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Introduction by Thomas Maddux

Ross A. Kennedy. *The Will to Believe: Woodrow Wilson, World War I, and America's Strategy for Peace and Security.* Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2009. 312 pp. ISBN: 978-0-87338-971-6 (\$45.00, cloth).

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Woodrow Wilson has continued to attract the attention of scholars and probably lengthened his lead in scholarly assessments of his diplomacy over any other U.S. president. His contemporary, Theodore Roosevelt, continues to attract biographies but few scholars would claim that he had a lasting influence, pro and con, on U.S. attitudes about international relations and U.S. strategy commensurate with the influence of Wilson. Two recent studies with a different orientation on Wilson and his international impact include Robert Tucker's *Woodrow Wilson and the Great War: Reconsidering America's Neutrality, 1914-1917* and Erez Manela's *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*. Whereas Tucker examines very closely Wilson's response to WWI and his failed effort to keep the U.S. out of the war, Manela offers a broader international perspective on the interaction of Wilson's rhetoric of self-determination and international reform with colonial national leaders through the Versailles peace conference.¹ The Wilsonian legacy in shaping U.S. attitudes on international relations has also received extensive recent analysis in both thematic overviews of U.S. policies in the 20th century as well as studies focused on recent challenges such as the Iraq war and the policies of George W. Bush. Wilson is given extensive credit or blame for current American ideas on exceptionalism, the spread of democracy, and unilateralism vs. collaboration with the major powers and the United Nations. Critics of the War on Terror and Bush's policies disagree strongly on how much blame to place on Wilson for enhancing American attitudes on current issues.²

Ross Kennedy's *The Will to Believe* has a narrower focus than a number of the books cited above but he does comment on the Wilsonian legacy into the 21st century. As the reviewers note, Kennedy has taken a fairly original approach to the 1914-1920 period in his analysis of debates about U.S. security and appropriate responses to the challenges and opportunities raised by WWI and the peacemaking at Versailles. Kennedy focuses on three major coalitions—liberal internationalists led by Wilson; Atlanticists commanded by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Theodore Roosevelt, and Secretary of State Elihu Root; and pacifists marshaled by William Jennings Bryan and Senator William Borah—and explores the rationales behind their positions as they debated the underlying causes of the war, its consequences for the U.S., and the appropriate security policies that Washington should pursue. This assessment is interwoven with Kennedy's evaluation of Wilson's grand strategy and his policies to deal with the challenges raised by the Entente powers of Great Britain and France, and by Germany before the U.S. decision to enter the war in 1917 and Wilson's ensuing campaign to shape the peace settlement.

¹ See the H-Diplo roundtables on Tucker and Manela at <http://www.hnet.org/~diplo/roundtables/>

² For a variety of examples of these studies, see the H-Diplo roundtables on Michael H. Hunt's *The American Ascendancy: How the United States Gained & Wielded Global Dominance* (2007); Walter Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy: National Identity and U.S. Foreign Policy* (2008); Joan Hoff, *A Faustian Foreign Policy from Woodrow Wilson to George W. Bush* (2008); Tony Smith, *A Pact With the Devil: Washington's Bid for World Supremacy and the Betrayal of the American Promise* (2007); and G. John Ikenberry, Thomas J. Knock, Anne-Marie Slaughter, and Tony Smith, *The Crisis in American Foreign Policy: Wilsonianism in the Twentieth-first Century* (2009).

The reviewers welcome Kennedy's focus and the impressive research shaping his analysis, but they do raise some issues concerning both the context of the study and the results with respect to Wilson's grand strategy. Kennedy's response is thorough and thoughtful.

- 1) The reviewers welcome Kennedy's assessment of the three different perspectives noting that he not only carefully compares them with each other but also develops the comparison throughout the 1914-1920 period. Sally Marks, for example, notes the successful emphasis on comparison around the issues of militarism, national security, and collective security, although she suggests this does become repetitious. (1) Elizabeth McKillen applauds the attention devoted to the pacifists as Kennedy demonstrates that "there were other analyses and options besides those adopted by Wilson and his famous Republican adversaries." (1) McKillen would have appreciated more differentiation among the pacifists as well as the inclusion of more perspectives from different feminists, socialist and labor groups, and racial and ethnic groups reaching into the international social reform perspectives. Christopher Ball emphasizes the analytical strengths of Kennedy's approach of examining "how political activists, commentators, and office-holders agreed or disagreed in their thinking about security questions" as well as the author's identification of three questions shaping the debates: "the relationship between power politics and militarism, the implications of the world war for U.S. security, and the problems of reforming international politics." (2)
- 2) The reviewers are generally supportive of Kennedy's evaluation of Wilson's strategy both in the debate on security policy as well as its implementation before 1917, at Versailles and in the Senate ratification debate. Lloyd Ambrosius, for example, considers Kennedy's analysis of the "contradictory and false assumptions in the president's worldview" as the best dimension of the study. (1) McKillen and Marks agree that Kennedy "portrays Wilson as a leader who played power politics in order to end it, and in the process became hopelessly caught up in the contradictions of his policies." (3-4) "One can clearly see Wilson talking himself into war," Marks notes, "and not facing the growing contradiction in his policies, which American leadership as God's instrument would somehow solve." (2) Ball favorably points to Kennedy's assessment of the challenges that the three groups as well as Wilson faced, most notably the German problem with respect to the need to defeat Germany but at the same time include Germany in the post-war reform, an issue that they shifted around on and to which Wilson never found a satisfactory resolution. Ball's "second unresolved dilemma" for Wilson "was how to create a collective security order that would actually reform international politics." (3) As Kennedy demonstrates, Wilson's Versailles Treaty did not achieve much reform and the League, even if Wilson could have gained U.S. acceptance, looked like a great-power alliance rather than a reform agency.
- 3) The reviewers raise questions on several different aspects of Kennedy's study. Marks would welcome more context, particularly with respect to the Republican and Democratic parties and the domestic political process. McKillen favorably

