, receiving SHAFR publications, and volunteering on a range of different committees. In addition, I benefitted greatly from winning the Gelfand-Rappaport Dissertation Fellowship and from participating in one of the Summer Institutes. The former allowed me to conduct research abroad and the latter introduced me to a group of amazing fellow scholars who are now all good friends.

Carl P. Watts: I have been a member of SHAFR for almost 20 years. I was introduced to the organization by two good friends from my Ph.D. years at the University of Birmingham—Dr. Andrew Johnstone (University of Leicester) and Dr. Andrew Priest (University of Essex)—who had been to a couple of conferences and suggested that I might benefit from joining SHAFR. It is a good fit for me because quite a few members share my research interests in the international history of British decolonization in Africa, and especially US policy towards southern Africa. Also, I have always been interested in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) and I am currently serving my second term on the SHAFR Teaching Committee.

Silke Zoller: I've been a member since my first year in graduate school (2013). For me, SHAFR has been a wonderfully supportive professional network. Even as a graduate student, its members made me feel welcome and offered a lot of interested feedback on my work. Some of my best friends and most valued colleagues are members. SHAFR events helped me to prepare my dissertation and job market materials, enabling my academic career.

2. What do you think are the two to four most significant issues that should be priorities for SHAFR Council and the membership over the next 5-7 years?

JC: Many possibilities here. I would say continuing to open the organization to young scholars who might not initially

see SHAFR as their natural home, either due to their research interests or personal identities, is a key priority. SHAFR has become vastly more diverse since I first joined, but we need to keep moving in that direction. This means making sure that SHAFR supports and recognizes research on areas beyond traditional interests but of great interest to young scholars and the general public—particularly environmental question and the climate crisis. Indeed, if I had one priority above all, it would be for SHAFR to more fully embrace environmental questions as an essential topic for inquiry.

KS: The biggest two issues that we should prioritize are: 1) Careful stewardship of SHAFR's finances and bringing in more donations to the organization so that SHAFR has a healthy long-term financial outlook. I know that Council and SHAFR leadership are already prioritizing this, but it's worth repeating. And 2) Retaining current members and attracting new members. SHAFR lost members during the pandemic, as I'm sure many organizations did, but we have to focus on bringing back those who have left and appealing to new members. We need to do so in a way that ensures that SHAFR is welcoming to all so that we remain a big umbrella for all kinds of scholars working on foreign relations history broadly defined.

AT: Maintaining membership and initiatives for junior scholars. Tailoring programs to the changing nature of the academic job market. You all are doing a great job on this so far and I think more on non-academic jobs at future meetings would be useful.

LT: Over the next 5-7 years, SHAFR will need to tackle the issue of its financial sustainability for the long term through increased fundraising and the like. The organization cannot do any of the wonderful work that it does if it is not fiscally sound and on a good footing for the future.

Tied in with that, SHAFR needs to continue to work to attract and support graduate student members by expanding its available funding, restoring funding for the summer institutes, and continuing to support students on the academic and non-academic job markets in our field. SHAFR is a wonderfully welcoming organization and we need to ensure that we are continuing to bring in a vibrant group of emerging scholars—and to help ensure that they have a reason to be a part of the organization for hopefully decades to come. Doing more outreach to historians working in government and other non-academic jobs and thinking about how SHAFR can be of value to them deserves serious consideration.

We also need to advocate broadly for more academic hiring in our field. The paucity of listings in history in general is of course concerning, but the available jobs are especially scarce for foreign relations historians. This is also a detriment to undergraduates who are eager to learn about foreign policy, broadly defined; without historians offering courses in our field, they are missing crucial historical context for current events, historical habits of mind, and a deep understanding of the past.

CW: I think that financial health must always be the first priority for any professional organization. This is clearly related to maintaining or expanding the membership and effective stewardship of the annual subscriptions paid by members. SHAFR Council minutes indicate that this always receives appropriate attention, and I think that Council is diligent in considering the ways in which it can protect and extend the financial interests of the organization.

SZ: For the past decade, history has been weaponized more

and more in political discourse. Politicians, policymakers, pundits, and others drift to the same analogies and events, especially concerning U.S. power, that reinforce their existing positions. More than ever, historians need to participate in the public discourse about the events we study. If we do not speak up, simplified, misleading historical narratives will only further serve narrow political interests.

Meanwhile, tenure-track jobs continue to decline as academic institutions rely on adjuncts and limited-time positions to teach necessary courses. These positions do not offer job security or the chance to sustainably plan a future. SHAFR members would benefit from more of a focus on job preparation, but also alternative career paths and outreach opportunities to such paths.

3. What would you do if you had control over an annual \$50,000 budget to spend on SHAFR-related activities? For example, would you fund two dissertation completion fellowships? Would you revive the Summer Institute program? Do you have another brilliant idea?

JC: I wish I had a brilliant idea. I do love the extensive resources SHAFR has committed to supporting and recognizing young scholars, so I suppose I would encourage more in that area, if the resources are available.

KS: I would love to bring back the Summer Institute. I participated in one as a grad student, and I got a lot out of it. A lot of us who attended that year formed a close cohort and are still in touch with one another, sharing ideas and inviting one another to speak, etc. Then I was a convener at the last ever Summer Institute in 2022 in New Orleans, and I got to see it from the other side. The Summer Institute provides a really unique opportunity for grad students and junior scholars in our field, so I would prioritize bringing it back. But barring that, I might also want to spend money on teaming up with American University's Bridging the Gap project, which aims to connect scholars with the policy world. I attended their International Policy Summer Institute (IPSI) in summer 2021—which was unfortunately virtual due to Covid—and it was a fantastic experience. It trained us scholars in how to connect with and speak to policymakers, think tanks, journalists, and the public. I was one of only two historians in my cohort; the rest were political scientists. I think SHAFR participating in something like that would go a long way toward getting our scholarship out into the policy world, which I think is much-needed, and it would also be useful for our members who may wish to work in government, think tanks, or other policy-relevant positions outside academia. Last but not least (and I know I probably don't have any money left from my \$50,000 at this point), I would be interested in creating a fund for unemployed/precariously employed SHAFR members to help cover their membership dues and conference participation. Having a fund so that temporary financial difficulties don't keep members from participating in SHAFR would be helpful.

AT: The SHAFR Summer Institute would be at the top of my list. I think it could also be useful to have a postdoctoral fellowship alongside the dissertation completion fellowship. This postdoc might help in some of the administrative responsibilities of the organization and could alleviate some of the responsibilities of the Executive Director.

LT: Given the loss of fellowships for graduate students in the humanities from the major funders (the Mellon, etc.), I would definitely want to find ways to fund graduate students, in particular through additional travel and language fellowships. Grad students must have funding

at the front end of their projects to get them off the ground and ensure they will be able to write the strongest dissertations possible. Reviving the Summer Institutes would also be fantastic, as the benefits of that program for networking, refining dissertation/book chapters, and forging friendships cannot be overstated.

CW: The SHAFR Summer Institute program has undoubtedly been a worthwhile enterprise. It has covered a number of thematic interests that are of interest to SHAFR members, including national security, nuclear weapons, and the intersection between domestic politics and foreign policy. However, as a member of the Teaching Committee I would naturally wish to see SHAFR allocate more resources to teaching-focused initiatives. SHAFR is obviously a vibrant research community, but I think that teaching is somewhat sidelined and this should be addressed.

The Teaching Committee has a mission to engage “national and international educators in conversation about the value of teaching and learning the history of American foreign relations.” In my opinion we need to go beyond this to discuss effective teaching of American foreign relations. Beginning scholars have to demonstrate the efficacy of their teaching practice as well as the significance of their research if they are to be competitive in their job search. I think we could establish regular teaching workshops to give them the tools for that purpose. The Teaching Committee was gaining some traction in 2018-19 but I think that the pandemic resulted in a loss of momentum. I would like to see SHAFR give greater encouragement and more resources to establish a lasting focus on effective teaching and learning in the field of American foreign relations.

SZ: My strongest SHAFR experiences have been ones in which a number of other scholars took the time to read my research and gave sustained feedback. The Summer Institute is an excellent opportunity for this type of collaboration.

In addition, I personally know many graduate students and scholars based outside of North America who engage with its themes and would love to share their work with the organization. By sponsoring more travel grants, SHAFR could enable the presence of valuable global research and viewpoints that complement and strengthen members’ existing interests.

4. What would you suggest that SHAFR should do to expand its membership, its public profile, and its annual conference attendance?

JC: I think I offered most of my thoughts on this in question #2. I’m a big fan of in-person conferences, and I’d rather not see SHAFR dilute its events with a hybrid approach. It would be terrific to see more international students and scholars attend, but that would like require the level of financial support that SHAFR can’t provide.

KS: To expand our membership, we need to be better at outreach—to graduate programs, scholars who do SHAFR-relevant work but who haven’t considered joining or presenting at our conference, independent scholars, think tanks, people in foreign relations-related non-academic jobs, etc. That might range from individual members acting as SHAFR ambassadors by inviting specific people to join to advertising campaigns targeting graduate programs, government agencies, think tanks, and perhaps ads in *AHA* publications. This relates to expanding our public profile. We need a more robust social media presence that highlights our organization and the work of our members, a unified website (having two sites to navigate right now isn’t

ideal—shafir.org and Member Clicks), and again a targeted outreach campaign that gets across how important SHAFR and our work is so that we not only attract new members, but also our work gets public notice. Maybe when our members write op-eds and other public-facing pieces, we can also include a mention of SHAFR in our short author bios somehow? It may also be useful to have a page on our website where we aggregate our work—maybe an experts directory or something like that so that members can input our publications, areas of expertise, availability for speaking engagements, etc. so that media outlets and others looking for experts in our field can go there and see all of the fantastic scholars who make up our organization in one place. In terms of conference attendance, I’m pretty happy with our typical conference numbers. SHAFR is big enough that there are a lot of interesting panels and events to choose from, but small enough to be collegial and welcoming. Having 300-500 people in non-D.C. years and 500+ people in D.C. years is the perfect size, which is I think our typical conference attendance.

