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Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier. *America Between the Wars: From 11/9 to 9/11: The Misunderstood Years Between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Start of the War on Terror.* New York: Public Affairs, 2008. ISBN: 9781586484965 (hardcover).

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Reviewers: Matthew Dallek, David Greenberg, Nicholas Guyatt, Robert Jervis, Elizabeth Spalding

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Introduction by Thomas Maddux, California State University, Northridge

The recent roundtable on Hal Brands' *From Berlin to Baghdad: America's Search for Purpose in the Post-Cold War World* provides a good introduction to Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier's study as well as a base for comparison of these two important studies of contemporary U.S. foreign policy. The authors are primarily limited to published sources, and online or National Security Archive document collections. Brands cites some documents from the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, and Goldgeier and Chollet make extensive use of interviews of U.S. diplomats and important liberal and conservative foreign policy advocates. The authors evaluate the three presidents and their advisers, although Brands extends his assessment of George Bush into 2006 whereas Goldgeier and Chollet focus on Bush's initial views on foreign policy and the impact of September 11th on him as well as the extension of Bush's "War on Terror" to Iraq in 2003. The authors also advance somewhat similar views on the degree of success or lack thereof that George H.W. Bush, William Clinton, and George W. Bush experienced. They agree the most in their assessments of the first Bush presidency with emphasis on the cautious response of Bush, Secretary of State James Baker and other advisers in dealing with the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the almost immediate outbreak of challenging situations in the Balkans, Somalia, and Haiti. There is less agreement in their evaluations of the performance of Clinton and George W. Bush, although they are critical of both with respect to their policies and implementation.

The biggest difference between the two books resides in the authors' orientation. Brands approaches the 1990s and "War on Terror" from the perspective of strategy. He focuses on the efforts of the three presidents to develop a coherent strategy to replace Cold War containment, a strategy that not only addresses the post-Cold War challenges but also maintains Congressional and public support for U.S. global leadership. Goldgeier and Chollet don't omit the issue of strategy and the efforts of the presidents to articulate a persuasive "bumper-sticker" slogan to sell their strategy. Their main focus, however, is on whether or not September 11th brought a transformation in the challenges faced by U.S. leaders and how skillfully the presidents and their advisers before 9/11 addressed the problems emerging out of the end of the Cold War: "combating extremist forces determined to spread terror, responding to the violent breakdown of states, stemming the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, managing the economy in an era of dramatic technological revolution, and choosing when to send young American soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines to fight." (xi)

Chollet and Goldgeier provide a challenging narrative that explores in more depth than Brands the shifting perspectives of foreign policy advisers, as well as the efforts of both Democrats and Republicans, liberals, conservatives, and neoconservatives, to adjust their Cold War mentalities to the new international environment, its opportunities and challenges, and to articulate strategies and policies that would achieve public support and success on the international level. The reviewers note a number of strengths in their study and also raise significant questions about their assessments as follows:

1.) The reviewers approve, with some reservations, the authors' general thesis on the existence of the major post-9/11 challenges in the post-Cold War period. Elizabeth Spalding, for example, suggests that some of the threats emphasized by Chollet and Goldgeier existed during the Cold War, some developed in the 1970s, and "9/11 both fundamentally changed some aspects of the post-Cold War era and intensified other characteristics." (3) Problems related indirectly and directly to Iraq can be traced back into the Cold War (as discussed by Lloyd C. Gardner in *The Long Road to Baghdad: A History of U.S. Foreign Policy from the 1970s to the Present*, the focus of a forthcoming H-Diplo roundtable).

2.) Several reviewers suggest that Chollet and Goldgeier could have placed the challenges of the period into a broader framework or a perspective on the continuities running through the period. Nicholas Guyatt suggests that "U.S. policymakers pursued two major goals in the 1990s: a neoliberal economic regime that could be exported throughout the world, and an international political order that would enable the United States to project its considerable power...." (1) Robert Jervis takes a different approach turning to a discussion of the authors' emphasis on the "continuing divisions between and within the Democratic and Republican parties. The essential question of the goals and instruments for American policy were never resolved in the 1990s, and despite the seeming clarity brought by 9/11 and Bush's response to it, the multiple and messy lines of division remain...." Jervis considers the dual focus of the book a major asset because the authors "pay almost as much attention to what critics are saying as to what the administration in power is doing because the people and ideas out of power represent important forces that affect policy." (2) Jervis effectively notes the continuities that the authors explore, such as the similarities between Clinton's policies after 1996 and Bush's policies before and after 9/11, the lack of public attentiveness and concern about foreign policy which, in the face of "domestic opposition and Congressional recalcitrance", led to "exaggerated rhetoric and unrealistic promises." Jervis also notes a continuity in the issues that divided Americans through the period including national sovereignty versus human rights, nuclear proliferation, globalization and the importance of non-state actors.

3.) George H.W. Bush receives approval for his caution about moving from the liberation of Kuwait to overthrowing Saddam Hussein, but the authors note that Bush initiated the U.S. involvement with Bosnia, Somalia, and Iraq and would have faced the same challenges as Clinton in these areas. Chollet and Goldgeier's assessment of Clinton's performance stimulates some disagreement among the reviewers. Matthew Dallek and David Greenberg agree with the assessment that Clinton had a shaky start on foreign policy, which reflected his desire to focus on domestic issues, his lack of experience and confidence, but that he turned his record around in 1995 in dealing with Bosnia, his understanding of globalization, and his successful management of Congressional ratification of NAFTA and U.S. membership in the World Trade Organization. The authors credit Clinton with understanding both the benefits and opportunities of globalization and its threats in overseas economic competition and terrorist attacks. Spalding, however, suggests that the authors may have taken the rehabilitation of Clinton too far, especially with respect to the credit given to Clinton for his recognition of the danger posed by Osama bin Laden. (2) In evaluating both Bushes and Clinton, Guyatt is more critical overall of a

U.S. desire to project its power globally and unilaterally in the absence of a Soviet adversary. Instead of a genuine commitment to multilateralism, international law, and the United Nations, Guyatt critically emphasizes the willingness George H.W. Bush to act unilaterally in the intervention in Panama in 1989, the “capricious multilateralism” of Clinton, and the “defiant unilateralism” of George W. Bush. (3, 7)

4.) The reviewers agree on the importance of Chollet and Goldgeier’s development of the domestic debate in the 1990s on America’s role in the post-Cold War world and the impact of this debate on policymakers. The authors reinforce Hal Brands’ focus on the unsuccessful efforts of Bush and Clinton to develop a replacement for containment from Bush’s “new world order” to Clinton’s “democratic enlargement.” They move beyond Brands in their detailed evaluation of the evolving perspectives on the domestic scene and suggestive insights on the impact of domestic views on U.S. policy. For example, the authors suggest that Clinton and his advisers failed to respond to the genocide in Rwanda in part out of concern about the very critical public reaction to Somalia. None of the reviewers suggest that any political or ideological perspective is presented unfairly by the authors. Robert Jervis suggests that readers receive a “rich and informative picture,” although he does propose more analysis of the “relevant camps and distinctions” with a “four-fold table consisting of three dimensions”: (1) the willingness to use force; (2) “the kind of goal for which force and other muscular instruments can be deployed”; and (3) “whether the person was more driven by perceptions of threat or of opportunity.” (6-7) Jervis’ table helps to organize the shifting domestic views, although readers may enjoy more the frequent quotes from interviews with important officials and individuals such as William Kristol and Robert Kagan.

5.) The extent to which the authors apply an even-handed approach to the three administrations is a subject of disagreement among the reviewers. Spalding, for example, suggests that Chollet and Goldgeier excessively applaud the prescience of Clinton and Vice-President Al Gore on future threats whereas George W. Bush is criticized for starting off with a focus on old problems, Russia and China. (2) David Greenberg, on the other hand, would welcome more judgments from the authors: “Chollet and Goldgeier aren’t reporters; they’re scholars who are writing a history, and so the reader seeks to know their considered judgments about the wisdom ... about the decisions that Bush Sr. and Clinton made.” (3-4) Several reviewers wish the authors had devoted more attention to Bush and the “War on Terror.” In agreement with Brands’ assessment, the authors do emphasize the degree to which Bush initially tried to be the opposite of Clinton on intervention, commitments to nation building, missile defense, national interests, and unilateralism with respect to the UN and international agreements, and to maintain some policies such as cooperation with Russia and Vladimir Putin and existing sanctions on Hussein in Iraq. They emphasize, for example, different failures by Clinton and Bush on terrorism: “Although Clinton understood that globalization fueled enormous transnational security challenges, he failed to lead the country effectively to combat the growing threat posed by Islamic extremists; and even after the events of 9/11 spurred Bush to confront terrorism with a newfound urgency, he rejected globalization as a catalyst for this new unrest. When he looked for the source of trouble, he found it in Iraq.” (pp. 310-311)

6.) Iraq is probably the most persistent issue that the U.S. presidents and their advisers had to deal with regardless of their preferences and doomed hope that Saddam Hussein would go away or be removed. The authors use Iraq policy as a point of comparison and the reviewers welcome this assessment. Guyatt is the most critical of all three presidents and their handling of Iraq after Hussein was forced out of Kuwait. Washington's shift in the use of the postwar United Nations approved sanctions from the removal of any weapons of mass destruction to the use of sanctions to keep Hussein "in his box" prompts Guyatt to criticize Bush and Clinton for "moving away from the multilateral, U.N.-driven process of disarmament, and ... shoe-horning its own prejudices and policies" in the process at the expense of civilian lives lost in Iraq under the sanction regime. (5-7) Jervis notes the similarities between Clinton and Bush on Iraq after 9/11 depicting both as "being willing to use American military power ... for the purposes of spreading democracy and national-building" with Clinton moving by 1998 to increase the bombing of Iraq and support efforts to overthrow Hussein. (2-3)

Participants:

Derek Chollet is a Senior Fellow at The Center for a New American Security (CNAS), where he works on a variety of issues related to U.S. foreign policy and national security strategy. He is also an adjunct associate professor at Georgetown University's Security Studies Program. Chollet assisted former secretaries of state James A. Baker III and Warren Christopher with the research and writing of their memoirs, Richard Holbrooke with his book on the Dayton peace process in Bosnia, and Strobe Talbott with his book on U.S.-Russian relations during the 1990s. Chollet is the author, coauthor, or coeditor of five books, including of *The Road to the Dayton Accords: A Study of American Statecraft* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) and *Bridging the Foreign Policy Divide* (Routledge, 2007).

James Goldgeier received a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley and teaches at George Washington University in the department of political science in the Elliott School of International Affairs. He is the author of *Leadership Style and Soviet Foreign Policy* (John Hopkins, 1994), which received the Edgar Furniss book award in national and international security, and *Not Whether But When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO* (Brookings, 1999). Professor Goldgeier co-authored (with Michael McFaul) *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy toward Russia after the Cold War* (Brookings, 2003), which received the 2004 Leggold Prize for the best book on international relations. Goldgeier is also a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.

Matthew Dallek is a visiting assistant professor at the University of California Washington Program. He holds a Ph.D. in U.S. history from Columbia, and is the author of *The Right Moment: Ronald Reagan's First Victory and the Decisive Turning Point in American Politics* (Free Press, 2000). He writes a monthly column on history and politics for Politico, and he has been a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

David Greenberg is an associate professor of History and of Journalism & Media Studies at Rutgers University and the author of three books on U.S. political history including *Nixon's Shadow: The History of an Image* (W.W. Norton, 2003), which won the Washington Monthly

Political Book Award, the American Journalism History Book Award, and, in dissertation form, Columbia University's Bancroft Dissertation Award. A former journalist, he is a columnist for *Slate* and a contributing editor to *The New Republic* and has written for the *New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Raritan*, *Daedalus*, and other scholarly and popular publications. He holds a BA, summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa, from Yale University (1990) and a PhD in history from Columbia University (2001)

Nicholas Guyatt teaches American history at the University of York in England. He is the author of four books, including *Another American Century? The United States and the World after 9/11* (Zed Books, 2003) and *Have a Nice Doomsday: Why Millions of Americans are Looking Forward to the End of the World* (Harper, 2007). He has written about American history and politics for the *London Review of Books* and the *Nation* magazine.

Robert Jervis is Adlai E. Stevenson Professor of International Politics at Columbia University and served as President of the American Political Science Association in 2000-01. His *System Effects: Complexity in Political Life* (1997) was a co-winner of the APSA's Psychology Section Best Book Award. *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution* (1989) won the Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Improving World Order. Among his other books are *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (1976), *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (1970; 2nd ed. 1989), and most recently *American Foreign Policy in a New Era* (2005). He is completing a book on intelligence and intelligence failures.

Elizabeth Spalding is Associate Professor of Government at Claremont McKenna College, where she teaches U.S. foreign policy and American government and directs CMC's Washington Program. The author of *The First Cold Warrior: Harry Truman, Containment, and the Remaking of Liberal Internationalism*, she has contributed to several volumes on the presidency and U.S. foreign policy and written for the *Wilson Quarterly*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, and the *Claremont Review of Books*. Her current research interests include the war on terrorism, the beginnings and endings of the Cold War, religion and U.S. foreign policy, and the Wilsonian influence on modern American foreign policy. Her PhD in government and foreign affairs is from the University of Virginia.

The decade of the 1990s is an orphan in the literature on American foreign policy. It's hard to imagine a diplomatic historian undertaking a major research project focused on this decade. (Thousands of internal documents won't be released anytime soon.) And with a few notable exceptions (James Mann's *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush's War Cabinet* and David Halberstam's *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton and the Generals*), journalists have also ignored the period because it is too remote in time and character to seem relevant to them.

Thus, the nation's bookshelves are lined with tomes chronicling virtually every aspect of the terrorist threat, the moderate-extremist struggles in the Middle East, post-nine-eleven intelligence debates, the Iraq War, and the war on terror. Just as Americans viewed international events in the nineties with a studied indifference, historians and journalists have shortchanged the decade as a forgettable interlude bracketed by the end of the cold war and the start of the war on terror.

Derek Chollet, a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, and James Goldgeier, a political scientist at George Washington University, argue much the opposite. They say that from the fall of the Berlin Wall to the nine-eleven terrorist attacks, international challenges emerged that are still confounding the country. Viewing these years as a kind of pivot on which questions of United States power and national security still turn, they boldly assert that overseas developments then are essential to understanding the post-nine-eleven world Americans inhabit today.

They write that, "the underlying realities of international politics" in 2008 – from the coming of globalization to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, "the rise of nonstate actors" to the threat of climate change – are traceable to "the Cold War's end"-- what they call "an 11/9 world" when the Berlin Wall came tumbling down (315). Chollet and Goldgeier convincingly argue that this "11/9 world" continues to define the nation's unfinished diplomatic agenda: whether the question is what to do about Iraq or Al Qaeda, how to cope with the dark side of globalization, or how and when to work through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations, the authors make clear that the origins of these debates lay not in nine-eleven but in the years after the collapse of Soviet communism.

America Between the Wars is a concise, intelligent, and well-written primer to the nation's national security debates under President George H.W. Bush and President Bill Clinton. Instead of narrowly restricting their focus to what a handful of policymakers believed, the authors broaden the discussion; they see domestic politics as important, charting the ideological battles within the two parties and between Democrats and Republicans about defense spending, when the U.S. should intervene militarily in conflicts, and the proper U.S. response to the forces of globalization.

They're at their best in mapping the "ideas" debates of the decade. While the first President Bush scorned "the vision thing" while also trumpeting a "new world order" that never gained much traction, Clinton searched continuously for a bumper sticker slogan that captured his liberal internationalist approach to post-cold war foreign policy. Just as George Kennan's strategy of "containment" defined American foreign policy during the Cold War, Clinton's aides heralded "democratic enlargement." "The successor to a doctrine of containment must be a strategy of enlargement—enlargement of the world's free community of market democracies," National Security Advisor Anthony Lake told an audience at Johns Hopkins in September 1993. (67-8)

The Administration soon dropped the phrase. "It was folly to try to describe how the United States should approach the world's complexities with one single idea," the authors argue. (71) Later, aides tried globalization as an organizing framework. But the issues -- free trade agreements, HIV/AIDS in Africa, foreign aid, genocide in Rwanda and ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and Bosnia among others -- proved un-conducive to a singular strategic concept.

In discussing economist Robert Reich's book *The Work of Nations* or neoconservative writers including Robert Kagan's and William Kristol's aggressive calls for spreading democracy around the world and toppling dictators (often through the use of force), Chollet and Goldgeier reveal how and why ideas matter. They show that at a moment when one age came crashing to an end with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the think-pieces published in magazines like *Commentary* and the *Weekly Standard* and speeches (one by Dick Cheney at the American Enterprise Institute, for example) delivered at ideological think tanks shaped the partisan dialogue and affected policy-making at the highest levels. Reich's book, for example, heavily influenced Clinton's policies including investing in worker training programs and the administration's push for a free and fair global trading system. (153)

Chollet and Goldgeier ably describe the political factions that roiled foreign policy debates in these years. American politics were rife with ideological divisions. The Republican Party was often bitterly divided: Republican presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan embodied an isolationist strain of conservative foreign policy, urging the U.S. to stay out of other people's problems abroad and "a new foreign policy that puts America first...second and third." (23) Realists including former George H.W. Bush national security advisor Brent Scowcroft rejected idealistic calls to use U.S. power to spread liberty overseas and instead argued for actions that were clearly in America's economic and national security interests. Still other conservative Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives clamored for dramatic increases in defense spending, endorsed a missile defense program, and opposed numerous Clinton administration foreign policy initiatives.

Presidential candidate Ralph Nader viewed Vice President Al Gore and Texas Gov. George W. Bush as "Tweedledee and Tweedledum" on national security matters, and demonstrators took to the streets of Seattle to protest the World Trade Organization and the forces of global capital. (293) Billionaire tycoon Ross Perot mounted a campaign decrying the effects of free trade agreements such as NAFTA, and some liberal activists

opposed their fellow Democrats on key issues including whether to intervene militarily in Kosovo.

At the same time, the Clinton administration veered from one grand post-cold war idea to the next. Still, Chollet (a former John Edwards foreign policy advisor) and Goldgeier (a former Clinton National Security Council staffer) convincingly show that Clinton, especially after 1994, found his footing on foreign affairs--becoming more at ease as commander-in-chief and more attuned to the vast ways in which globalization was transforming the national security challenges confronting the United States. Clinton understood that technological advances and free trade agreements not only had big upsides but could also make the American people more vulnerable to competition overseas and terrorist attacks. He ultimately sought to convince the American people that the U.S. needed to embrace globalization and take advantage of opportunities created by shrinking borders and the technological revolution. By 1997, the authors write, Clinton "had become a commanding figure on the global stage." (148)

America Between the Wars will serve as an important synthesis of a little-examined and little-understood period in the nation's recent past. Especially for historians and political scientists grappling now and in the future with the impact of nine-eleven on American politics and foreign policy, this book will be relevant and useful. Based on scores of interviews with participants, articles in magazines and newspapers, and some unclassified documents in Tony Lake's papers at the Library of Congress, *America Between the Wars* makes a case that scholars will need to grapple with: the 1990s was no idle interlude between the end of the cold war and the start of the war on terror; rather, it was the seedbed out of which America's current national security debates in fact blossomed.

When Islamic fundamentalists hijacked four airplanes and killed three thousand Americans on September 11, 2001, the reigning cliché on that grisly morning held that “everything changed.” The World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks seemed to mark a rupture in time, to herald a new age, especially in American foreign policy. President Bush voiced (in his trademark Christian idiom) the prevailing wisdom in his second inaugural: “After the shipwreck of communism came years of relative quiet, years of repose, years of sabbatical—and then there came a day of fire.” (x)

In *America Between the Wars*, their exemplary history of United States foreign policy from the fall of the Berlin Wall to the fall of the Twin Towers, political scientists Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier challenge this standard view of the post-Communist era. They argue that instead of a “holiday from history,” as the columnist George Will called the 1990s, the twelve years preceding September 11 constituted a prologue to what followed. To understand 9/11, you have to go back to 11/9—the day in 1989 when the Berlin Wall fell, the ice of the Cold War cracked open, and a cluster of previously underappreciated threats and challenges came to the surface.

The book succeeds on many levels. It is comprehensive without being a page too long. It is smoothly written without being glib. It tackles the broad themes of what they call the “interwar” years as well as the key historical events and policy details. All future scholars looking at the post-Cold War world will rely on it to organize and sharpen their thinking, and general readers will be hard pressed to find a better introduction to understanding world events in the 1990s as seen from American shores. It stands as our first and best stab so far at defining this recent chapter of American foreign policy history.

Of the book’s many contributions to understanding the inchoate post-Cold War years—a term I confess to favoring over “interwar”—the most important may be to distill and organize the central issues of the time. Chollet and Goldgeier show how the forces of globalization, along with the end of the superpower rivalry (indeed, the end of one of the superpowers) directed new attention to a nettle of topics including nuclear proliferation, rogue and failed states, terrorism, genocide, and economic interconnectedness. These new priorities in turn led policymakers to rethink such matters as international law, human rights, the sanctity of national sovereignty, and the dos and don’ts of military intervention.

Merely to have elucidated the main issues of foreign policy represents an achievement; more impressive is that Chollet and Goldgeier situate their discussions of these issues within the domestic political contexts of the Bush Sr. and Clinton presidencies. For the entirety of his term, George Bush Sr. had a Democratic Congress; for six of his eight years Clinton squared off against a deeply hostile Republican legislature. Placing the policy dilemmas in these real-world political contexts—when both partisanship and executive-legislative rivalries ran high—shears them of any easy answers that a pure policy analysis might suggest. Bill Clinton’s inaction during the Rwandan genocide, so widely condemned today, looks different when we remember the vilification he endured for the Somalia

mission the year before. His willingness to consider a missile defense program, by the same token, makes more sense when we recall the extent to which nuclear-armed rogue states were in the late 1990s undermining the old Cold War verities about the stability that came from mutual assured destruction. Books that purport to judge presidents' international actions in moral terms without accounting for the domestic politics of the time make us feel virtuous but don't enrich our understanding of events. This book takes no such shortcuts.