AT: I am not sure.

LT: SHAFR should expand existing connections with historians working in related non-academic fields, including those in federal, state, and local governments, museums (including but not limited to the National Museum of American Diplomacy), media, secondary education, think tanks and NGOs, and the like. For example, experts within SHAFR might be able to collaborate with education professionals and curators at museums to develop opportunities for teachers to earn continuing education credits in topics related to U.S. foreign relations history, which would have the benefit of bringing more knowledge of diplomatic history to schools (within the confines of state education standards of course).

CW: Following on from my comments in relation to question 3, I think that SHAFR might be able to expand its membership if it were to make a conscious effort to present itself as an organization that is concerned with teaching as well as scholarship. This would open up SHAFR to SoTL organizations and faculty in community colleges for whom archival scholarship might be seen as a luxury that they cannot afford. It is also possible that SHAFR might be able to grow by establishing joint memberships with organizations where there is a crossover of interests, such as the American Political Science Association, the International Studies Association, and the Society for Military History. SHAFR might consider how to enhance its public profile by discussing outreach with energetic and media-savvy scholars like Christopher McKnight Nichols at Ohio State and Hal Brands at Johns Hopkins.

SZ: The travel grants I mentioned above would be a valuable way to enable truly international discourses between scholars at the SHAFR conference.

I am glad to see SHAFR involved in more advocacy than it has been in the past.

5. Where would you like to see a future SHAFR conference held? What kinds of social events, keynote topics, and local attractions would make it more likely that you would attend? Do you think that SHAFR’s every other year in Washington, D.C. tradition should continue? Why or why not?

JC: I don’t have much to suggest here. I think SHAFR does a superb job with its conference locations. I’m excited to have the next meeting in Toronto, which is great for Canadian-based scholars like myself, but I wouldn’t change

the tradition of Washington D.C. every year—it is a major reason those meetings get such great attention.

As for the social events, SHAFR has been terrific at this throughout my time in the organization. The dinner cruise on the Potomac was a blast.

KS: I absolutely think that SHAFR's every other year in Washington, D.C. tradition should continue (and I'm not just saying this because I recently moved to the D.C. area). From what I understand, the D.C. conferences are usually larger than the non-D.C. ones, so there's an obvious draw. A lot of SHAFR conference attendees use the opportunity to visit the archives in the D.C. area when they attend the D.C. conference. NARA College Park, the Library of Congress, Georgetown—a lot of the important archives in our field are in the area. There's also a lot to do in terms of social events and cool places to go for dinner, museums, etc. D.C.'s location and three area airports make it convenient for our European members. For U.S.-based members on the Eastern seaboard, it's easy to get to by car, train, or a short flight. Plus, the Renaissance (our usual hotel) loves us because we spend so much money at their bar! Meeting in the District also offers the ability for SHAFR contingents to meet with lawmakers or policymakers if they so choose, or go to the Supreme Court to await an important ruling (since we meet in June), and it makes it easier to get current and former policymakers to be keynote speakers for us. Washington, D.C. is important for a lot of our research, and I think it makes sense that it's a regular conference location. I'd even be happy if we did conferences in D.C. more often—say two years in a row and then every third year we go somewhere else.

I almost always go to SHAFR, so the non-D.C. locations, attractions, keynote topics, etc. don't really matter that much to me, as long as the locations are easy to get to (nearby airports are key), not terribly expensive, and not ridiculously hot in June (sorry, New Orleans). I think we should do more conferences West of the Mississippi—Colorado would be nice, or Stanford, Seattle, the Twin Cities, or Chicago. I'd be interested in going to the UK, as well, especially since we have a lot of members in the UK.

No matter the location, I think we should go back to our regular third week of June conference dates. The conference was mid-June the past two years, and that was hard for our colleagues on the trimester system (especially those in California—this past year's conference coincided with their graduation ceremonies). Going back to the third week of June is not only our historically scheduled week (at least during my 20 years of membership)—always knowing what week SHAFR will take place is really helpful for planning purposes—but it also works better for our trimester system colleagues.

For social events, I'm really up for anything as long as there's good food and a chance to mingle. Probably my favorite social event so far was the BBQ in Kansas.

AT: Any university in Texas! I would like to see everyone come out to Texas A&M. It's a bit remote but inexpensive and we have a great community of diplomatic historians in College Station, as well as the Bush 41 Library.

LT: I appreciate having SHAFR in DC every other year, as I like being able to travel back east and to take advantage of archives in the DC area during my trip. I am open to any future locations for the annual meeting, provided there are ample dining options nearby (specifically vegetarian/vegan dining options) and am looking forward to going on the upcoming trip to Toronto.

CW: I have always enjoyed attending the conference venue in Arlington and hope that SHAFR will continue to hold its annual meeting there every other year. It is easier for international scholars to attend when the conference is held there or in another city on the East Coast. Obviously, when the conference is held in the DC area SHAFR members can stay on for research in the Library of Congress or National Archives and can take advantage of the many cultural opportunities in the capital. I like visiting other cities, but I much prefer it when the conference venue is in a downtown area hotel such as Lexington in 2014 and Philadelphia in 2018. I do not like having to catch buses between downtown hotels and campus venues like San Diego in 2016 and New Orleans in 2022, although I recognize that it makes available more affordable accommodation options on campus. I typically do not attend social events or keynotes and prefer to socialize with my friends and colleagues on the sidelines of the conference.

SZ: The Washington, D.C., conferences tend to draw a significant crowd of scholars. I have found that these conferences enable me to network and meet friends and colleagues very effectively. The proximity to D.C. archives and institutions also eases the burden of explaining to departments and funding agencies why and how this conference trip will be useful.

Airplane tickets are the single largest expense that I have had in attending SHAFR conferences. Especially when I was a graduate student, having a conference venue near a substantial airport with a range of affordable flights was a significant boon.

6. How can we make SHAFR more international—both in scholarship and membership?

JC: This might be worth a roundtable, but there are several issues here. The first is cost—travel is quite expensive now, which deters many international scholars. The second is that, despite its evolution over the years, SHAFR still has a US-centric view of international relations that makes it appear less inclusive than it actually is.

I would suggest that the program committee emphasize formation of a roundtable or two that would include prominent US-based scholars as well scholars from outside the US to model a bit of dialogue on these questions.

KS: I think SHAFR has done a good job of attracting members based in Europe, especially the UK, and recent initiatives like designating a seat on Council for a member from a non-U.S. institution and conference travel funds for international scholars are a step in the right direction. Again, outreach so that scholars working on SHAFR-relevant scholarship who aren't based in the U.S. know about SHAFR and see it as a potential scholarly home would be useful. And while I think SHAFR shouldn't totally abandon the fact that we're an organization focused on American foreign relations, doing more to attract and highlight papers that don't center on Washington, D.C. or Europe at our annual conference would help widen our scope. As much as our field has internationalized in recent years, we still have relatively few panels on Africa, the Middle East, and the Pacific. That said, I think it will be difficult to be a truly global organization in terms of logistics, but continuing internationalization is beneficial.

AT: I am not sure.

LT: Hosting more regular mini-conferences, summer institutes, or symposia abroad, with options for virtual attendance, would be one option. We could also consider a

virtual symposia series that features talks by international scholars. That would give U.S. members the chance to learn from scholars working on U.S. foreign relations in other countries and would create opportunities for international collaboration.

CW: In terms of scholarship there is an argument to be made that in straying too far beyond US foreign relations as an organizing principle SHAFR might lose some of its coherence. I do not think the same is true with regard to membership and it would certainly be helpful from the perspective of diversity, equity, and inclusion if SHAFR could incentivize membership and conference attendance from international scholars, especially those who are from the Global South. SHAFR might consider allocating funds to subsidize conference attendance for this purpose.

SZ: See my suggestions for questions 3 and 4.

Often, language barriers provide substantial burdens to historians seeking truly international archival research. SHAFR's Michael J. Hogan Foreign Language Fellowships are an invaluable tool to promote more multilingual and international research.

7. Do you have any other suggestions for SHAFR's leadership to strengthen or improve the organization?

JC: SHAFR has always been my favourite scholarly organization, and I'm proud of how it has changed over the years. As I became more interested in international environmental questions, I have felt, perhaps incorrectly, that few SHAFR members are interested in such topics, and so I drifted away for a number of years. I guess I would reiterate that I'd love to see SHAFR prioritize environmental questions more—which shouldn't be hard, as everyone in the world is being confronted with the climate crisis.

KS: We live in an increasingly polarized world in which people are dividing into camps based on political ideology—both in the United States and in many countries around the world. Pretty much everything is politicized, and I think that poses some dangers for SHAFR. I think it's important that SHAFR be careful going forward to make sure that we remain open and welcome to all and that we don't end up inadvertently making SHAFR a political or ideological organization rather than a scholarly one. This is not a criticism of SHAFR; it's just a concern about how the wider context in which we operate may make things difficult for us to navigate as an organization. Right now, we have a wide membership that is diverse in so many ways, and we are able to disagree with one another—

sometimes passionately—and still work together and see ourselves as belonging to one scholarly community. Being able to remain a diverse organization in which we can have productive and collegial conversations across difference will be increasingly challenging given the state of the world (and given increasing restrictions on academic freedom in many of the places where our members work), but I think it is necessary for our field, our members, and the long-term health of the organization.