Besides spotlighting the partisan conflicts that shaped American foreign policy in the 1990s, Chollet and Goldgeier also usefully bring into consideration the search *within* each of the parties for new ways of framing the post-Cold War challenges. The relatively wide-open landscape for new foreign policy thinking made for some surprising changes and developments. The neoconservative guru Norman Podhoretz quipped that liberals and conservatives had switched positions—with the Democrats becoming the party of intervention and the Republicans the party of isolation (276)—and while the authors grant the surface plausibility of that remark, it obscures more complex dynamics. Both parties, in fact, underwent internal splits and reversals of major significance.

When the Berlin Wall fell, Vietnam still shaped the worldview of most Democrats. Many hewed to a quasi-isolationist stance, or at the least an excessive reluctance to use military power. For them, globalization meant that America should no longer view itself as first among equals in the world order. Clinton, in contrast, saw globalization as a potentially destabilizing force that the United States, uniquely, could help to tame in pursuit of peace and economic growth. Although the young former Arkansas governor didn't grow fully confident with the implications of his own thought until 1995, he soon, ironically, found as much success in foreign policy as in the domestic arena. Whether staving off the slaughter of the Albanian Kosovars or striking forcefully (if in the end not forcefully enough) against al-Qaeda or intervening financially to arrest global financial panics, Clinton not only helped the Democratic party shed its image as weak on defense but, more importantly, articulated a new liberal internationalism that went beyond the ad-hockery of his first years in office and embraced the active promotion of democracy in other (willing) parts of the world. In so doing, Clinton and his able team restored much legitimacy to American global leadership.

If Clinton led his party fitfully toward a new internationalism—though even by 2000, many Democrats remained wary of this stand—Republicans gravitated toward a reactionary strain of isolationism that had lain dormant since the 1950s. With a few exceptions, such as House Speaker Newt Gingrich, the rank-and-file Republicans who took over control of Congress in the 1994 elections were parochially minded and contemptuous of foreign involvements. Defining the national interest narrowly, they also tended to oppose whatever Clinton supported simply because Clinton supported it. (George W. Bush's administration, though staffed with more experienced diplomats and analysts, took a similarly partisan view of foreign policy at first, tossing out or shifting away from many sound Clinton-era policies.)

The new Republican isolationists were not alone. They had support from so-called "realists," including many neoconservatives who shared a skepticism of humanitarian

interventions, rhetoric about human rights, and a regard for working with allies instead of unilaterally. (The stark dichotomy bandied about these days between realists and neocons is false and misleading; far from starry-eyed Wilsonians, neocons such as Irving Kristol and Jeane Kirkpatrick were second to none in emphasizing the overriding importance of “national interest” in foreign policy.) But while newfound caution about intervention became more fashionable on the right, a large number of Reaganite Republicans found themselves to their surprise siding with Clinton. Some even criticized him for not intervening vigorously enough in various global hot spots.

Against this complicated matrix of partisan politics, Chollet and Goldgeier trace the major developments in every significant area of foreign policy, including those very much with us today, such as Iraq, terrorism, and global finance. It is a testament to their gifts not just as policy analysts but also as writers that they find a way to narrate and explain these simultaneous and interrelated events without undue repetition or backtracking. Inevitably, of course, some hiccups occur. It’s odd, for example, for readers to find ourselves back in 1993 on page 181, amid a discussion of a military confrontation between Iraq and the U.S.-led coalition, several chapters after we have crossed the break point of 1995 that the authors rightly describe on page 112 as “a transformational year for Clinton’s presidency.” Devoting freestanding chapters to major issues such as Iraq makes a certain amount of sense of course, but the Iraq discussion probably still should have come sooner in the book than the seventh chapter.

One notable omission in *America Between the Wars* is that the authors sometimes withhold their own judgments about the controversies they discuss. Were they mere reporters, such neutrality would be welcome; indeed, too many correspondents in the field return these days brimming with the desire to tell to us not only what they saw but also how to conduct our policy. But Chollet and Goldgeier aren’t reporters; they’re scholars who are writing a history, and so the reader seeks to know their considered judgments about the wisdom—now that we have had a decade or two to gain perspective—about the decisions that Bush Sr. and Clinton made.

For example, they quote Colin Powell, now safely removed from the Bush administration, stating that terrorism is “a criminal problem. This is not the Soviets coming back,” Powell tells the authors. “Let’s not hyperventilate.” (314) This claim is deeply controversial, and a variant of it, when made by John Kerry to the *New York Times* magazine in October 2004, may have cost the Democrats the election that year. But Chollet and Goldgeier let Powell’s remark stand without comment. It’s not clear if they endorse it, but at the least it warrants more discussion. It certainly reveals Powell to be somewhat craven, since he failed to express this view when he was Secretary of State and could have made a difference; it also makes one wonder about his acumen, for while the Bush administration doubtless overhyped the terrorism threat after 9/11, the ultimately ineffectual jailing of Ramzi Yousef for the 1993 World Trade Center bombing showed that criminal prosecution alone is inadequate to the task of combating al-Qaeda.

To take another case, Chollet and Goldgeier admirably present both sides of the (ongoing) argument about whether Treasury Secretary Bob Rubin was correct to lead swift financial

rescue efforts in Mexico and Thailand during the 1990s. They quote the Columbia University economist Jagdish Bhagwati stating that Rubin, together with his deputy Larry Summers “really blew it.” They juxtapose his harsh verdict against that of *Time* magazine, which featured the two Treasury officials and Alan Greenspan on its cover in 1999, calling them the “Committee to Save the World.” But Chollet and Goldgeier don’t say whether they agree with Bhagwati or *Time*. Recent events, clearly, have made plain that those decisions from the 1990s are still ramifying in our own day. But did fending off financial turmoil in multiple instances a decade ago avert crises similar to the current one? Or did those actions make the recent collapse more catastrophic in scope? I don’t know the answer, but I would expect that Chollet and Goldgeier, after studying the 1990s so closely, probably have informed judgments to offer. The book would be the richer for them.

On the whole, however, the authors’ evenhandedness and humility serve them well. In a time when book publishing, no less than other forums of political discussion, has been dominated by dogmatic rants and partisan screeds, including no small measure of politicized scholarship, this dispassionate, thoughtful, and clarifying volume feels like a raft in a torrent. It is an important effort to give shape and meaning to our recent past—shape and meaning that is not ideological but historical.

To paraphrase its authors, the most striking thing about *America Between the Wars* is how utterly conventional it is. The book's basic premise is sound, though not original: Goldgeier and Chollet reject the claim that 9/11 changed everything, and suggest that Americans are still living with challenges that were thrown up by the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989. These include globalization, the rise of nonstate actors and threats, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the emergence of weak or failing states, the role of international institutions, and the proper use of American power.

What the book does less well is to corral the challenges into any broader framework. Beyond the "11/9 to 9/11" chronology, the authors struggle to find an approach that holds the period together. One of the book's ironies is that, in this forlorn quest for a big idea about the 1990s, Goldgeier and Chollet appear have reprised a struggle that took place within Bill Clinton's administration. In their account, Clinton alternately rejects an easy soundbite for his new foreign policy and beats himself up for his imaginative failures; likewise Goldgeier and Chollet set out to explain an important era, but shy away from the assessments and conclusions that might illuminate it. The result is an uneasy compromise between narrative and analysis that steers by George Kennan's advice to Clinton staffers during the mid-1990s: policymakers shouldn't fret about their inability to sum up what they're doing in a sentence, but they should probably have a paragraph. At the conclusion of *America Between the Wars*, in which historians are tamely instructed to pay attention to the 1990s when they write about the twenty-first century, I wondered if our authors even had that paragraph.

"No single expression illuminated America's purpose after the Cold War," argue Goldgeier and Chollet in their final chapter. "And it was folly to believe one could." (315) Perhaps this is true, but we can venture an assessment of American ambitions from 1989 to 2001. I would suggest that U.S. policymakers pursued two major goals in the 1990s: a neoliberal economic regime that could be exported throughout the world, and an international political order that would enable the United States to project its considerable power in the sudden absence of the Soviet Union. Presidents Bush and Clinton were better at pursuing the first goal than the second, if success is to be measured in the sheer reach of American economic ideas and institutions into the farthest corners of the world. (The current financial crisis may reveal whether the neoliberal agenda was successful in a more substantive sense.)

Given the emphasis placed on trade agreements and financial diplomacy during the Clinton administration, one would expect the economic agenda to be a major focus of *America Between the Wars*. But Goldgeier and Chollet postpone this discussion until the middle of the book. The political and military intrigues of Clinton's first term are placed on a separate track to the economic developments, and the authors show us a president floundering in Somalia and Bosnia before the triumphant railroading of NAFTA through Congress. This makes for a certain drama – Clinton struggles to find his way around obscure corners of

eastern Africa and the Balkans, and eventually overcomes his inexperience – but it's poor history that shuffles the president's priorities during his first term.

Clinton invested his political capital in the turbocharged economic policies drafted by his Wall Street advisers. NAFTA was massively unpopular with core constituencies in the Democratic Party, and Clinton had promised not to support the agreement unless it was amended to include labor and environmental protections. In his first year in the White House, he went ahead and pushed for its passage regardless, splintering the party and contributing to the Republican sweep in the midterm elections in 1994. Under Clinton, the Democratic Party blended social and economic liberalism, championing deregulation of the telecommunications and financial services sectors while promoting gun control and abortion rights. Clinton's free-trade messianism converted wealthy donors and corporations to the party, enabling the Democrats to raise even more campaign dollars than the Republicans and flooding the political system with soft money. Meanwhile, many working Americans who had been core Democrats drifted towards Perot or the social conservatism that would be championed by George W. Bush and Karl Rove after 2000.

If Clinton was a fearless proponent of New Democrat policies on trade and finance, he was much muddier on the political system that would anchor the post-Cold War moment. In theory, the new world order was directly linked to the global economic awakening: the Washington Consensus would be the midwife of liberal democracy. As Thomas Friedman famously argued, countries with McDonald's franchises didn't go to war with one another.¹ (Fast-food lovers in Belgrade, Beirut and, most recently, Tbilisi beg to differ.) When liberal economics didn't produce open societies and democratic regimes, American policymakers and pundits preferred autocrats who accepted the dictates of the International Monetary Fund (in China or Singapore, for example) to elected leaders who rejected it. (Like the sulfurous Hugo Chavez.)²

In the 1990s, administration officials seem to have been genuinely surprised that the march of markets wasn't in lockstep with the progress of democracy. Goldgeier and Chollet spend some time dissecting Madeleine Albright's 1996 claim that the United States was the "indispensable nation," but they overlook her revealing classification of the world in a 1998 *Foreign Affairs* article into "four basic categories of countries": full members of the international system, transitional members, failed states and rogue states.³ What's interesting about this list is the implication that all nations can be located on a single axis of political and economic development. Although the 1990s were a period of significant convergence towards the neoliberal economic model, often under pressure from western governments and from the I.M.F. and the World Bank, there was much more variety and dispute over political arrangements than Albright's model allowed. In reviewing U.S. responses to the crises of the 1990s, or the diplomatic maneuvers of other nations, one

¹ Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1999), 195-217.

² For an elaborate rationalization of this preference, see Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* 76 (November/December 1997), 22-43.

³ Madeleine Albright, "The Testing of American Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 77 (November/December 1998), 50-64.

senses a frustration on the part of Albright and other officials with the reluctance of other nations to come to heel. Part of this frustration was surely the product of a skewed set of expectations that were produced in the immediate aftermath of America's apparent triumph over the Soviet Union.

What kind of international order did George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton seek to create? Brent Scowcroft, Bush 41's national security advisor, envisaged the United States as a model world citizen:

"Use the United Nations, don't go farther than the mandate of the United Nations, operate in a way that you've earned the trust of the smaller countries of the world...That was fundamentally what we were thinking." This strategy, Scowcroft explained, meant that perhaps "the hopes of the world of 1945... could be realized." (11)

One of the themes of *America Between the Wars* is the battle between the Scowcroft types (along with most of the Clinton foreign policy team) and the unilateralists who thought that America had the moral and political power to shape the world as it saw fit. This seems a false dichotomy. The neocons and isolationists who sought to distance America from the United Nations certainly sounded a different note from James Baker or Madeleine Albright. But all three presidents since 1989 have rejected the idea that the U.N. and international law should seriously constrain U.S. action. Goldgeier and Chollet discuss Desert Shield and Desert Storm in detail, but they overlook the Bush-led regime change in Panama in December 1989. They offer gnomish observations on the state of the United Nations during the Clinton years, but say almost nothing about the bitter turf wars between the U.N. and the U.S. over the peacekeeping disasters of 1993-95. (There's less than a page on the Oslo peace process, in which the U.N. was marginalized and the United States assumed the role of 'honest broker' with disastrous results.) Clinton's conflict with the United Nations culminated in 1996 with the bathetic and ultimately successful attempt to remove Boutros Boutros-Ghali as secretary-general, an effort accomplished by Madeleine Albright against the wishes of every other nation on the Security Council.

Goldgeier and Chollet repeat many of the talking points of the Republican class of 1995: the United Nations was a "feckless" and "extremely disappointing" organization whose failings justified U.S. reform efforts during the 1990s. (272-73) This is tendentious and misleading. Whatever the limitations of the U.N., the core problem with multilateralism in the post-1989 world was the refusal of successive administrations to accept meaningful constraints on American action. The paradox is clear: the United States sought to establish an international order that blended multilateralism and American hyperpower. Under George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton, policymakers presented the UN as a useful weapon in the American policymaking arsenal, rather than an arbiter of international law and the legitimacy of armed interventions. As Madeleine Albright put it in 1995:

UN peacekeeping adds to our capabilities, without subtracting. It offers us a choice between unilateral action and standing aside while conflicts fester. It allows us to influence events

without assuming the full burden of costs and risks. And it lends the weight of law and world opinion to causes and principles we support.⁴

The idea of the U.N. (and, by extension, of international law) as an option rather than an obligation explains many of the multilateral crises of the Clinton era, and prepares us for the diplomatic Götterdämmerung of the second Bush presidency. It's easy to see why both Bush 41 and the supposedly dovish Democrats were reluctant to surrender unipolar prerogatives after the Cold War. The American right to act as a hyperpower was the real 'peace dividend' of 1989, and successive presidents were better at insulating Americans from the consequences of foreign involvement than at pacifying the fractious world beyond American shores.

The debate over the U.N. and a genuinely multilateral order is as much philosophical as political, though Goldgeier and Chollet disingenuously lump the opponents of the "selective engagement" of the 1990s into a single category of isolationism: Bill Bradley, Ralph Nader, Ross Perot, and Patrick Buchanan advocate an American stand-down from global prominence. (291-94) Although this might hold for Buchanan and Perot – or, more recently, for Ron Paul and his passionate supporters – it obscures the question of whether the United States could have encouraged a world system with more rigid and consistent rules. At various points during the 1990s, American policymakers came close to recognizing the advantages of a genuinely binding world order: witness the Clinton administration's participation in the talks to draft the Kyoto protocol, the international landmines treaty, and the International Criminal Court. But, in the end, all three initiatives would have placed constraints on American action and a Democratic White House refused to fight for their implementation. One of the serious failings of *America Between the Wars* is its attribution of the failure of such multilateral initiatives to George W. Bush. It's true that Bush clumsily dismissed Kyoto and the ICC in the spring of 2001, but he was merely confirming the actions of his predecessor.

As a work of history, this book promises more than it delivers. The authors have interviewed many of the key figures – from Scowcroft and Albright to Tony Lake and Robert Rubin – but they unearth little that is fresh or unexpected, suggesting either that the principals were wary of revealing too much or that Goldgeier and Chollet were unwilling to strain their friendships with the insiders. (The only colorful interviewee is Anthony Zinni, though some casual observers may be surprised to hear that Newt Gingrich was a closet globalist even while he served as ringmaster of the Republican revolution after 1994.) The book pays little attention to the local histories that produced the crises of this period: the handling of the complex story of the disintegration of the Balkans is cursory, and the eventual U.S. air strikes of 1995 seem more *deus ex machina* than the result of shifting conditions and alignments on the ground. The authors make no effort to update the story of American involvement in the Balkans by considering the fate of Bosnia or Kosovo a decade or more after those areas dominated the headlines. The report card is mixed, to say the

⁴ Madeleine Albright, testimony before the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Senate Committee on Operations, 8 March 1995.

least, and would help to contextualize both the ambitions and achievements of American policymakers during the original interventions.

It's a shame that *America Between the Wars* doesn't venture further into the George W. Bush presidency, not least because a serious treatment of Bush 43 might help to resolve the question of continuity or change from the Clinton to the Bush administrations. Goldgeier and Chollet take shots at W. over Kyoto and the I.C.C. but they also acknowledge the strange alliances thrown up by the global reorientation after 1989. Neocons like Robert Kagan and Samuel Huntington, incredible as it may seem, voted for Clinton in 1992. Liberals like Michael Ignatieff and Thomas Friedman supported regime change in Iraq in 2003. In many ways, Iraq was the touchstone for these reorientations of domestic opinion and for the diminished vision of international law and cooperation that has emerged in the past twenty years. Perhaps Goldgeier and Chollet hoped to end their book elliptically, but for our purposes it's worth considering Iraq in more detail.

After the invasion of 1991, the United Nations (with American leadership) imposed a crippling sanctions regime intended to strip Saddam Hussein of weapons of mass destruction. UNSC Resolution 687 also seriously compromised Iraq's sovereignty, creating no-fly zones and areas that were virtually autonomous from Baghdad. But the basis for this harsh treatment was limited and transactional: as a question of international law, the legitimacy of the sanctions depended on Saddam's continued violation of his ceasefire obligations. At some point after 1991, both George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton determined that sanctions had another use: they were a cheap way to keep Saddam Hussein "in his box," a phrase that was endlessly repeated by policymakers at the time. Saddam was both an aberration and an embarrassment, the leader of a 'rogue state' who had survived a direct U.S. assault. The sanctions allowed American policymakers to look tough even if Saddam no longer constituted a dire threat, and to postpone the hard reckoning about the place of unpleasant regimes in the new world order after 1989.

By Clinton's second term, when the U.N.'s own reporting suggested that hundreds of thousands of Iraqis were dying under the sanctions regime, the administration's spokespeople openly suggested that sanctions might only be lifted with the fall of Saddam. Meanwhile, the U.N. weapons inspection teams were leaking intelligence to the CIA and to Israel, which gave Saddam Hussein a pretext for withdrawing cooperation entirely in 1998. These troubling developments suggest that the business of 'containing' Saddam had shifted in important ways from the original ground on which sanctions had been established. The United States was moving away from the multilateral, U.N.-driven process of disarmament, and was now shoehorning its own prejudices and policies into the narrow pretext for international action against Iraq. Saddam had almost no incentive to cooperate with U.N. inspectors when it became clear that the U.S. had moved the goalposts; given his paranoia and posturing towards his neighbors, he may even have recognized the advantages of playing up the possibility that he might retain terrible weapons. The Clinton administration succeeded in keeping Saddam "in his box," but sacrificed America's credibility at the United Nations and countless civilian lives in Iraq.

Goldgeier and Collet are curiously uninterested in what must now be the hot-button question for historians: since Saddam had no WMDs in the spring of 2003, when was Iraq effectively disarmed? Was it in the summer of 1991, as Hans Blix has suggested? Or by 1996-97, as Scott Ritter and Rolf Ekeus believe? Perhaps the question should be phrased differently: when did American officials begin to suspect that the justification for sanctions (and, eventually, for a war of occupation) was non-existent? In their Iraq chapter, Goldgeier and Chollet rely on an extraordinary conceit: they write about Saddam and his American antagonists as if Iraq had retained or developed WMDs through the 1990s, then they offer a “postscript” in which they acknowledge that “all the assumptions made, claims asserted, and dangers voiced about the extent of Iraq’s weapons programs were incorrect.” Just as apologists for the current administration have pointed to systemic intelligence failures rather than political skullduggery in explaining Bush’s false rationale for war in 2003, Goldgeier and Chollet blame “a stream of intelligence reports detailing the Iraqi menace” for the unshakable fear of WMDs that purportedly gripped the Clinton administration. In fact, Washington’s obsession with Saddam’s weapons programs was a direct consequence of the American recasting of the U.N. sanctions regime after 1991: suspicion about WMDs allowed for the indefinite punishment of Iraq, a goal that appealed to Democrats and many Republicans but left America isolated in the world community. U.S. policy towards Iraq during the Clinton years placed enormous strains on the credibility of the United Nations and prepared the battleground for the invasion of 2003.

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Clearly, the events of 2002-03 introduced the American public to a radically unilateral understanding of U.S. power. The Bush administration, after spending nearly six months pursuing a U.N. resolution that would authorize war with Saddam, went ahead without it and reaped a lonely chaos in Iraq. But the bravura of the neocons has inspired a nostalgia for Bill Clinton and Bush 41 that distracts from the broader pattern in American policymaking since 1989. The Iraq invasion, like the calamitous and open-ended sanctions regime that preceded it, was a consequence of American hyperpower acting without restraint: the belief in the United States as the “indispensable nation” may have cheered those policymakers who (belatedly) intervened in Bosnia in 1995 or Kosovo in 1999, but it also deterred the formation of an international order in which rules and obligations were consistently upheld.

And what about Al Qaeda, which occupies a curiously marginal place in *America Between the Wars*? The authors concede the importance of non-state actors and transnational terror networks, but their book sits comfortably within the familiar terrain of state-based relations: hence the considerable attention paid to Iraq and to quaint debates over missile defense. I mentioned above that the costs of American foreign policy in the 1990s largely accrued to those living outside the United States: even during the supposed high-water mark of American altruism – the bombing of Serbia in 1999 – most Americans were barely interested in what was happening and the B-2 pilots flew their missions from Missouri. (Commendably, Goldgeier and Chollet concede that the U.S. decision to forego the use of ground troops facilitated Milosevic’s initial rampages against Kosovar Albanians.) After 9/11, however, the picture has changed considerably. If the United States could project

power with impunity in the golden glow of its victory over the Soviets, the threat from Al Qaeda (or from any group which has been radicalized by American braggadocio) invites a different calculation of the national interest. One option is to go on the offensive, fighting a war on terror that makes unlimited demands on American troops and money. The other is to recognize that hyperpower brings as many burdens as rewards, and that an international system in which the United States agrees to play by the rules may be both safer and more enduring in the long run.