Another issue is that SHAFR's administration has become infinitely more complex, even just in the two decades since I joined, as SHAFR has grown and as the world we operate in has become more complicated. I saw this up close when I served on Council. The SHAFR President and Executive Director have to deal with way more issues in many more areas than in the past (finances, legal issues, digital communications, advocacy statements, managing the demands of a growing membership, public relations, etc.). The workload for these positions—plus for Council, our committees, publications editors, etc.—as grown exponentially. For instance, I can't even imagine how many SHAFR-related emails Amy receives every day. I'm not sure this situation is sustainable. I don't have a solution, but I do worry about burning out our leaders and/or deterring strong future leaders from seeking these roles.

AT: Not at the moment. You all are doing a great job, in my opinion.

LT: We might want to collaborate more closely with other related organizations, such as the Society for History in the Federal Government and the Society for Military History, to see if we can figure out how to advocate for the work of historians in our fields in academia and beyond, and how to better support our graduate students on the job market. We cannot grow as an organization or even sustain our current membership if current graduate students cannot find jobs after they finish their degrees.

CW: I assume that SHAFR is not alone in facing challenges of retaining, engaging, and expanding its membership. I wonder if SHAFR can learn any lessons from other professional organizations, particularly those of a similar size?

SZ: The job materials and teaching workshops provided significant advantages to me as I was preparing to graduate and make my way as a Ph.D. I warmly commend that these workshops be continued (and potentially expanded).



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SHA FR SPOTLIGHTS

My research focuses on U.S.-Latin American relations especially the cultural and social dimensions of these relationships. My book *Borderland on the Isthmus: Race, Culture, and the Struggle for the Canal Zone* was published by Duke University Press in 2015. I have co-authored along with mentors Thomas G. Paterson, J. Garry Clifford and Robert Brigham, *American Foreign Relations: A History, Volumes I and II* (2014). I am currently working on a monograph on U.S. Military-Cuban Relations since 1850 that examines U.S. military activities on the island since the Filibuster invasions of the 1850s all the way the present era with the use of Guantanamo as a holding center for Cuban immigrants and later Al Qaeda suspects. The strongest period of U.S. military influence on the island was obviously from the 1898 invasion until the early 1960s when the Cuban Revolution isolated that presence to the aforementioned base. But I am particularly interested in how the American military in Cuba influenced economic development, infrastructure, gender relations, sports, and popular culture. Besides the U.S. presence at bases, including a number of WWII locales, and port furloughs for decades, the U.S. military intermingled with lots of Cubans, hired them as workers in the tens of thousands, provoked a big sex industry, intermarried with many Cuban women, and introduced two Cuban sports obsessions that continue to this day: baseball and boxing - as well as the lesser-known basketball and body building.



Michael Donoghue

What are your favorite movies/TV shows of all time?

Citizen Kane, The Godfather, La Dolce Vita, Goodfellas, The Wages of Fear, North by Northwest, Bringing Up Baby, Do the Right Thing, The Seven Samurai, Once Upon A Time in the West.

What was your most embarrassing/nerve-wracking/anxiety-producing professional moment?

I once duplicated the Aztec human sacrifice ritual in a Latin American History class. I laid on my back on a table in front of the students while several of them held me down with one moving to cut out my heart out, using a rolled-up magazine as a knife. A janitor saw all this through the glass wall of the classroom and called security shouting: "The students are trying to kill Professor Donoghue!" Police and an ambulance soon arrived with sirens blaring. That was a tough one to explain to the department chair. Fortunately, I was only an adjunct and not a tenure-track professor at the time.

You are exiled to a desert island and can only take five novels. What do you take and why?

I would take *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Robinson Crusoe* (the latter for survival tips, the former for the right mental attitude), Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, which is my favorite novel for its insights into race and human suffering, *Catch -22* for laughs, need some humor alone on a desert island - and a big, blank notebook instead of a fifth novel so I can write my own work of fiction. Since I could be stuck on this island for many years, I will need something creative to do besides fish and hunt reptiles for dinner. No archives on the island I assume, so I can't write an historical monograph. I could also use the biggest, most gigantic bottle of clean drinking water in the world while I'm there, of course.

If you could have dinner with any three historical figures, who would they be and why? Simon Bolivar, Abraham Lincoln, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. For the first gentleman, I'm still confused on all his ideas for the new Latin American republics and why he seemed to give up on popular democracy as a viable political model for the new states. This had a lot of tragic consequences so I would like to get his take on why he moved so decisively in an authoritarian direction in his later years. For Abraham Lincoln, I would like to delve into his complex and evolving notions of slavery, black equality, and the future direction of the American government especially a Reconstructed South. Also, on a more personal level how he dealt with so much disappointment, defeat, and adversity in his life and his whole time in office. My own experience in this area is trivial in comparison but I would like to get some insights into how he drew strength and continued to struggle forward under such arduous circumstances worse than any other U.S. president. With FDR, I get the Triple Crown, not only can I ask him about his own experiences forging through the Depression and World War II but can also quiz him on impressions and insights into Winston Churchill and Josef Stalin, two other titanic figures from that period and what he really thought of them - off the record of course.

What would you do if you won the \$500 million Powerball?

Keep a third for myself, family, friends - and a good-sized donation to my university (endow a chair in my name! The Donoghue Chair for U.S Foreign Relations Studies at Marquette University! Has a nice ring to it). Give the other two-thirds to charities to help sick children and the poor of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Actually, I'll need a lot more than \$500 million for all that!

You have been given an unlimited budget and a time machine to organize a music festival. What bands or solo acts do you invite?

If I had a time machine, I would go back in time to stop the Lincoln, Gandhi, Kennedy (both brothers) and MLK assassinations, Slavery, the Holocaust, the Holodomor, the two World Wars, Armenian genocide, the Crusades... wait, that's way too much to do and far beyond my abilities... On the band question, I would have the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Cream, the Supremes and the Temptations as my headliners, solo acts would include Dylan and Springsteen singing on acoustic guitars, Odetta, Marvin Gaye and Tony Bennett as solo vocalists.

What are five things on your bucket list?

Spend a month in Italy. Spend a weekend in Ireland (having trouble with my liver lately), visit Egypt and parts of the nearby Middle East to view all the great historical sites there, vacation in New Zealand for a few weeks, and take a long sojourn in China.

What would you be doing if you were not an academic?

High rise window washing. I did it for 14 years before I got my PhD. But at my current age and physical condition not sure I could still handle it. Would need that time machine again. Might be better off now working in an archive or a library. On the first floor only. Stairs are getting tough on the knees lately.



Rebecca Herman

I'm an associate professor in the history department at UC Berkeley. My first book, *Cooperating with the Colossus*, was published last year. It's about US military basing in World War II Latin America. My newer research has focused on environmental politics in the 1970s and 80s. In January, I have an article coming out in the journal *Environmental History* that may be of interest to SHAFR folks. It explores the politics of environmental organizing across the North-South divide through a history of Greenpeace International's first office in the so-called developing world, which opened in Buenos Aires in the 1980s. The larger book project that I'm working on currently is about Antarctica.

How did I get interested in history? I was a late bloomer. Besides playfully antagonizing my conservative high school history teacher (I'm not kidding – in the yearbook, my superlative was “Most likely to get into a fight with Mr. Schiel”), I did not particularly enjoy history classes before I went to college. As an undergrad at Duke, I focused on Literature, but I took a number of classes with historian Jolie Olcott that made an impact on me. After college, I moved to Argentina to intern with a human rights organization and was based in Buenos Aires for the next four years, working on various projects. By the time I decided to apply to grad programs in the US, I knew History was the right fit. These days, I live on the edge of San Francisco near the ocean with my husband, two kids, and our dog Obie.

What are your favorite movies/TV shows of all time?

Stressful question. So many options, and I rarely re-watch things I've seen before. I'll cheat and just list some shows that I've enjoyed recently: *Sex Education*, *Broadchurch*, *Alone*, *Peaky Blinders*, and, if you want the honest truth, *Love is Blind*. I said it.

What was your most embarrassing/nerve-wracking/anxiety-producing professional moment?

Confessing, in print, that I watch *Love is Blind*? Just kidding, this one is easy: My first SHAFR council meeting as a graduate student representative. It was bright and early on a Thursday morning. I was excited and a little nervous (Emily Rosenberg might be there!!) but I played it cool when I arrived, helped myself to the breakfast buffet, introduced myself to folks. While making chit chat, I left my bagel unattended in the toaster and it burned, setting off the fire alarm, and prompting an evacuation of the hotel. Picture SHAFR-goers outside at 8am in their pajamas. I heard that the fire department later supplied Peter Hahn with a report including a photograph of the bagel in question. I don't know if that's true, but I can confirm that there were no toasters present at any subsequent SHAFR council meetings that I personally attended.

You are exiled to a desert island and can only take five novels. What do you take and why?

I read a lot of fiction, so this is tough. Maybe I'd take five novels that made a lasting impact on me in one way or another during different points in my life: *The World According to Garp*, *Still Life with Woodpecker*, *Cracking India*, *The English Patient*, and *The Kiss of the Spider Woman*.

If you could have dinner with any three historical figures, who would they be and why?

I never knew any of my grandparents, so I would start with three of them (and I know which three, but I won't say.)

What would you do if you won the \$500 million Powerball?

Pay off a whole lot of debt and put new tires on the minivan. The dream! Then figure out how to do some good with the rest, focusing on climate change mitigation.

You have been given an unlimited budget and a time machine to organize a music festival. What bands or solo acts do you invite?

I would do some sort of rat pack + contemporaries dinner and dancing extravaganza.

What are five things on your bucket list?

I don't really have a bucket list, as you might infer from my answer to the Powerball question. But I would love to walk the Camino de Santiago with my mom, and again with my kids when they're a little older.

What would you be doing if you were not an academic?

Writing novels or reporting.

Since 2005, I have served as Dean of the College of Arts & Letters at the University of North Georgia. I am also a Professor in the Department of History, Anthropology & Philosophy. I came to North Georgia in 2001 when I was hired to be the chair of the Department of History. I received my Ph.D. from Rutgers University while studying under Lloyd Gardner and Warren Kimball.