Perhaps a truer picture of the 1990s will emerge in another decade or two, when the fortunes of China and the intentions of America's radical enemies become clearer. If the Chinese continue on their current course, they will soon lay claim to being the "indispensable nation"; perhaps they already can. Meanwhile, another twenty years of the capricious multilateralism of Bill Clinton (or the defiant unilateralism of George W. Bush) will confirm whether the 'war on terror' can be won by either Democrats or Republicans. Goldgeier and Chollet are right to insist on the importance of the years between 11/9 and 9/11, not least because the lessons of this period may prepare Americans for another power shift in the years ahead. But making sense of that shift will not be easy unless historians and policymakers can transcend the complacency and myopia that still surrounds the post-Cold War period.

The title of this book is long and awkward for the good reason that it summarizes not only its topic, but its thesis. The title's meaning is pretty obvious. The war whose end marked the beginning of the period is the Cold War, and although different writers give different dates for this (George H. W. Bush's Secretary of State, James Baker, picked the Soviet-American cooperation in the wake of Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait), but the authors are on firm ground selecting the fall of the Berlin Wall, which occurred on November 11, 1989, thus providing a nice pairing of 11/9 with the more familiar 9/11. This inter-war period has some resemblance to the 1920s as publics sought to return to domestic business and national leaders sought to clean up the remains of the previous conflict and lay the foundations for a more peaceful world. And just as many historians claim that the earlier era was misunderstood, so Chollet and Goldgeier argue that we have failed to see the meaning and significance of the more recent inter-war period.

They provide a thorough and insightful account of American foreign policy in these years, drawing on memoirs, journalistic accounts, documents (some readily available and others not so), and interviews.¹ Of course the archives are still closed, but this is a bit less of a problem than it was in periods when decision-makers were more discreet. Some may be disappointed that it is focused on the US and its political elites. Developments abroad are recounted only as they figure in American policy and there is no discussion of issues on which non-governmental organizations have been central, such as the treaty banning landmines (to which the US declined to be a party). But I think the focus is appropriate for the authors' purposes. Because I agree with so much of the book I will take advantage of the Roundtable format to present several of its main arguments in a somewhat different form and sharpen some of its points by abstracting from the detailed and careful history.²

Winston Churchill once sent a dessert back to the kitchen saying, "Take away this pudding, it has no theme."³ While at first glance this is true for the period under discussion, Chollet and Goldgeier argue that, rather than being a shapeless interlude filled with uninspired leadership, contradictory policies, and ineffective floundering, "the 1990s were a defining moment for U.S. politics and foreign policy" (329). Furthermore, 9/11 did not "change everything" and "when future historians reflect on the ideas and debates that shaped American foreign policy in the twenty-first century they must start by looking back at the years from 11/9 to 9/11" (329). This is not to say that this period itself is easy to understand or summarize. As the authors note on their first page, many titles have been

¹ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Second Chance: Three American Presidents and the Crisis of American Superpower* (New York, Basic Books, 2007) is also very much worth reading, but it is a very different kind of book, being shorter and sharper in its judgments.

² Truth in reviewing: I am friends with both authors and Chollet was a student of mine.

³ Like so many of his pithy statements, this one has a currency that outruns its pedigree:
<http://www.winstonchurchill.org>

proposed for this era, and with good reason none of them caught on. George H. W. Bush called for a “New World Order,” but in his admitted lack of “a vision thing” did not seek a clear road map to where he was going, let alone a good slogan to summarize it. Clinton wanted the latter if not the former, and the authors recount the misguided and somewhat humorous attempts to find the appropriate bumper sticker, an experiment that ended with the “Black Hawk down” incident in Mogadishu that left 18 American soldiers dead and Clinton’s foreign policy in tatters (64-71). Even the post-9/11 world is hard to summarize, and it is interesting that the Bush administration has abandoned and then reinstated the term “War on Terror” a number of times, that as Donald Rumsfeld left the Pentagon he admitted, “I don’t think I would have called it a ‘War on Terror’” (although he did so with some frequency), and that Colin Powell told the authors, “The ‘War on Terror’ is a bad phrase. It’s a criminal problem. This is not the Soviets coming back....let’s not hyperventilate” 314).

Although Chollet and Goldgeier end with 9/11, in arguing for the importance for the previous years they implicitly look beyond it, and even beyond where we are today, to hint that the future will lack clear and consistent policies as well. For them, what will be carried over from the 1990s are a series of continuing divisions between and within the Democratic and Republican parties. The essential question of the goals and instruments for American foreign policy were never resolved in the 1990s, and despite the seeming clarity brought by 9/11 and Bush’s response to it, the multiple and messy lines of division remain, which leads us to expect that American policy in the coming years will have more resemblance to the inter-war period than to the Cold War.

For the authors, the continuities are in the unresolved questions and debates themselves. It is the fact that these have not ended and probably cannot end that will continue to produce wavering and inconsistent policies. Although the authors do not put it in quite this bumper-sticker form, I think they are saying that the continuity resides in the disagreements, and the recurring disputes about the uses of American power will produce a continually inconsistent policy. Thus they give us two inter-twined histories, one of American foreign policy and the other of the domestic struggle over it. Indeed, this dual focus is one of the great strengths of the book. The authors pay almost as much attention to what critics are saying as to what the administration in power is doing because the people and ideas out of power represent important forces that affect policy.

Before turning to the debates, I want to note some of the continuities that the authors do detect, correctly in my view. First, they see more commonalities between the later years of Clinton’s administration and Bush’s post-9/11 policy than the supporters of either one of them like to acknowledge. (I would also suggest more similarities between Clinton’s early years and Bush’s pre-9/11 policy than is usually acknowledged.) Both Clinton and Bush are “liberal hawks” in the sense of being willing to use American military power, to do so multilaterally if possible, but unilaterally if need be, and to do so for the purposes of spreading democracy and “nation-building.” It is no accident that Clinton supported the war in Iraq, explaining his Desert Fox strikes of December 1998 by words that could have come out of Bush’s mouth: “If Saddam defies the world and we fail to respond, we will face a far greater threat in the future. Saddam will strike again at his neighbors. He will make

war on his own people. And mark my words, he will develop weapons of mass destruction. He will deploy them, and he will use them" (179).⁴

Clinton not only favored regime change in Iraq, he was willing intervene in numerous places, especially the Balkans, did not believe that UN approval was necessary, and while seeking as broad a coalition as possible, did not excessively defer to allies. In the wake of the al Qaeda attack on the American embassies in East Africa, Clinton said "Countries that persistently host terrorists have no right to be safe havens" and predicted that "this will be a long, ongoing struggle between freedom and fanaticism, between the rule of law and terrorism" (265) (a headline the next day said that the U.S. was "preparing for 'war' on terror"). Of course, as the authors say, this should not be pushed too far. As Clinton's Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told them, Bush and his colleagues "picked up a lot of things we were doing and pushed them to their expedient degree. They give democracy a bad name" (319).⁵

Another continuity runs throughout the entire 11/9-9/11 period. This is the dilemma created by the dual facts that the American public cares little about foreign policy except at times of great perceived threat and the administrations needs domestic support. Clinton and both Bushes, like most Cold War presidents, were constantly frustrated by domestic opposition and Congressional recalcitrance, and as a result often had to resort to exaggerated rhetoric and unrealistic promises.⁶ For most Americans, foreign policy is secondary and usually an expensive nuisance. Although it was only in Clinton's first campaign that the slogan "It's the Economy, Stupid" was formally used, this statement could apply to much of the public policy in the US (and most other democracies). Calvin Coolidge was right: "the chief business of the American people is business."⁷ The large role of foreign policy in American politics during the Cold War should not mislead us: this was not a natural state of affairs. Thus in retrospect it is not so surprising that George H. W. Bush was unable to capitalize on the striking victory in the Gulf War to gain re-election. Neither is it surprising that on assuming office Clinton paid as little attention as possible to foreign policy. Diplomatic historians and international politics scholars may find this a scandalous dereliction of duty, but the American people did not. Chollet and Goldgeier understand the irony of writing a history of American foreign policy in which they care more about it than did most figures in American public life. Although I think the authors,

⁴ The irony is that Desert Fox, derided at the time as a typically Clinton half-hearted measure, in fact seems to have convinced Saddam that he would not be able to resume his WMD programs under current conditions.

⁵ For an excellent discussion of the intellectual roots of this policy, shared by major elements in both political parties, see Tony Smith, *A Pact With the Devil* (New York: Routledge, 2007), which was the subject of a H-Diplo Roundtable.

⁶ For the classic discussion of the need to oversell problems and their solutions, see Theodore Lowi, *The End of Liberalism* (New York: Norton, 1969), chapter 6.

⁷ Calvin Coolidge, "The Press Under a Free Government," January 17, 1925: http://www.calvin-coolidge.org/html/the_press_under_a_free_Governm.html, p. 2. Coolidge's speech also had idealistic themes, not unlike so much of American foreign policy.

both of whom served in the Clinton administration, downplay Clinton's irresponsibility in the early years, the chaotic foreign policy process he permitted does not go unmentioned (59-59, 75, 92 – for a happier example, see 184).

But if Clinton would have been happy if the world went away (except for opportunities to trade and invest, which he took seriously – perhaps too seriously), the world of course did not oblige, and like all presidents he needed to assiduously court Congress, interest groups, and the wider public if he was to succeed. Chollet and Goldgeier deservedly give him much credit for his political courage and leadership in securing the ratification of NAFTA and the WTO in the face of significant opposition, mainly from members of his own party. But lack of domestic support remained a tight constraint. When he sought a stronger policy against Iraq in early 1998 he sent his foreign policy team to a “town hall” meeting at Ohio State University which degenerated into a shouting match with critics from the left and the right. “Albright remembered the raucous event as a ‘fiasco.’ When asked about it years later, Berger visibly winced at the memory....After the debacle, Albright recalled, the mere mention of the words ‘Ohio State’ would shut down anyone inside the administration who came up with a ‘harebrained scheme’ to get their message out” (p 198-99).

Lacking a dramatic threat, there were few ways to build support that did not qualify for this epithet. Thus Clinton, like other presidents, often found that he could not act as strongly as he would have liked and in many cases had to plunge ahead and hope that Congress would follow, as he did in the Mexican Peso bail-out early in his administration and the bombing to free Kosovo at the end. As Chollet and Goldgeier show, we simply cannot understand American foreign policy without looking at the essential and difficult problem of mustering and maintaining public support. Kissinger attributes too much to this factor in explaining the decline of detente, thus excusing his own errors, but there is much truth in his account.⁸ Scholars of international history and international politics often lose sight of this factor when they focus on the interactions among states. No leader of a democratic country can afford to do so.

Clinton's Secretary of the Treasury Robert Rubin told the authors that he regrets the administration's failure “to educate the American people on globalization, trade, and foreign aid” (253), and faced with the protests to the WTO meeting in Seattle, Clinton agreed (257, 288-89). But even when serious attempts were made, public opinion often refused to be rallied. Clinton and his colleagues did try to do so on terrorism, but I suspect that even without the distraction of Monica Lewinsky and the impeachment, the campaign would not have succeeded (262-70; also see p 267-69 for whether Clinton could have done more). Although polls showed that people put terrorism and Islamic extremism near the top of their list of worries (262), the threat simply did not seem severe enough to trump domestic concerns, and in the foreign policy area Kosovo and Iraq competed with terrorism

⁸ Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1982); Kissinger, *Years of Renewal* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999). Jeremi Suri's *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Detente* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003) similarly carries a good point too far when he attributes detente to domestic pressures around the world.

for attention. The most careful study of the subject indicates that are sharp limits on the ability of presidents to persuade the public.⁹

Another continuity was with issues, ones on which the public, the political parties, and indeed individual analysts and policy-makers were divided. The end of the Cold War gave the US the freedom to think seriously about a range of issues that had been submerged by the existential conflict with the Soviet Union, and gave other countries and groups the freedom that forced some of these issues to the surface. One was the question of national sovereignty versus human rights. In the wake of the Cold War, many ethnic conflicts emerged, leading to enormous suffering and forcing the US to think about when it was appropriate or required to intervene, especially with force, to protect human rights. *America Between the Wars* brings out many of these instances (e.g., p 13, 182, 212, 216-17), such as George H. W. Bush's humanitarian intervention in Somalia, which soon suffered "mission creep" under Clinton (as it well might have had Bush been reelected). As Chollet and Goldgeier show, although the rhetoric within the US was often heated on these issues, most people had a foot in both camps for the good reason that everyone valued both sovereignty and human rights. Thus American policy veered from placing greater emphasis on one of these values to stressing the other largely in reaction to the most recent disaster. The failure in Somalia was partly responsible for passivity over Rwanda, and guilt about this helped produce intervention in the Balkans.

The other issue that demanded continued attention was proliferation. During the Cold War, Democrats tended to be more concerned with this than Republicans, who stressed that most potential proliferators were enemies of the Soviet Union.¹⁰ In the post-11/9 era, all politically relevant actors opposed proliferation,¹¹ but there was less agreement on exactly how bad it would be, the priority to be placed here as opposed to other issues, and what combination of carrots or sticks would be most effective. Here too public support would be difficult to muster for any costly or risky policy, and continuity of concern co-existed with--or perhaps produced--wavering and uncertain policies.

There were two related questions that separated Clinton from both Bushes. These were globalization and the importance of non-state actors. As Chollet and Goldgeier show, although Clinton was inconsistent on many matters, from the start he believed that globalization was transforming world politics and deeply affecting all societies, not least of all America's. Indeed, because economic issues and a commitment to an open economic system were so high on Clinton's agenda, he could hardly avoid the topic. But he was

⁹ George Edwards, *On Deaf Ears: The Limits of the Bully Pulpit* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); also see Lawrence Jacobs and Robert Schapiro, *Politicians Don't Pander: Political Manipulation and the Loss of Democratic Responsiveness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

¹⁰ But the neoconservative's intellectual father, Albert Wohlstetter, was a proliferation hawk, although these views largely stemmed from the need to keep a Soviet-American nuclear war under control.

¹¹ The view of Kenneth Waltz and a few other academics that proliferation would lead to stability never gained a serious hearing.

drawn to it for broader reasons: “Clinton loved talking about the transformative power of globalization” (154). As he said, “globalization is not a proposal or a policy choice, it is a fact. But how we respond to it will make all the difference” (154). For most Republican leaders, thinking about the subject stopped with the desire to lower the barriers to economic intercourse. When it was not derided as globalony, globalization was ignored as either a threat or an opportunity (p 175, 272-77).

Linked to globalization, Clinton stressed the rise of non-state actors, especially troublesome ones. Indeed, in a public address in early 1998, he talked about the “peril...as a result of reckless acts of outlaw nations and an unholy axis of terrorists, drug traffickers, and organized international criminals” (195). This also meant that danger came from weak states, which could not prevent these miscreants from flourishing on their territory. For most Republicans, including both Bushes, this was misguided. There was an axis of evil, but it was composed of states. Indeed, terrorists could only be a significant menace if they had a state sponsor, especially because the gravest danger was that they would gain access to weapons of mass destruction, which could only be supplied by states. Until 9/11 this danger seemed remote and Republicans said little about terrorism. So the main concern of George W. Bush when he came into power was not weak states or terrorists, but the “near-peer” rivals, Russia and China. Indeed, this concern for major states and neglect of non-state actors was one of the few foreign policy beliefs that all conservatives shared.

At least as important as the agreements and disagreements over issues is what Chollet and Goldgeier show about the complex and shifting fault-lines between various groups. Although their presentation is not startlingly new, by focusing on what factions argued when they were out of power they paint a rich and informative picture. One of the main points is that it defies simple summary. The old “hawk-dove” division that characterized so many of the Cold War arguments no longer serves, although it has not entirely disappeared. Partisan divisions remain, but there are splits within the parties. The authors do not make explicit what they see as the relevant camps and distinctions, but they provide enough material and arguments to allow me to take a stab at it. We can get fairly far with a simple four-fold table consisting of two dimensions. One is the propensity to use force, and the other is the kind of goal for which force and other muscular instruments can be deployed. Traditional Republicans such as George W. Bush before 9/11 and to a lesser extent his father were willing to use force, but only for what they saw as core interests of American national security. Neoconservatives and Bush after 9/11 retained a healthy (or unhealthy) willingness to use force, but expanded the relevant objectives to include advancing the American mission in the world, especially spreading democracy.¹² They, like many Americans, reject the central Realist postulate that states react mainly to their external environments and hold what Kenneth Waltz calls a “second image” theory that a state’s foreign policy is strongly influenced by the nature of its domestic political system.¹³

¹² For many neoconservatives, having an ambitious foreign policy mission to spread American values was important not only in itself, but as a means to see that American society did not fall into decadence: Michael Williams, “What is the National Interest: The Neoconservative Challenge in IR Theory,” *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 11, September 2005, pp. 307-37.

¹³ Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

American interests and values are fused in the cause of supporting and promoting democracies. This is not a partisan issue, and Democrats like Joseph Lieberman fit in this category of liberal hawks, Al Gore has a foot in this camp (p 282-85), and Clinton's use of force in the Balkans drew quite a bit of support from Republicans. Indeed the issue of Kosovo cut across party lines. Albright's mantra that the US was "the indispensable nation" had at least as much resonance with neoconservatives as it did with Democrats (175-76), and the former would have been more likely than the latter to agree with Clinton when he said "if we're serious about WMD being the biggest threat to the twenty-first century, we've got to be ready to use force" (193). On the other hand, traditional Republicans saw the danger of Kosovo becoming a "quagmire" and objected to using force for humanitarian purposes, while some Democrats, although agreeing with the goal, were less than happy with the use of force, especially without UN sanction (219-21).

Republicans were then less divided by whether to use force than about what to use force for. Thus the famous Draft Defense Guidance produced for Secretary of Defense Cheney at the end of the first Bush administration appears to have been clearer about the need for a robust military policy than it was about the range of goals this was expected to meet (43-51). The Democrats, on the other hand, tended to agree on goals but disagree on means. Most were internationalist and sought to spread American values if not way of life abroad both because this was a good in itself and because it was the only way to manage a complex and inter-dependent world (a stance that was complicated by the growing opposition to economic openness in the Democratic base), but they differed on the perceived efficacy of force. Although the linkage was not entirely tight, aversion to the use of force tended to accompany beliefs in the necessity for and efficacy of multilateral institutions and arrangements. Some Republicans also felt that force and threats were insufficient to meet most of the pressing problems. Indeed, thanks to having been shown some still-classified documents, Chollet and Goldgeier are able to reveal the depth of the split on this question between the State and Defense Departments at the end of the first Bush administration. They convincingly argue that the State Department under Secretary Lawrence Eagleburger (who replaced Baker when he moved to the White House to run Bush's reelection campaign) held views that were similar to those of the in-coming Clinton administration (47-51). At the start, Clinton's aversion to force rested not only on principle, but on lack of confidence and fear of upsetting his domestic agenda. Thus it is not surprising that he changed over time, but it is noteworthy that he continued to worried about whether his use of force, rather than increasing American influence, would alienate governments and public opinion around the world, and after the Kosovo war he took the unusual step of asking American embassies to report on how the American policy had been perceived (p 233-34).

Also significant, especially for conservatives, was a third distinction or dimension: whether the person was more driven by perceptions of threat or of opportunity. Immediately after the Cold War, the latter predominated. For Bush, a new world order with a larger role for the UN seemed possible (6, 11-13). In the early 1990s, neoconservatives saw opportunity as well, one based on seizing the "unipolar moment," extending American values abroad, and guarding against complacent if not isolationist impulses that would allow American

power to atrophy. But by the mid 1990s these groups came to see threats as more salient, partly because of changed perceptions of the world, partly because of the feeling that Clinton was weak, and partly because it became apparent that threat was more of an effective political motivator than opportunity (145, 173, 323). As the decade wore on, Clinton too became more concerned with threats and less with opportunities (195).

There is obviously room to debate the authors' thesis that post-9/11 American foreign policy needs to be understood in terms of the choices and divisions found in the previous dozen years. But even skeptics will find their treatment of the events of this period insightful and valuable and their analysis of the competing arguments and factions illuminating and fair-minded. Of course the 1990s will not return, but I think that the sort of shifting coalitions, beliefs, and values that they analyze will reappear as the war in Iraq winds down. There is no reason to expect these differences to be settled once and for all and plenty of reason to expect continued inconsistencies and vacillations of the kind that political scientists if not historians find professionally disturbing and all see as unsatisfactory for the country.

While there is much to Chollet and Goldgeier's thesis, it is ambiguous and perhaps a bit overstated. They are correct that 9/11 did not "change everything" and that one can find elements of Bush's policy in the post-11/9 years, but 9/11 did change quite a bit. Without it, I suspect that Bush would have continued along the path he marked out in the campaign and his first nine months in office. He would have concentrated on core security issues and paid most attention to Russia and the PRC. While he would have increased pressure on Saddam, the Middle East would not have been a focus of his attention, and democratization would not have been high on his agenda. It is true that this hypothetical path also had roots in the period the authors study, but this shows how many currents were operating then and how many possible futures could have had at least some traces in the earlier era. Relatedly, if it had not been for the accident of the "butterfly ballot" in Palm Beach County, Al Gore would have been president and his policy would have differed from both Bush's pre- and post-9/11 stances (assuming his administration, which would have paid more attention to terrorism, would not have thwarted the attacks). One could undoubtedly find roots of this in the earlier years, but this again underscores the multiple possibilities that inhere in them. This line of argument does not indicate that Chollet and Goldgeier are wrong, but does call into question some of the value of the analysis by arguing that the range of policies that were compatible with those inter-war period was very large. There are some paths that the US could have followed that would have been a sharp break from this period, but not many.