My tenure as dean has seen tremendous institutional growth and change, especially when North Georgia College & State University consolidated with Gainesville State College in 2013 to become the University of North Georgia. UNG has five campuses and just over 18,000 students and is one of the nation's six senior military colleges. UNG is more like Virginia Tech or Texas A&M than it is Norwich, The Citadel, or VMI insofar as it has many more civilian students than cadets. And no, faculty do not have to wear uniforms when on campus.

I continue to teach a rotation of courses, including Modern Japan, Vietnam, History of the Cold War, and Recent Conflict and American Diplomacy. My research is focused on a topic I am titling *Dragon Ladies: Madame Chiang, Madame Nhu, Imelda Marcos, and America's Fascination with East Asia, 1931-1986*.

My wife, Dr. Anita Nucci, is a Professor of Nutrition Science and Associate Dean of the College of Health Sciences at Georgia State University. We have a dog, Milo, and four cats: Abbie, Dewey, Gracie, and Rocky.



Christopher Jespersen

What are your favorite movies/TV shows of all time?

1. *Memento* (2001) directed by Christopher Nolan. Its handling of (false) memory is genius even if there are issues with the plot. It works so well in introducing students to history and how it can be misused.
2. *Alien* (1979) directed by Ridley Scott. Simply the greatest horror movie ever made, and it holds up beautifully four plus decades later.
3. *Goodfellas* (1990) directed by Martin Scorsese. Scorsese should have won the academy award for best director and best picture. It's his best film.
4. *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) directed by George Miller. No CGI. Stunningly beautiful and exhilarating.
5. *Moneyball* (2011) directed by Bennett Miller. I know, I know. The movie fails to mention the A's pitching staff, but there is no doubt that Billy Beane changed the way baseball is played, and the movie captures its essence so well.
6. *Rashomon* (1950) directed by Akira Kurosawa. There's a reason why people still talk about the Rashomon-effect.
7. *Gojira* (1954) directed by Ishirō Honda. This movie spawned a franchise that continues to deliver nearly 75 years later.
8. *Tampopo* (1985) directed by Jūzō Itami. A hilarious take on Japanese food and culture using the American western as its modality.
9. *The Sopranos* (1999-2007) created by David Chase. The best television show ever created.
10. *The Wire* (2002-2008) created by David Simon. The second best television showed ever created.
11. *Breaking Bad* (2008-2013) created by Vince Gilligan. The third best television show ever created.
12. *Hannibal* (2013-2015) created by Bryan Fuller. As engrossing as *Silence of the Lambs* in its own way. Mads Mikkelsen is brilliant

What was your most embarrassing/nerve-wracking/anxiety-producing professional moment?

This one probably falls under stupid rather than embarrassing. I once interviewed for an administrative position at another institution within the University System of Georgia (of which my current institution is a member). I know the place well. During my interview, I made it a point to say that UNG students were better than those at the institution where I was interviewing. And the search committee had a student representative. Not surprisingly, I was not offered the position.

You are exiled to a desert island and can only take five novels. What do you take and why?

1. Graham Greene, *The Quiet American*. Greene's novel is often listed as one of the 100 greatest novels of all time. It still holds up decades later and works really well in the Vietnam class.
2. John Le Carré, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*. Same as Greene. The writing is concise, and it holds up so well.
3. James Baldwin, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*. I've always liked Baldwin after reading one of his essays.
4. Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon*. Simply put, one of the classics.
5. Kazuo Ishiguro, *An Artist of the Floating World*. The way this novel fits into postwar Japanese culture makes it so rewarding for me since I teach on Japan.

6. Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*. I'm stranded on a desert island. I'm going to need advice.
7. Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*. Again, I'm stranded. On an island. A novel about the creation of a monster seems like a good choice.
8. Alexandre Dumas, *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Exiled, shmexiled. I want to plan my revenge.
9. J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*. If I'm going to be there a long time, I may as well have a long novel to read.

If you could have dinner with any three historical figures, who would they be and why?

1. Anthony Bourdain
2. Julia Child
3. Dean Smith

I'd enjoy meeting the first two to talk about food, wine, and travel. They both seemed to really enjoy experiencing all that life has to offer. As to the third, since I was an undergraduate at Chapel Hill in the early 1980s, I learned that college basketball was a religion unto itself, and no one better exemplified what that could mean for societal good than Dean Smith. Not only was he an innovator as a coach, but he was also a beloved mentor to his players, other coaches, and he was a champion of civil rights.

What would you do if you won the \$500 million Powerball?

Given my age, I'd take the lump sum, which drops the winnings to about \$250 million. After taxes, that'll net approximately \$150-\$160 million. Anita and I have a few home-remodeling projects we'd finish; I'd set up a few trusts for close family members and friends, and then I'd donate the rest to certain charities. But I would set aside enough to ensure that when Anita and I travel, we get to do so in style.

You have been given an unlimited budget and a time machine to organize a music festival. What bands or solo acts do you invite?

I need to separate this one by decades to be comprehensive, so we are looking at a setup that allows for multiple performers over several days.

1. 1950s: Little Richard and Buddy Holly.
2. 1960s: Rolling Stones, Marvin Gaye for me, but I'd have to add the Beatles for Anita.
3. 1970s: Chicago, Fleetwood Mac, Eagles, Steely Dan, Elton John, Supertramp, Dobbie Brothers, Earth, Wind & Fire, Maynard Ferguson, and Pat Metheny Group. This is something of a sweet spot since it's when Anita and I met and came of the age when you really get into music. The first three are for her.
4. 1980s: Michael Jackson, Bruce Springsteen, Madonna, and Prince. Four of the best performers to ever hit the stage.
5. 1990s: Smashing Pumpkins, REM, Tears for Fears, Stone Temple Pilots, They Might Be Giants.
6. 2000s: Foo Fighters, Cousteau, Daft Punk, Gipsy Kings, Green Day, Alicia Keys, Oasis, Scala & Kolacny Brothers.
7. 2010s: Taylor Swift, Beyoncé, The 1975. I know, I know. The lead singer for The 1975 is a jerk, but the latest album is really good, and although I am not a member of the Bee hive or a Swiftie, you cannot deny their talent, and the unbelievable, all-encompassing nature of their shows.

What are five things on your bucket list?

I don't really have a bucket list. I've had the opportunity to travel extensively because of my job, and because of Anita's work as well. We'd like to visit Iceland, and I'd like to go back to New Zealand.

1. Visit Iceland
2. Return to New Zealand
3. Became a better photographer. This one is related to my interest in developing better skills as a photographer.
4. Learn to speak another language fluently. I came reasonably close at one point with German, but I never got over the hump.
5. I went over in my list of movies & television shows, so I'll go under on this one.

What would you be doing if you were not an academic?

I'll go with non-fiction writing. It would allow me to combine my passion for research and writing with getting the opportunity to speak to audiences (assuming I ever wrote anything people would want to read.) In short, I have no interest in being anything other than an academic.

I am a Historian in the Office of the Historian at the U.S. Department of State. (The views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of State or the U.S. Government.) My first book is *Dreams for a Decade: International Nuclear Abolitionism and the End of the Cold War* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2023). My work has also appeared in *Diplomacy & Statecraft* and *The Reagan Moment: America and the World in the 1980s* (Cornell University Press, 2021). My current research focuses on peace activism in the early post-Cold War era.

My family's vacations often included trips to historical sites and museums, so I have been interested in history since I was in elementary school. I was the nerdy kid who wanted to visit a birthplace, home, or library of each of the U.S. presidents. (I have yet to achieve this goal.) I decided to pursue a Ph.D. in history after doing research at the Reagan Library for an undergraduate thesis on the Reykjavik summit of 1986. When I am not doing history, I love to go to the theater, read, watch college basketball, and travel.

What are your favorite movies/TV shows of all time?

Movies – *La La Land*, *The American President*, *Sleepless in Seattle*
TV shows – *Seinfeld*, *The West Wing*, *Gilmore Girls*

What was your most embarrassing/nerve-wracking/anxiety-producing professional moment?

During a campus visit for a job, I missed a step leading into an office, fell in front of several faculty, and sprained my ankle. In a move that I would not recommend or make again, I decided to downplay this injury and tough it out. But my foot swelled up like a grapefruit, which was pretty tricky to hide! Since this incident, I have been firmly committed to wearing flats instead of heels.

You are exiled to a desert island and can only take five novels. What do you take and why?

I have so many novels on my "to read" list that it would be hard to pick just five novels to take! I will say that I have recently gotten into the novels of Amor Towles, which I am already anxious to reread. I am impressed that his three novels are so different and yet each evokes a strong sense of place.

If you could have dinner with any three historical figures, who would they be and why?

I have spent so much of my life reading, thinking, and writing about the end of the Cold War that I would have to say Ronald Reagan, Mikhail Gorbachev, and George H. W. Bush.



Stephanie Freeman

What would you do if you won the \$500 million Powerball?

I would finally become a homeowner! In fact, I would buy houses in Alexandria, my hometown of Jacksonville, Big Sur, and London. I would have Final Four tickets for the rest of my life, and I would travel all around the world. I would also give money to charity and to my alma maters (Vanderbilt and the University of Virginia).

What are five things on your bucket list?

Although I am a planner, I don't have a bucket list! But I would like to travel more and learn to play the ukulele.

What would you be doing if you were not an academic?

I would definitely be a lawyer. In fact, I very nearly went to law school after college. I actually paid a law school tuition deposit and lined up a roommate before deciding to go to graduate school for history instead. I think I made the right choice and love my job as a federal historian.



Kaitlin Findlay

I am Kaitlin Findlay, a doctoral candidate at Cornell University. My dissertation research examines forced displacement, humanitarianism, liberal internationalism, and memory in the mid-twentieth century. I grew up in Ottawa, Canada!