Perhaps the sharpest version of Chollet and Goldgeier's thesis would be that we can not only see the post-9/11 policy reflected in policies and arguments after 11/9, but that the inter-war years were very different from the Cold War. In many ways, this is obviously true, but there are important continuities as well. John Gaddis stresses (and exaggerates) the American tradition of taking preventive actions, Melvyn Leffler notes that Bush's policy contained many elements from earlier American policies, and Stephen Sestanovich argues that throughout the Cold War American policy-makers reacted to setbacks, not by making

marginal adjustments, but by instituting highly ambitious policies.¹⁴ Indeed a Marxist (fortunately some can be found among historians, if not among political scientists) would argue that American policy after 9/11 displays the same economically-driven expansionism that has characterized it since colonial times. The traditional explanation for the Cold War that sees American hostility as a response to the Soviet threat is rendered less plausible by the fact that American interventions and expansionism continued after the Soviet Union disappeared. A Realist would see an even deeper continuity, arguing that all great powers have a propensity to expand. In detail, American foreign policy of course differs from that followed by other major states, but once we step back a bit the general similarities are striking. These arguments are relevant here because to the extent that these continuities extend further back in time or to other states, the thesis that 9/11 is not a sharp break is sustained but the particular significance of the years the authors examine becomes somewhat less.

Part of the reason that the post 9/11 period looks so different from what came before is that the policies failed. Bush has not been able to prevent proliferation, even before the fighting in Georgia relations with Russia had deteriorated, and, most obviously, Iraq has not been turned into a democracy. If the political reconstruction had been quick and easy, not only would the policy have looked better, but it would have seemed an extension of the liberation of Kuwait and the operation in Kosovo. Once we see that we should not judge the causes of policies by their consequences, the case for continuity becomes stronger, however. The inter-war years remain interesting if frustrating, and this book is a good place to begin the discussion of whether they were a missed opportunity to start building a better world, whether American domestic politics permits a steady course, and how much is determined by the accidents of events and personalities.

¹⁴ John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise, Strategy, and the American Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Melvyn Leffler "Bush's Foreign Policy," *Foreign Policy*, No. 144, September/October 2004, pp. 22-28; Stephen Sestanovich, "American Maximalism," *National Interest*, No. 79, Spring 2005, pp. 13-23.

America *Between the Wars* is a valuable book, the long sub-subtitle of which conveys the clarity of the authors' thesis: *The Misunderstood Years Between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Start of the War on Terror*. Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier argue that the world did not change on September 11, 2001, because the main challenges facing America—"combating extremist forces determined to spread terror, responding to the violent breakdown of states, stemming the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, managing the economy in an era of dramatic technological revolution, and choosing when to send young American soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines to fight"—began at the end of the Cold War (xi). Further, the authors maintain that 9/11 left unanswered the questions raised by the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, while it created the illusion that America's purpose was once more as clear as it had been during the Cold War (xv). They conclude that, in addition to 9/11 not changing everything, it was dangerous to replace the Cold War's tested doctrine of containment with the oversimplifications of the "war on terror" framework (315).

Chollet and Goldgeier are to be commended for writing an accessible, well-sourced, mostly objective treatment of U.S. foreign policy that covers a period often disparaged as the "holiday from history." They are well-suited for this task since they inhabit both the university and think tank worlds of Washington, D.C. (Chollet is a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security and adjunct teaches at Georgetown University; Goldgeier is a professor at George Washington University and a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.) Although the authors sometimes make the years between 11/9 and 9/11 seem more coherent in retrospect than they actually were, they offer an energetic narrative history that weaves together the presidents, main events and trends, and policies of the time and portrays how chaotic foreign policy making could be, especially during the Clinton administration. Their analysis of George H.W. Bush is workmanlike, and they neatly address Bush's pragmatic realism, his main foreign policies, and the large foreign policy debates of the new post-Cold War era (from Francis Fukuyama's "the end of history" to Charles Krauthammer's "unipolar moment"). Perhaps reflecting their insider as well as scholarly credentials—Chollet worked in Clinton's State Department and later was a foreign policy advisor for Senator John Edwards, and Goldgeier was a Council of Foreign Relations fellow at both State and the National Security Council in the mid 1990s—the authors are at their best when assessing Bill Clinton's foreign policy, and their chapter on Kosovo is a must-read case study.

Chollet and Goldgeier describe well how President Clinton at first lacked "a sense of priority" and even ended the regularly scheduled meetings between the president and his foreign policy team that had been the custom since the Truman administration (57-58). Preferring to read the intelligence papers himself, Clinton also quickly gave up on the daily intelligence briefings by the CIA director. As many times as the authors say that Clinton initially lacked a sense of priority, they also contend that he was short on confidence in his foreign policy decisions (examples on pp. 57 and 81) and cite this as a critical reason for the early failures abroad. They offer compelling evidence for the former point, but not for

the latter. In short, Clinton did not spend enough time on foreign policy and became defined by his errors in judgment ranging from don't ask/don't tell regarding gays in the military to Somalia, Rwanda, and Haiti. At the same time, critics were making powerful arguments about the purpose of the American military in the post-Cold War world, reaching a crescendo in 1995 with the claim that U.S. foreign policy had become, merely and dangerously, a vehicle for social work (82, 113-14). Chollet and Goldgeier argue that Clinton turned the corner in 1995 and that Bosnia was transformational for him. Also transformational, they say, was Clinton's grasp of the phenomenon of globalization, in terms of both its positive and negative qualities. Despite his differences with the "Contract with America" GOP, Clinton benefited from a good working relationship on foreign policy with Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, lack of interest on the part of many new Republicans in Congress (which the authors interpret as isolationism), and the growing dissension within conservative circles (especially from and toward neoconservatives). The authors briefly but directly speak to the impact of the Lewinsky scandal on Clinton's foreign policy, especially with respect to Iraq and Operation Desert Fox in 1998 and actionable intelligence about Osama bin Laden in 1999 (200, 269); but without being hagiographical, Chollet and Goldgeier offer a partial rehabilitation of Clinton as a successful president in foreign policy.

There is a question as to whether this rehabilitation goes too far. Chollet and Goldgeier highlight a quote from Clinton regarding the "explosive underbelly" of globalization as represented by terrorist organizations (260-61) as an indication that he would have handled al-Qaeda better on 9/11 and over time than Bush has done. Although they concede that what the Clinton administration did or did not do to fight al-Qaeda remains "hotly disputed," the authors maintain that Clinton "had become seized by the tremendous danger posed by Osama bin Laden" (268, 289). They attribute the same gift of prescience to Vice President Al Gore in sketching what he would have done as president in 2001 (290-91), while they stress those quotes from Bush that show him focused on "old" rather than "new" threats. Clinton—and Gore, by extension—is praised for leaving office understanding that the United States could be "threatened more by another nation's weakness than by its strength" (310) and therefore being able to handle the short- and long-term ramifications of 9/11-style attacks. This leads to the weakest part of the book. The largely even-handed tone disappears when the authors get to George W. Bush. To be sure, passions run high about Bush, but it is a shame that a less careful tone and imprudent word choices mar the previously steady analysis.

America Between the Wars should be read by those getting ready to serve in the new administration and by those who are generally interested in reflecting on George H.W. Bush's and Bill Clinton's foreign policies after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The book is also a useful pedagogical tool. I assigned *America Between the Wars* earlier this semester in my seminar on U.S. foreign policy after Bush. The class is all juniors who, to a person, said they did not remember the Clinton years, let alone the end of Bush 41's administration. They added that they had not studied much about the period in other classes or on their own. What is surprising about this latter comment is that my students attend a liberal arts college known for its students being highly interested and involved in politics, government, and public policy. Thus, Chollet and Goldgeier filled in both historical and conceptual gaps

for my students. Their allusion to Isaiah Berlin's famous categorizations of thinkers as either hedgehogs—who know one big thing and see everything through that lens—or foxes, who know many things and are impressed with the complexities of the world, prompted lively debate about George H.W. Bush, Clinton, and George W. Bush. After extended discussion, my students decided that John McCain is a hedgehog and Barack Obama is a fox when it comes to foreign policy—and much else in politics.

In the end, Chollet and Goldgeier seem to be forced to make the either/or case—either it changed everything or nothing—about the war on terror. This conclusion inheres in their position that the “war on terror” is but a facet of the negative, explosive underbelly of globalization. “The tragedy for America is twofold,” they say of the difference they draw between Clinton and Bush (311). “Although Clinton understood that globalization fueled enormous transnational security challenges, he failed to lead the country effectively to combat the growing threat posed by Islamic extremism; and even after the events of 9/11 spurred Bush to confront terrorism with a newfound urgency, he rejected globalization as a catalyst for this new unrest. When he looked for the source of the trouble, he found it in Iraq.” The “modern interwar years,” as the authors term the period between 11/9 and 9/11, are ultimately—if somewhat surprisingly—book ended not by the end of the Cold War and the start of the war on terror but driven by the rise of globalization. Yet it seems more accurate to say that 9/11 both fundamentally changed some aspects of the post-Cold War era and intensified other characteristics of the 1990s. The authors appear so focused on rejecting George W. Bush's “war on terror” framework that they cannot find anything existential in the threat from jihadist terrorism. It also seems short-sighted to date every significant trend back to 11/9. Recall Chollet and Goldgeier's list of main challenges confronting America (see first paragraph of this commentary), or look at how the authors recast this inventory in their final chapter: “the economic, political, and security challenges created by globalization; the rise of nonstate actors; the threat of weapons of mass destruction; the dangers that emanate from weak or failing states; the possibilities and limits of international institutions; and questions about whether and how to use America's preponderant power to meet global responsibilities” (315). Some of these challenges were also Cold War threats, others developed starting in the 1970s, and the question of where and when to use American armed forces has been central ever since the United States became a great power.

As we observe the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall—nearly twenty years since 11/9—we should note that the clear purpose of U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War was not always as widely accepted as Chollet and Goldgeier sometimes suggest and thank the authors for their many insights into the period between 11/9 and 9/11, realizing that the layers of challenges from the 1990s and since 9/11 will test our next president for the duration of his term in office. If Bill Clinton was a fox and George W. Bush is a hedgehog, it looks as if the United States could now use a president who is a hedgehog in terms of strategic vision and a fox in terms of tactics.

Author's Response by Derek Chollet, Center for a New American Security, and James Goldgeier, George Washington University and Council on Foreign Relations

We are extremely grateful to all the reviewers for the time and care they took in providing their assessments of *America Between the Wars*. We are pleased that such distinguished individuals found so much that was valuable about the book, and we are particularly pleased that our effort to discuss not just the major events and ideas that animated American foreign policy, but also the domestic political aspects of this story, seems to have been so helpful in understanding the period. We welcome the opportunity to address some of our colleagues' sharp insights and fair criticisms.

Matthew Dallek offered an excellent summary of the book and we appreciate his kind words. We are also grateful for David Greenberg's thoughtful analysis, and wanted to respond to his justifiable concern that we did not step out of the narrative to provide enough of our own judgments, particularly on the nature of the terrorism threat as it evolved during the 1990s, and concerning who was right regarding the U.S. government's efforts to respond to the 1997-98 global financial crisis.