I decided to pursue history when I learned about public history, community engagement, and oral history practice. For me, history is a powerful tool to ground ourselves in the world, understand the roots of contemporary inequality, and imagine alternate futures. I completed my MA History at the University of Victoria, where I also served as Research Coordinator for Landscapes of Injustice, a major public history project that told the story of the dispossession of Japanese Canadians in the 1940s. I have experience in exhibit curation, database creation, and teacher resource design. I have also consulted on public history projects, including the Writing Wrongs online exhibit and the virtual-reality game East of the Rockies. In addition to chapters in the *Landscapes of Injustice* book (2020), I recently published in *The Canadian Historical Review*.

What are your favorite TV shows and movies of all time?

Arrival; *Moonstruck*; *Lost in Translation*; *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*; *Nymphomaniac*; *Another Round*; *Fleabag*; *Sense and Sensibility*; *Bon Cop, Bad Cop*; *Darjeeling Limited*

What was your most embarrassing/nerve-wracking/anxiety producing professional moment?

The first time that I tried to give a presentation without a script, at the British Association for Canadian Studies conference in London (UK). I rehearsed in the streets beforehand, looking like a person talking passionately to themselves about low-level policy meetings (although that is exactly what I was.) Then, it came time to present. I recall captivating the audience less with my words and more with the suspense of whether I was going to fall over. They were on the edge of their seats. My knees jangled as I tried to assemble sentences that vaguely conveyed my research. When it got to the finish, the crowd broke into applause. Afterwards, I asked my fellow panelists if they could tell that I was nervous. "No, of course not," they said at first. "Well," my one kind colleague said, doing an impression, "my favorite part was when you went to scratch the blotch on your neck with your wavering hand." "Oh shush," said my other considerate colleague, "you can just wear a turtleneck next time. Nothing to worry about."

You are exiled to a desert island and can only take five novels. What do you take and why?

The Moons of Jupiter, Alice Munroe (1982) -- Alice Munroe's short stories are each like diamonds of perfection. I've been carrying around this volume since undergrad. I'm from Ontario, so her stories of interpersonal tension and things left unspoken in everyday southern Ontario resonate with me.

The Brothers Karamazov, Fyodor Dostoevsky (1874) -- Presuming that this exile will last a while, this one will come in handy to pre-empt whatever existential crises I'm bound to have. Did you know that there is a 1958 film version of this in which William Shatner plays Alyosha, the youngest brother?

Buddhist Sutras: Volume 1 (Siddhartha Gautama) -- This is meant as a solution, to be read in tandem with, or as a balm to whatever *The Brothers Karamazov* can't help me with. Which is probably a lot. (Thank goodness for collected volumes.)

Too Far to Go: The Marples Stories, John Updike (1979) -- I hope that there are other humans on this island, but if there aren't this collection holds a place dear for me for its lessons of humility and tenderness in our relationships and as we try to work through life.

Motherhood, Sheila Heti (2018) -- Heti has a knack for addressing key topics head on. It's hard to choose between this and *How Should a Person Be?* (2010), but right now I'll choose *Motherhood* because its more open-ended, meditative quality seems conducive for multiple reads on the island. Among other things, it is an exultation of creativity and call to create.

If you could have dinner with any three historical figures, who would they be and why?

Leonard Cohen, Toni Morrison, and James Baldwin. Need I say more??

What would you do if you won the \$500 million Powerball?

I would start a foundation, the Kaitlin Findlay Centre for Inconspicuous Ways to Save the World, and hire staff to help me manage this money. One of our first initiatives would be literacy programming.

You have been given an unlimited budget and a time machine to organize a music festival. What bands or solo acts do you invite?

Here are two starter ideas in lieu of a fully developed schedule (which I'm too tempted to write.) Day 1 – have this first day culminate with Kate Bush and be united by the themes of synths, fog machines, and light shows. I lived for years in Montreal, which has an amazing music scene and where synths and fog machines are ever present. Day 2 – the second night can be organized around a funky baseline and would culminate with David Bowie and then Prince. You could have Nina Simone earlier in the night. There would be dancing afterwards, on both nights, of course.

What are five things on your bucket list?

Casually make a delicious meal without stress; cross-country ski into my 80s; get to an intermediate level at surfing; visit Haida Gwaii; sing in a choir.

What would you be doing if you were not an academic?

I would be living in blissful ignorance of the *Chicago Manual of Style*!

SHAFR Council Fall Budget Meetings
September 6, 2023, via Zoom, 8:00-11:00 a.m. (U.S. Eastern)
October 2, 2023, via Zoom, 10:00-11:00 a.m. (U.S. Eastern)
Part I of Fall SHAFR Council budget meeting

Council members in attendance: Mary Ann Heiss (chair), Laura Belmonte, Megan Black, Emily Conroy-Krutz, Jessica Gienow-Hecht, Gretchen Heefner, Daniel Immerwahr, Mitchell Lerner, Sarah Miller-Davenport, Andrew Preston, Vanessa Walker, Molly Wood, Kelsey Zavelo
Others in attendance: Clelly Johnson, Amy Sayward (ex officio)

Introductory matters

SHAFR President Ann Heiss opened the meeting by pointing to the set of financial decisions that Council needed to tackle to ensure SHAFR's long-term financial stability. She pointed out that she had developed a proposal for Council's consideration but was happy to have members offer their best ideas for how to accomplish cuts before delving into it. There was discussion about reductions that might be made to the annual conference budget, including snacks and AV. There was also discussion about offsetting some of the luncheon costs with higher ticket prices or possibly offering less of a discount on student tickets.

Diplomatic History editorial team renewal discussion:

Council then discussed the *Diplomatic History* (DH) editorship renewal proposal. Council members discussed their hesitancy about non-renewal, despite the costs, especially given the diversity and quality that the editorial team featured. Council stated its desire to support an institution that supported its graduate students and its reluctance to eliminate the graduate-student position at Indiana State University. There were some questions about the figures in the proposal, especially the cost of course releases, which are determined by the institution. Council members also raised questions about the challenges of finding new, quality editors on a relatively short timeline. When questions were raised about lowering the overall cost of the Temple renewal, Heiss reported that she and Sayward had had several meetings with the editorial team leading up to this meeting and that the figures before Council were effectively its final offer. Conversation then shifted to the proposal from Oxford University Press (OUP).

Oxford University Press renewal proposal:

Council discussed the provision in the OUP proposal for print-on-demand for *Diplomatic History* and *Passport*, with SHAFR collectively or individual members paying these costs, which OUP estimated would be \$30/person/year; Mitch Lerner asked for clarification on these numbers, and Sayward said she would seek it. She also stated that she had estimated (for the long-term projections spreadsheet) that about half of the 600 members currently receiving the journal in print might shift to on-line only. Several Council members expressed their strong preference for print copies of the journal but stated that they thought that members, rather than the organization as a whole, should bear those costs.

Daniel Immerwahr moved that Council approve the recommendations from the report by Melvyn Leffler and Nick Cullather that SHAFR seek better financial terms and a three-year renewal of the contract rather than the proposed five; Emily Conroy-Krutz seconded the motion. There was discussion about whether the print-on-demand discussion should be part of the current discussion and vote. At this point, Council voted in favor of the Immerwahr proposal to negotiate better terms and a shorter contract term with OUP by a vote of 11-0-0. Council will consider OUP's response at its next meeting.

Continuation of Diplomatic History editorial team renewal discussion:

Conroy-Krutz then moved to accept the proposal from the *Diplomatic History* editorial team, including retention of the ISU graduate student; Immerwahr seconded the motion. It was pointed out that the projected loss of some \$20,000 or more from the new Oxford contract in addition to the higher cost of renewing the editorial team would mean a net loss of almost \$50,000 for the SHAFR budget. Given this budget shortfall, Council members expressed the desire to first identify where in the budget cuts could be made to offset this significant deficit.

Preliminary discussion of potential budget cuts:

At this point, Heiss returned to her proposed set of cuts to offset the OUP and Temple proposals.

Electronic communications

In regard to the electronic communications line-item, Council members expressed the need for on-going outreach using electronic means and expressed their appreciation for the work already done by the Electronic Communication Co-editors (ECCs). Heiss pointed out that the two-year term had been set by Council when the position was originally established, and Andrew Preston recalled that in that conversation Council created the position as a trial run with no firm targets. There was discussion about the podcasts initiated by the ECCs and their educational value as well as discussion of electronic programming in general. There was general agreement that given SHAFR's straitened financial situation, this was not an initiative that Council could afford to continue. Council discussion shifted to what would happen if the ECCs were not renewed. Sayward explained that she would take up the Twitter responsibilities she had performed before the ECCs had taken up that role. She also explained that responsibility for the website—with the update the ECCs had spearheaded now almost complete—would remain with SHAFR's IT Director.

Awards

In turning to what SHAFR spends for awards, there was general consensus that prizes at the senior level—not fellowships and prizes to assist junior scholars—were a target for cuts. Heiss stated that she was specifically proposing to eliminate the Link-Kuehl Prize for Documentary Editing, as there have been only a small number of nominations in recent years. Sayward pointed out that the cycle of every-other-year awards had had to be adjusted because there were no submissions in one cycle. Belmonte, who had previously chaired this committee, agreed that this prize might no longer reflect the most recent scholarship in the field. Another Council member suggested that one way to trim some other award expenditures could come by shifting some prizes or fellowships into an every-other-year rather than an annual award cycle.

National Coalition for History

Lerner then called for elimination of SHAFR's contribution to and membership in the National Coalition for History (NCH), which currently costs just over \$6,500. Sayward provided an update on SHAFR's relationship with the NCH, stating that our long-time representative, Amy Offner, had been pleased with the work of the declassification subcommittee; Sayward also explained that Tom Zeiler had succeeded Offner and that SHAFR's dues were paid through September 2024.

Continuation of Diplomatic History editorial team renewal discussion

Heiss said that she sensed an emerging consensus that cuts could be made to the general budget and asked Council if it was ready to return to the Temple renewal process, which needed to be settled at this meeting. Sayward reiterated the motion made earlier by Conroy-Krutz and seconded by Immerwahr to accept the editorial team renewal terms. Council's vote on this motion was 9-2-0.

Continuation of discussion of potential budget cuts

Heiss then asked about other budget cuts that Council wished to discuss, for example, her proposal that the Passport editorial staff should manage their own copy-editing rather than outsourcing that task.

Electronic communications

Heiss also stated that Council could circle back to make a decision about electronic communications. Immerwahr moved to strike the electronic communication budget, which was seconded by Gretchen Heefner. There was further discussion of the value of the work conducted by the ECCs and the continuing need to expand SHAFR's reach, but there was reluctant consensus that SHAFR could not afford to continue paying ECCs for this work. Council then voted on the motion to strike the electronic communications budget line item, which passed 10-0-1. Heiss expressed her regret that such cuts had become necessary.

National Coalition for History

Lerner then moved to cut SHAFR's funding for/membership in NCH, which was seconded by Belmonte. Preston agreed that this cut should be made. Belmonte asked about the status of what had been relatively regular meetings between the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and historical organizations, including SHAFR. Heiss and Sayward stated that they had not seen any effort to schedule a meeting lately, which Belmonte pointed out was after the confirmation of the new Archivist of the United States. Preston suggested Offner and Zeiler be consulted before the January meeting to assess this decision. Council supported the motion to end SHAFR's membership in NCH by a vote of 11-0-0.

2026 conference proposal

Sayward asked for Council's reaction to the proposal from the Blackwell Inn for the Columbus conference, with room rentals and service charges that make the costs equivalent to a conference at the Arlington Renaissance. Heiss wondered if it might be possible to utilize classroom space for breakouts and/or to seek a reduced price for the room rentals. Sayward pointed out that being in separate buildings can be confusing for conference participants and might accrue additional transportation costs. Lerner indicated that he thought it might be possible to identify alternative spaces.

Awards

Heiss indicated her interest in reducing some of the awards that did not benefit graduate students and junior scholars, and there was reiteration of the earlier discussion about eliminating the Link-Kuehl Prize. Heiss explained the "clickable" citations for award winners on the webpage of the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic (SHEAR), which may be an additional way to lend prestige to SHAFR awards beyond cash prizes.

Conference social events

Lerner then shifted the discussion to social events at the annual conference, pointing out that Sayward had cut those in the long-term projections for the 2025, 2026, and 2027 conferences. He thought that merited further discussion. Council members expressed the value of the social event and discussed alternative ways to raise additional funds to cover the cost. Sayward pointed out that Conference Coordinator Kaete O'Connell's report had noted that a less expensive social event could well be possible. Council suggested that a budget of \$8-10,000 might provide a sufficient amount for a nice social event. There was also discussion of cutting alcohol from the welcome reception budget, which also included the cost of hiring bartenders. Kelsey Zavelo added that she thought that the social event and welcome reception were especially valuable to graduate students.

Executive director stipend

Lerner then shifted to a conversation about the cost of the executive director position and proposed a reduction of \$5,000. Sayward said that she supported this proposal and had already proposed (per the agenda) to donate the \$5,000 raise that she had earlier received to fund the transition in the coming fiscal year that was called for in the job ad for the position. Heiss agreed that the base rate for the new executive director, who will—by definition—have less experience, should be less than the current rate. Lerner also stated that he thought additional savings could be found in the current budget that can bring the budget into balance that he would work with Sayward on following the meeting.

2027 conference

Belmonte discussed a recommendation she had made previously to the Ways & Means Committee of SHAFR hosting a biannual meeting rather than having a conference every year. Preston noted that having the conference in DC was especially valuable for international scholars, as they could combine the conference with research. Lerner suggested canceling SHAFR's contract with the Arlington Renaissance for the 2027 conference, and Sayward pointed out the contractual ramifications of doing so. Belmonte talked about Virginia Tech's Innovation Campus, which she had recently toured. It has its own Metro stop and would have all of the conference facilities (but not housing) that SHAFR would need for the annual conference. It was agreed that this might be something to consider for the 2027 conference, but a decision to cancel the 2025 conference would have to be made by December, which would be before the Innovation Campus opens. Lerner agreed that the Innovation Campus might be a good alternative for the 2027 conference, but SHAFR would need to understand the costs of a conference there before making a decision.

Non-budgetary business items

As the time for the meeting was nearing expiration, Sayward asked Council to look at the additional non-budgetary business items (renewal of the conference coordinator, updating of Myrna Bernath award language, acknowledgment of the approval of the June 2023 Council minutes, and Passport editorial board replacements), to see if there was any substantive discussion about these issues. Lerner stated he was in favor of each of the non-budgetary business items and moved that not only the Myrna Bernath prize information but all of the gendered (he/she) language in the by-laws be changed. Sayward welcomed the suggestion and said she could provide a set of revisions that Council could approve before June that would go onto next year's ballot for approval by the membership. Immerwahr seconded Lerner's motion, which was passed 10-0-0.

Endowment draw

Sayward then requested a vote from Council on the Ways & Means Committee proposal that the organization increase the endowment draw from "up to 3% annually" to "up to 4% annually" of the three-year rolling average of the endowment. The motion passed 9-0-1.

Agenda for second part of the meeting

Discussion moved to the agenda of the next meeting, which will include the response of OUP to Council's counter-proposal (and either acceptance of OUP's response or opening the bidding process to all presses) as well as a final budget for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, which will begin on November 1st. Sayward said she would also provide revised estimates of the conference expenses based on reducing/cutting snacks and at least projectors and screens from the AV costs as well as other suggestions that surfaced during the Council discussion. Sayward reminded Council that their terms end on December 31st but the presidency changes hands on November 1st.

The meeting adjourned at 11 a.m. Eastern.

Part II of Fall SHAFR Council budget meetings

Council members in attendance: Mary Ann Heiss (chair), Laura Belmonte, Megan Black, Emily Conroy-Krutz, Gretchen Heefner, Daniel Immerwahr, Mitch Lerner, Sarah Miller-Davenport, Andrew Preston, Vanessa Walker, Molly Wood, Kelsey Zavelo
Others in attendance: Amy Sayward (ex officio)

Passport Copy-Editing:

After welcoming everyone to the meeting, SHAFR President Ann Heiss provided context for the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with a new copy-editor for *Passport*. Andrew Johns, *Passport* editor, had reported to Heiss and Executive Director Amy Sayward that the long-time copy-editor was retiring; approval of this MOA would ensure continuity of operations for *Passport*. Heiss moved to approve, Molly Wood seconded, and Council approved unanimously, 11-0-0.

Trimming Expenses:

Given Mitch Lerner's proposal to reduce the Council travel budget, there was a discussion about whether subsidizing Council travel was needed any longer, given the move to Zoom meetings that Council had approved previously. Heiss recalled from a previous Council discussion the expressed need for Council members to interact regularly with the membership, especially the graduate student members and teaching-centered member. Lerner stated that he believed that \$7,000 was sufficient to cover all reasonable needs. Daniel Immerwahr moved to approve Lerner's proposal, Vanessa Walker seconded the motion, and it was approved 11-0-0.

Council also moved to cut the budget for support services for the Executive Director to \$4,000, another proposal from Lerner. Immerwahr moved the proposal, Kelsey Zavelo seconded, and Council approved 11-0-0.

Other matters:

Emily Conroy-Krutz, co-chair of the Development Committee, discussed some suggested fundraising initiatives. Council discussed affirmation of the electronic approval of the minutes and requested some additional revisions to those minutes as well as integrating them with the minutes of this meeting, as the two were essentially the same meeting about budget issues. Sayward agreed to make these changes.

Oxford University Press Contract Proposal:

After a brief discussion of Oxford University Press' response to Council's counter-proposal, Laura Belmonte moved to approve the offer, Andrew Preston seconded, and Council approved 10-0-1.

Heiss then shifted to the question of pay-for-print options. She summarized Sayward's suggestions, which were followed by a conversation of the by-law requirement for providing members with a "copy" of its publications without additional cost. Council members pointed out that the language of the by-laws does not specify a hard or digital copy. However, there was a stated preference for providing members with at least a year-long transition, judging members' preference for a print copy and providing an option to "opt-in" to continuing print issues. Heiss clarified that a final decision was not required ahead of the next, regularly scheduled Council meeting in January. It was pointed out that electronic access to issues would potentially end if a person did not continue their SHAFR membership. Sayward added that she had clarified that Oxford's estimation was of \$30 per volume of *Diplomatic History*, and she was still awaiting clarification on whether that included *Passport* issues. She also ensured that Council's vote to approve the proposal included empowering the President, with guidance from SHAFR's legal counsel, to move toward a final contract, which Council averred. In answer to a question, Sayward also explained that she had included the lower income projections from OUP on the long-term projections spreadsheet to hedge against the possibility that OUP's projections were overly optimistic.

Conference cost savings:

Heiss turned to the cost of the proposed 2026 SHAFR Conference at Ohio State's Blackwell Conference Center. Sayward observed that the costs were on par with the Arlington Renaissance costs. She said she would liaise with Peter Hahn of the Local Arrangements Committee to discuss ways to save money, including—for example—shifting away from the Blackwell for the Saturday break-out sessions, although this might cause logistical challenges.