First, on the "War on Terror." A big question we wanted to explore in this book is what exactly changed for American foreign policy (and the political debates about it) as a consequence of the September 11, 2001 attacks. The prevailing wisdom was perhaps best articulated by President George W. Bush. Describing the events of 9/11, he asserted, "All of this was brought upon us in a single day, and night fell on a different world." With these words, he reinforced a general perception that global politics had changed irrevocably. To be sure, that terrible day is one we will always remember and honor, but the president was articulating an emotional truth – not an analytical one. Just as history did not end in 1989, it did not begin on 9/11.

As we try to show in the book, the tragedy of 9/11 and its aftermath had its origins twelve years earlier, when the world shifted in ways that were incomprehensible at the time. On 11/9 (November 9, 1989) the Berlin Wall fell, and the Cold War was effectively over. That year, the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan, and the former superpower battleground was left unattended until Bill Clinton bombed Al Qaeda training camps there in August 1998 in retaliation for the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. As we explain, by 1998, the Clinton administration believed it was "at war" with Osama bin Laden and his followers, and Clinton told George W. Bush after the 2000 election was decided, "One of the great regrets of my presidency is that I didn't get him [bin Laden] for you, because I tried." Of course, conservatives at the time were hardly focused on the threat from Islamic extremism.

We, too, were taken aback when Colin Powell described to us the threat of Islamic terrorism as a "criminal problem." This statement is clearly politically controversial, and like Greenberg, we believe that the terrorism threat is more than a question of law enforcement alone (although law enforcement certainly plays a role). What was so striking in our research for this book was how dissatisfied even former senior officials from the

Bush administration are about the “War on Terror” as a frame for U.S. national security policy, and in fact all the former military officials we spoke with expressed unease with the doctrine defined by the “War on Terror,” believing that this puts too much burden on military tools alone to solve the problem rather than recognizing that the threat requires a multifaceted response.

Greenberg criticizes Powell for not expressing this view publicly as Secretary of State, but then again, we don’t know what he was arguing internally (and the book was published before Powell endorsed Barack Obama for President). Related to this is Elizabeth Edwards Spalding’s critique that we can’t seem to find “anything existential in the threat from jihadist terrorism” and that we were perhaps unfair to Bush to criticize his use of the “War on Terror” as a concept to drive American security policy. Clearly, the U.S. government must do everything it can to protect the nation from future threats, and America and its allies must be particularly vigilant about preventing terrorists organizations from obtaining WMD. But it is not just a military problem with a military solution, and many analysts on both sides of the political aisle agree that there needs to be a new way to approach the terrorist threat moving forward.

Moreover, what we were interested in exploring was how the “War on Terror” frame was used by conservatives to set the terms for the political debate and provide a unifying theme for Republican foreign policy that had been lost with the end of the Cold War. In telling this story, we hoped to draw insights that help explain what is happening inside the Republican Party today. Although Republicans were strongly unified after the September 11 attacks, conservatism is breaking apart as the George W. Bush administration comes to a close. Pragmatic realists are facing off against neoconservatives to dominate Republican Party foreign policy, while the lure of the two extremes of conservatism, isolationists skeptical of global engagement along with nationalists defined mainly by anti-immigration, remains strong.

We aim to show that such fissures are not new; in fact, they erupted nearly twenty years ago with the end of the Cold War. Anti-communism had been the glue that held the political right together for decades. In the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall, Republicans scattered among Pat Buchanan’s isolationism, the anti-Clinton nationalism of the “Contract with America” Republicans in Congress, the realist pragmatism of establishment stalwarts such as James Baker and Brent Scowcroft, and neoconservative idealism. These factions endured throughout the 1990s, and continued to battle one another when George W. Bush began his presidency.

Then came 9/11, and conservatives seized on Islamic terrorism as the new communism: an all-encompassing threat to the United States that could unify a diverse party and dominate the national security debate. Bush did not campaign for president in 2000 as a neoconservative, but after the September 11 attacks, he adopted the core tenets. He outlined a bold interventionist policy that emphasized the spread of democracy, and for some time he was backed by a remarkably robust conservative consensus. But now we are seeing Republicans splitting into familiar factions, with neoconservatives, traditional realists, and neo-isolationists facing off against one another. This presents huge challenges

for the Republican Party in the coming years -- indeed, we believe one of the more interesting stories to watch unfold will be how conservatives define their future in foreign policy.

Greenberg also wishes we had weighed in on the debate over whether Robert Rubin and his colleagues saved the day in 1997-98 or made a mess of everything, as Jagdish Bhagwati and others have argued. Economic historians will be debating the events of 1997-98 and their links to today's financial crisis for years to come. The maelstrom we currently find ourselves in should induce some amount of humility in all of us when it comes to figuring out what was done right and what wasn't. George W. Bush's first Treasury Secretary, Paul O'Neill, criticized the Clinton team for responding to crises like firemen and not having a framework in place to prevent the crises from emerging. Of course Henry Paulson and his colleagues spent 2008 trying to put out even bigger fires than the ones that developed a decade earlier, so clearly putting a framework in place to prevent crises is easier said than done. What we hope is that our book can help people understand the mindsets of officials like Timothy Geithner and Larry Summers, who learned lessons in 1997-98 and who will be taking the lead to solve even tougher problems in 2009.

Robert Jervis provided some very helpful clarifications to our own discussion, particularly in sorting out divisions within and between the political parties on the basis of the propensity to use force and the goals for which force is used. And he reminds us that all too often, foreign policy is of secondary importance in American political debates.

Yes, certainly, as Jervis argues, "9/11 did change quite a bit." As he notes, it changed President Bush. And it changed much in our domestic life, including the process of going through airports and difficulties for our universities in continuing to attract the best and brightest from abroad given more stringent visa requirements. But the point of the book was to show that when it comes to the big challenges out there in the world, they didn't just spring up on 9/11—many of them emerged after 11/9. (Although as Spalding correctly reminds us, many were also there even before then.)

Jervis argues that if not for Florida's butterfly ballots in 2000, we might be looking back at this period very differently. Fair enough. No doubt, Al Gore would have taken an approach to the world that was less grating to others, and would have been more attuned to the economic and security challenges of globalization that conservatives had dismissed as "globaloney." But a critical part of our story is to explore the continuity on an issue like Iraq. Some readers have been surprised to learn that Gore (and less surprisingly, his 2000 vice presidential candidate, Joe Lieberman) was the most hawkish in the Democratic Party on Iraq at the time. That's not to say that the Iraq drama would have unfolded the same way regardless of who had won in 2000. But the idea that Iraq is a problem solely of the Bush administration's making ignores the difficult history of America's entanglement with that country since Saddam invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

Professor Spalding takes us to task for being less evenhanded on George W. Bush than we were with his father or with Bill Clinton. To be sure, the Bush presidency has been a great boon to the publishing world, as entire forests have been destroyed to produce books

trashing the Bush Administration. We'd like to think that instead of piling on, we offer some historical context. We set out to help explain how the key tenets of Bush's policies can be traced back to the evolution of conservative foreign policy thinking since the end of the Cold War, and the lessons that many in the Republican establishment learned from the Soviet collapse (such as the confidence about the ease with which the United States can spread democracy elsewhere in the world).

Nicholas Guyatt stands out among the five reviewers as the critically unhappy one, and his dissonant voice reflects a useful perspective from abroad. As we've given talks about our book around the country, it has become clear that an interesting sequel would take the same period and examine how it looked to the rest of the world. Guyatt provides a glimpse of what such a study might look like. But that's not the book we set out to write.

In writing about America from 11/9 to 9/11, we tried to do several things. This book is an intellectual history of the debates between liberals and conservatives (and among factions inside both the political right and left) about the world after the Cold War and America's role in it. It is also a diplomatic history, in that it is a narrative of the major events and key turning points in American foreign policy during these years. And finally, it is a political history of how the politics of national security played out during these years, as liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans, responded to the end of the Cold War and tried to reshape themselves to face the new global realities. We believe it is impossible to understand these years without seeing the interweaving of the ideas, events, and politics, which we argue very much shaped the history of the past eight years and continues to shape the foreign policy choices that Democrats and Republicans will argue about in the months ahead.

As Guyatt sees American foreign policy in those years, what stands out to him is the effort to promote a neoliberal economic order and a political order enabling the U.S. to project its power. He finds it strange that given Clinton's interest in global economics, the book would put the foreign policy crises first in telling the story of 1993-95. But Clinton's mishandling of Bosnia, Somalia and Haiti early on had profound effects on his presidency, overshadowing much of the success of his economic agenda. It also shaped Republican attitudes toward him and Democrats generally, cementing a stereotype about liberal foreign policy that lasted for years, if not to the present day.

Guyatt appears to be bothered by the failure of U.S. presidents to believe that the international order should not constrain the United States. And he is correct that American presidents have viewed the United Nations as a tool of American foreign policy. But this isn't particularly surprising, and the critique is something of a cliché.

Guyatt complains about the Clinton effort to keep Saddam Hussein "in his box." But this is a bit strange given his belief that more should be done to buttress the United Nations. After all, these were UN resolutions that the United States and its allies were upholding. Saddam did try to assassinate a former American president and massed troops once again on the Kuwaiti border. Guyatt believes it is sleight of hand for us to have written our Iraq story as if Saddam had WMD, but the policies were built on those assumptions – and we have tried

to explain this history as it unfolded. Obviously, as we point out, the lack of WMD in Iraq meant that the policies were built on faulty assumptions, but one can't understand the policies or the continuities from one administration to another without understanding the assumptions.

Guyatt says we didn't write enough about Al Qaeda and that we paid too much attention to Iraq and missile defense. But the latter is what was being debated, so not to cover those issues as we did would have been to ignore a key part of the history. And in fact, this is a major point of the book: that American political debates were so focused on issues like Iraq and missile defense that American policymakers, politicians, intellectuals, and common citizens didn't spend enough time discussing terrorism, as well as issues such as the rise of Asia and climate change that will affect us for many years to come.

On a broader level, Guyatt criticizes us for failing to come up with what Bill Clinton would call a "theory of the case" for explaining this critical era. For twenty years people have been trying to come up with a replacement for the Cold War's "containment" policy. We tell the story of how Clinton himself was obsessed with finding such an idea, but was ultimately unsuccessful. And as we explained above, Bush thought he had found the new defining concept after 9/11 with the "War on Terror."

But that concept has lost its luster. So we argue that while the quest for defining a single, simple concept to guide American foreign policy might keep many academics in business, as a practical matter it is fruitless, overrated and even dangerous in the complex world of the 21st century. As the book recounts, in 1994, the Clinton team asked 90-year old George Kennan to come down from Princeton so they could get his advice on replacing the doctrine that he had articulated so successfully in 1947. The former diplomat's sage counsel: "forget about the bumper sticker; try to come up with a thoughtful paragraph or two."

Finally, perhaps the most gratifying comment of all the reviews came from Professor Spalding. We are thrilled that her students found the book so helpful. One of the main reasons we wrote this book was for those who are just coming of age who see 9/11 as a starting point of modern history at the expense of what came before it. This is not to diminish the importance of 9/11 as a pivotal date (as Jervis rightly points out), but to believe that history "began" on 9/11 is as misleading as believing that history "ended" with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Again, thanks to all the reviewers for contributing such stimulating remarks.

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