Turning to conference costs, Sayward noted that abandoning the use of AV and microphones at the Arlington Renaissance conference in 2025 would largely solve the projected budget shortfall for that year, saving some \$30,000. She pointed out that she had inquired specifically about the cost of the breaks, because of Council's pointing that out at its last meeting, but an entire day of snacks and coffee packaged for a day were \$6,000. There was general assent from Council about cutting AV but keeping the snacks and coffee. Sayward then noted O'Connell's suggestion of combining the social event and welcome event offsite in a way that would significantly reduce costs but not affect the contractual Food and Beverage minimum. This would not preclude additional, no-cost social options, such as a baseball game or arranging for group dinners. Heiss noted the shocking increase in just the price of a podium. Given Council's assent to these suggestions, Sayward said she would have O'Connell begin planning in these directions. Lerner raised the question about whether he might liaise with the Arlington Renaissance team to see if additional pressure could allow the organization to amend or possibly cancel its 2027 contract. Council members agreed that the financial practices being implemented by the Arlington Renaissance are a growing concern. There was discussion about alternative conference sites and general agreement that Lerner should do his best to promote SHAFR's financial interests.

Approval of budget reports:

Council discussion then shifted to the updated budget for the upcoming fiscal year (FY2023-2024) that incorporated the cuts that Council had approved in the first part of this meeting and that brought the budget generally into balance. Lerner moved to approve, Belmonte seconded, and Council approved by a vote of 11-0-0. Sayward then directed Council's attention to the long-term financial projections report, which included Council's changes as well as the proposed conference savings to bring SHAFR's long-term projected budgets generally into balance as well.

Concluding matters:

Heiss offered her heart-felt thanks especially to those Council members who were rotating off after this meeting: Emily Conroy-Krutz, Daniel Immerwahr, Shaun Armstead, and Andrew Preston. She commended them for adding immensely to the Council conversations over the years, evidencing their hard work and dedication. Heiss offered her personal thanks to each of them.

Sayward reported that the election results would be posted soon, and then planning for the January Council meeting would begin. The meeting ended 3 minutes early! Belmonte motioned to adjourn, Lerner seconded, and Council voted 11-0-0.



Professional Notes

Kelly Shannon will be the W. Glenn Campbell and Rita Ricardo-Campbell National Fellow at the Hoover Institution during the 2023-2024 academic year.



Recent Books of Interest

Aleinikoff, T. Alexander and Alexandra Délano Alonso, eds. *New Narratives on the Peopling of America: Immigration, Race, and Dispossession*. (John Hopkins, 2024).

Allen, Thomas B. *1789: George Washington and the Founders Create America*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2023).

Anderson, Grey, ed. *Natopolitanism: The Atlantic Alliance since the Cold War*. (Verso Books, 2023).

Barbier, Brooke. *King Hancock: The Radical Influence of a Moderate Founding Father*. (Harvard, 2023).

Bellamy, Alex J. *Warmonger: Vladimir Putin's Imperial Wars*. (Columbia, 2023).

Beltrán, Héctor. *Code Work: Hacking Across the US /México Techno Borderlands*. (Princeton, 2023).

Ben-Ur, Aviva and Wim Klooster. *Jewish Entanglements in the Atlantic World*. (Cornell, 2024).

Bodnar, John. *Divided by Terror: American Patriotism after 9/11*. (UNC, 2024).

Bollard, Alan. *Economists in the Cold War: How a Handful of Economists Fought the Battle of Ideas*. (Oxford, 2023).

Boulton, Mark and Tobias T. Gibson. *Red Reckoning: The Cold War and the Transformation of American Life*. (LSU, 2023).

Boutelle, R.J. *The Race for America: Black Internationalism in the Age of Manifest Destiny*. (UNC, 2023).

Brooks, Emily. *Gotham's War within a War: Policing and the Birth of Law-and-Order Liberalism in World War II-New York City*. (UNC, 2023).

Brown, Martin D., Ronald J. Granieri, and Muriel Blaive, eds. *The Bondian Cold War: The Transnational Legacy of a Cultural Icon*. (Routledge, 2024).

Buchanan, Andrew N. *From World War to Postwar: Revolution, Cold War, Decolonization, and the Rise of American Hegemony, 1943-1958*. (Bloomsbury, 2023).

Bukovansky, Mlada, Edward Keene, Christian Reus-Smit, and Maja Spanu, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of History and International Relations*. (Oxford, 2023).

Catsam, Derek Charles. *Don't Stick to Sports: The American Athlete's Fight against Injustice*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2023).

Chadwick, Andrew Lewis. *Part-Time Soldiers: Reserve Readiness Challenges in Modern Military History*. (Kansas, 2023).

Copeland, Dale C. *A World Safe for Commerce: American Foreign Policy from the Revolution to the Rise of China*. (Princeton, 2024).

Cothran, Boyd and Adrian Shubert. *The Edwin Fox: How an Ordinary Sailing Ship Connected the World in the Age of Globalization 1850-1914*. (UNC, 2023).

Cuhaj, Joe. *Everyone's Gone to the Moon: July 1969, Life on Earth, and the Epic Voyage of Apollo 11*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2023).

De Leon, Adrian. *Bundon: A Hinterland History of Filipino America*. (UNC, 2023).

- Doddington, David Stefan. *Old Age and American Slavery*. (Cambridge, 2023).
- Downs, Jim. *Maladies of Empire: How Colonialism, Slavery, and War Transformed Medicine*. (Harvard, 2023).
- Eddy, Beverley Driver. *The Psycho Boys: How a Unit of Refugees, Artists, and Professors Fought Back Against the Third Reich*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2023).
- Engel, Jeffrey A., Mark Atwood Lawrence, and Andrew Preston. *America in the World: A History in Documents, Revised and Updated*. (Princeton, 2023).
- Fazzi, Dario. *Smoke on the Water: Incineration at Sea and the Birth of the Transatlantic Environment Movement*. (Columbia, 2023).
- Fazio, Daniel. *Korea and the Evolution of the American-Australian Relationship, 1947–53: Aligning Interests*. (Routledge, 2024).
- Fichter, James R. *Tea: Consumption, Politics, and Revolution, 1773-1776*. (Cornell, 2023).
- Fields, David P. and Mitchell B. Lerner, eds. *Divided America, Divided Korea: The US and Korea During and After the Trump Years*. (Cambridge, 2023).
- Fitzgerald, David. *Uncertain Warriors: The United States Army Between the Cold War and the War on Terror*. (Cambridge, 2023).
- Friedman, Jeffrey A. *The Commander-in-Chief Test: Public Opinion and the Politics of Image-Making in US Foreign Policy*. (Cornell, 2023).
- Greenwood, John T., ed. *John J. Pershing and the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I, 1917-1919*. (Kentucky, 2023).
- Griffith, Luke. *Unraveling the Gray Area Problem: The United States and the INF Treaty*. (Cornell, 2023).
- Godine, Amy. *The Black Woods: Pursuing Racial Justice on the Adirondack Frontier*. (Cornell, 2023).
- Goldgeier, James and Tamara Cofman Wittes. *Foreign Policy Careers for PhDs: A Practical Guide to a World of Possibilities*. (Georgetown, 2023).
- Harland-Jacobs, Jessica L., Jan C. Jansen, Elizabeth Mancke, eds. *The Fraternal Atlantic, 1770–1930: Race, Revolution, and Transnationalism in the Worlds of Freemasonry*. (Routledge, 2023).
- Hill, Matthew Alan. *The Rise and Fall of Democracy Promotion in US Foreign Policy: From Carter to Biden*. (Routledge, 2023).
- Hoyt, Edwin P. and Rear Admiral E. M. Eller. *How They Won the War in the Pacific: Nimitz and His Admirals*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2023).
- Irwin, Julia F. *Catastrophic Diplomacy: U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance in the American Century*. (UNC, 2024).
- James, Harold. *Seven Crashes: The Economic Crises That Shaped Globalization*. (Yale, 2023).
- Jones, Jennifer Dominique. *Ambivalent Affinities: A Political History of Blackness and Homosexuality after World War II*. (UNC, 2024).
- Kalic, Sean N. and Ethan S. Rafuse. *US Presidents During Wartime: A History of Leadership*. (Bloomsbury, 2023).
- Karlsson, Håkan and Tomás Diez Acosta. *The Policy of the Ford Administration Toward Cuba: Carrot and Stick*. (Routledge, 2023).
- Kaszeta, Dan. *The Forest Brotherhood: Baltic Resistance Against the Nazis and Soviets*. (Oxford, 2023).
- Kenyon, David. *Arctic Convoys: Bletchley Park and the War for the Seas*. (Yale, 2023).
- Keyes, Geoffrey. Edited by James W. Holsinger Jr. *Patton's Tactician: The War Diary of Lieutenant General Geoffrey Keyes*. (Kentucky, 2024).
- Kirschenbaum, Lisa A. *Soviet Adventures in the Land of Capitalists: Ilf and Petrov's American Road Trip*. (Cambridge, 2024).
- Kott, Sandrine. Translated by Arby Gharibian. *A World More Equal: An Internationalist Perspective*. (Columbia, 2024).
- Kuzmarov, Jeremy. *Warmonger: How Clinton's Malign Foreign Policy Launched the US Trajectory from Bush II to Biden*. (Clarity Press, 2023).
- Lawrence, Mark Atwood and Mark K. Updegrove. *LBJ's America: The Life and Legacies of Lyndon Baines Johnson*. (Cambridge, 2023).
- Li, Hongshan. *Fighting on the Cultural Front: U.S.-China Relations in the Cold War*. (Columbia, 2024).
- Lindorff, Dave. *Spy for No Country: The Story of Ted Hall, the Teenage Atomic Spy Who May Have Saved the World*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2023).
- Link, Stefan J. *Forging Global Fordism: Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, and the Contest over the Industrial Order*. (Princeton, 2023)

Lloyd, Keith Warren. *Dark Nights, Deadly Waters: American PT Boats at Guadalcanal*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2023).

Loiselle, Aimee. *Beyond Norma Rae: How Puerto Rican and Southern White Women Fought for a Place in the American Working Class*. (UNC, 2023).

Luttwak, Edward N. and Eitan Shamir. *The Art of Military Innovation: Lessons from the Israel Defense Forces*. (Harvard, 2023).

Mann, Michael, *On Wars*. (Yale, 2023).

Matthews, Jeffrey J. *Generals and Admirals, Criminals and Crooks: Dishonorable Leadership in the U.S. Military*. (Notre Dame, 2023).

McCarthy, Tom, ed. *Great American War*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2023).

McCoy, Cameron D. *Contested Valor: African American Marines in the Age of Power, Protest, and Tokenism*. (Kansas, 2023).

McKevitt, Andrew C. *Gun Country: Gun Capitalism, Culture & Control in Cold War America*. (UNC, 2023).

Milanovic, Branko. *Visions of Inequality: From the French Revolution to the End of the Cold War*. (Harvard, 2023).

Mundy, Liza. *The Sisterhood: The Secret History of Women in the CIA*. (Crown, 2023).

Nance, William Stuart. *Commanding Professionalism: Simpson, Moore, and the Ninth US Army*. (Kentucky, 2023).

Neiberg, Michael S. *When France Fell: The Vichy Crisis and the Fate of the Anglo-American Alliance*. (Harvard, 2023).

Parker, Thomas R. *American Presidents in Diplomacy and War: Statecraft, Foreign Policy, and Leadership*. (Notre Dame, 2023).

Parks, Thomas. *Southeast Asia's Multipolar Future: Averting a New Cold War*. (Bloomberg, 2023).

Parrish, John M. *Watergate, 1973-1974*. (UNC, 2023).

Reeder, Tyson, ed. *The Routledge History of U.S. Foreign Relations*. (Routledge, 2023).

Reynolds, E. Wesley. *Coffeehouse Culture in the Atlantic World, 1650-1789*. (Bloomsbury, 2023).

Richards, David A. J. *Revolution and Constitutionalism in Britain and the United States: Burke and Madison and Their Contemporary Legacies*. (Routledge, 2023).

Rosenfeld, Gavriel D. and Janet Ward, eds. *Fascism in America: Past and Present*. (Cambridge, 2023).

Slaughter, Joseph P. *Faith in Markets: Christian Capitalism in the Early American Republic*. (Columbia, 2023).

Stoker, Donald. *Purpose and Power: US Grand Strategy from the Revolutionary Era to the Present*. (Cambridge, 2024).

Stout, Mark. *World War I and the Foundations of American Intelligence*. (Kansas, 2023).

Tournès, Ludovic. *Philanthropic Foundations at the League of Nations: An Americanized League?* (Routledge, 2023).

Truxal, Luke W. *Uniting Against the Reich: The American Air War in Europe*. (Kentucky, 2023).

Tyszkiewicz, Jakub. *The Open Window into the Soviet Bloc: US Policy toward Poland, 1956–1968*. (Routledge, 2023).

Warren Jr., Jack D—with the American Revolution Institute of the Society of Cincinnati. *Freedom: The Enduring Importance of the American Revolution*. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2023).

Whiting, Colin M. and Nikos D. Kontogiannis. *Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 77*. (Harvard, 2023).

Willrich, Michael. *American Anarchy: The Epic Struggle between Immigrant Radicals and the US Government at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century*. (Basic Books, 2023).

Wood, Kirsten E. *Accommodating the Republic: Taverns in the Early United States*. UNC, 2023).

Zander, Cecily N. *The Army Under Fire: The Politics of Antimilitarism in the Civil War Era*. (LSU, 2024).



DISPATCHES

Errata: In the September 2023 issue of *Passport*, Xiaochen Zhu's name was misspelled in the author credit of the "Last Word" column he co-wrote with Jacob Forward on page 106. *Passport* apologizes for the error.

2023 Samuel Flagg Bemis Dissertation Research Grant Final Report Kaitlin A. Simpson, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Thanks to funding from the 2023 Samuel Flagg Bemis Dissertation Research Grant, I was able to spend eleven weeks in the summer conducting research in Bogotá and Mosquera, Colombia for my dissertation, "The Flowers of El Dorado: Gender, Production, and the Cut Flower Industry in Colombia and the United States." While in Colombia, I spent a month and a half in the capital city where I visited the Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia, the Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango, and the Biblioteca Agropecuaria de Colombia. Through the kindness, help, and patience of the many archivists and librarians I met, I was able to find newspaper sources, government reports, and journals that discussed the growing importance of cut flower production within the nation's export economy and the impact of commercial floriculture on local communities within the Sabana de Bogotá – the highland plateau on which the capital sits and where most cut flowers are grown. These sources included reports on how commercial floriculture altered traditional family structures on the Sabana, fights over water usage between growers and local Sabana residents, the difficulties and successes of labor unionization, and conflict over flower production between U.S. and Colombian growers.

For the final month of my trip, I had the opportunity to travel to Mosquera, Colombia and other small Sabana communities including Funza, Madrid, and Zipaquirá. While there, I was able to visit local municipal libraries to learn more about the local histories of these communities and their relationship with the flower farms. I also got to see several farms, even though the secretive nature of the industry meant that I could not tour the farms directly. I was, however, able to speak with some small-scale growers and learn their thoughts about the commercial floriculture industry and how it connects small Colombian towns with flower consumers in the United States. This time spent on the Sabana allowed me to see and experience firsthand how flower farms relate to and situate themselves within and across their local communities and a global commodity system.

Overall, this research trip to Bogotá, Mosquera, and the wider Sabana de Bogotá region gave me the chance to collect the remaining Colombian sources needed to complete my dissertation on the interconnected Colombian and U.S. cut flower industries. I am grateful to SHAFR for this opportunity and their support of my research.

The Last Word: Let's Talk About Class

Ilaria Scaglia

In discussions about diversity within SHAFR and in the historical profession at large, we rarely mention financial issues. Of the three classic categories of historical analysis—gender, race, and class—the third has received the least amount of attention. While women in SHAFR have made progress in recent years, and while the presence of non-white scholars has been slowly—if too slowly—increasing, discussions about class remain taboo, perhaps the last vestige of a traditional etiquette that deems it rude to talk about money.

Examples of such reticence are everywhere. We read and peer-review each other's articles and books, but we seldom dare to speak openly about the debts we have accrued. We don't discuss the struggle of being or having a trailing spouse, often at a reduced income; or the improbable arrangements we have in place to balance work and caring responsibilities both for children and parents, often at the same time and on a shoestring; or the fact that even if we have what might be seen as a good job, we still struggle and thus wish to share accommodation at the Arlington Renaissance or to take the dorm room at Tulane because we can really use the extra money. Crucially, we don't dare to allude to the scores of colleagues or friends who have left academia because they could not afford to remain in it. Indeed, we seldom talk about those economic factors that either prevent us from thriving in our profession or that enable us to excel in it, for instance by hiring research assistants, editors, and/or other forms of help by using private funds.

Meanwhile, with few exceptions, on both sides of the ocean and in all types of institutions and contracts, academia is in crisis. To be sure, some issues are intersectional. For instance, women are disproportionately the ones to pay the price. Leaving pay-gap issues aside, academia is still designed around people of means with partners willing to follow them, and most of these people are men. But there are people of all genders who make tremendous financial and personal sacrifices for their career, yet we seldom dare to talk about them. For this group, academic life means pinching pennies, and losing a job after a costly education equates to financial ruin. Their CVs omit what each line meant from a financial and a personal point of view; critically, they do not list the items that are missing simply because they could not afford to make them happen.

Organizations like ours do not have either the mission or the power to eliminate this disparity. Still, SHAFR can do much to mitigate its effects in order to sustain historians of American foreign relations from all classes. In fact, it has already taken some important steps by establishing a fee structure that takes income into account, by offering graduate students the option of working to offset registration expenses, and by creating a position on the SHAFR Council for teaching-only fellows who are often—

though not always—paid less. At recent meetings, it has also provided catered spreads that enabled participants to avoid costly restaurant meals if they wished.

But SHAFR can choose to do even more. It can make providing affordable accommodation at all of its annual meetings a priority. It can divert income streams currently devoted to expensive AV setups and instead offer additional travel grants to scholars at all stages of their careers who might not otherwise be able to attend, or it can fundraise specifically to increase their chances of attending. It can also consider supporting other activities needed to make scholarship happen. For example, SHAFR could lobby major archival repositories to negotiate lower prices for nearby accommodations to make research stays less costly, particularly for users who pay for them out of their own pockets.

During this time of unprecedented cuts to the humanities and to history departments in particular, SHAFR can work with other organizations to discuss the impact that these cuts are having on the demographics of our discipline. To be sure, there are important distinctions to be made among various states and countries, and what kind of research or teaching contract people have makes a tremendous difference. Does healthcare depend on that contract, or not? Can employees be members of a union? Is maternity leave available? Is there free childcare?

Upon deeper reflection, though, I believe these differences can sometimes be exaggerated and end up fragmenting a profession that should instead be united in fighting for its integrity, protection, and diversity, not only in terms of race and gender but also in terms of class. The bottom line is that everywhere, people without independent financial means are most likely to abandon the profession, leaving the historical discipline poorer as a result.

Decades of scholarship have shown how people of all classes have both affected—and been affected by—foreign relations. SHAFR can work with other organisations to ensure all its members' voices are represented. A first step might be to create a taskforce to connect professional organisations across borders to discuss what can be done. Sharing American experiences of activism with the lobbying work of British associations such as the Royal Historical Society or the British Academy, for instance, might benefit colleagues on both sides of the Atlantic.

At the very least, a strong public effort would convey to historians of all classes the message that they matter. People of other underrepresented groups would most likely profit as well. Fully developed and sustained, such an initiative would allow academia and the historical discipline to make a case for their own existence and serve most effectively their purpose of engaging with democratic societies for the benefit of all.

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