refers to how Wilson's beliefs about American exceptionalism influenced his position on issues such as the Monroe Doctrine and its relationship to the peace treaty and "how binding collective security should be." (4) Kennedy recognizes the importance of "ideas about the moral and political superiority of the United States" in shaping American views, but he gives more significance to national security concerns in shaping Wilson and the liberal internationalist agenda for reform. (p. xiii) At the same time Kennedy frequently depicts Wilson as relying on a concept of U.S. moral superiority to rationalize contradictions between what he wanted the Entente powers and Germany to do, and what he was willing to have the U.S. contribute. (see pp. 78-80, 100-101, 130-31, 141-42, 200, *et. passim*) Ball suggests that Kennedy has minimized the political economy of national security by playing down the importance of Open Door market considerations in the debates. (pp. 26-27, 34-36), and by leaving this issue out of the debate among pacifists, Atlanticists, and liberal internationalists.

- 4) Unlike specialists such as John Milton Cooper, Jr., Kennedy emphasizes Wilson's ultimate defeat as a result of his unwillingness to accept a Versailles treaty and U.S. entrance into the League with reservations and the "profoundly flawed character of the collective security program." The flaws, Kennedy emphasizes, include the prospects of endless intervention around the globe regardless of the relationship of conflicts to U.S. interests; the likelihood of the League becoming an alliance of the victors to keep Germany down; and the promotion of spreading democracy without being able to recognize it and support it when it emerged in a new German government. (pp. 221-2) Marks agrees with Kennedy's suggestion that Wilson "bumped into reality" at Versailles and in the U.S. Senate and ran out of energy, health, and political support to bring a conclusion of limited success to his reform efforts. McKillen also applauds Kennedy's assessment that Wilson talked neutrality after 1914 but cooperated with the British war effort to bolster his desire to mediate the conflict, a similar hypocrisy to talking peace without victory but supporting a settlement that punished Germany.
- 5) The post-1914 debate and Versailles Treaty conflict did not, according to Kennedy, lead to either a consensus behind a more stable and realistic national security policy or a removal of the contradictions in the perspectives of Wilson and the liberal internationalists, pacifists or Atlanticists. In a brief discussion of this assertion to the present day, Kennedy reviews how postwar isolationism, WWII diplomacy and the Cold War "reveal the endurance of long-held Wilsonian views about national security." In the aftermath of the Cold War, Kennedy suggests that both liberals and neo-conservatives looked forward to a Wilsonian transformation of international politics but encountered instead the "anarchical structure of the international system or the power politics that went with it." With a degree of discouragement, Kennedy concludes that "Wilsonianism dominates America's discourse about national security affairs at the dawn of the twentieth-first century just as it did nearly one hundred years ago." (pp. 225-7) Ball accepts this assessment but

questions the assertion that neo-conservatives reject balance-of-power politics and Kennedy's concept of collective security. (5-8) ³

Participants:

Ross A. Kennedy received his Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley. He has taught at the Johns Hopkins University-Nanjing University Center for Chinese and American Studies and is an associate professor of history at Illinois State University. He is the author of *The Will to Believe: Woodrow Wilson, World War I, and America's Strategy for Peace and Security* (Kent State University Press, 2009). Professor Kennedy is currently working on a book analyzing U.S. national security strategy from 1921 to 1941.

Lloyd E. Ambrosius is the Samuel Clark Waugh Distinguished Professor of International Relations and Professor of History at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He is the author of *Woodrow Wilson and the American Diplomatic Tradition: The Treaty Fight in Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 1987); *Wilsonian Statecraft: Theory and Practice of Liberal Internationalism during World War I* (SR Books, 1991); and *Wilsonianism: Woodrow Wilson and His Legacy in American Foreign Relations* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). He was the Mary Ball Washington Professor of American History at University College, Dublin (1977–8), and twice a Fulbright Professor at the universities of Cologne (1972–3) and Heidelberg (1996).

Christopher Ball has taught U.S. foreign policy and international relations at the University of Iowa, Johns Hopkins, and Iowa State University. He is completing his Ph.D. at Columbia University entitled "Ideologies of Security: Visions of Democracy and International Order in the Making of United States Grand Strategy Policy." He is an editor at H-Diplo and currently supervises book reviews and moderates list discussion.

Elizabeth McKillen is a professor of history at the University of Maine. She is the author of *Chicago Labor and the Quest for a Democratic Diplomacy* (Cornell University Press, 1995) and many articles on labor internationalism. She is currently writing a book manuscript on "Workers' Control and Wilsonian Internationalism: U.S. Labor, Socialist, and Immigrant Left Responses to War."

Sally Marks holds the doctorate in international history from the University of London. She is the author of *The Illusion of Peace: International Relations in Europe, 1918-1933* (1976, 2003); *Innocent Abroad: Belgium at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919* (1981), which won the George Louis Beer and Phi Alpha Theta awards; *The Ebbing of International Ascendancy: An International History of the World, 1914-1945* (2002); and the forthcoming *Paul Hymans of Belgium* (2010) in the *Haus Makers of the Modern World* series. At present, she is revisiting Allied and American approaches to the German question, 1918-1921.

³ For debates about the influence of Wilsonian concepts on current national security policies, see G. John Ikenberry, Thomas J. Knock, Anne-Marie Slaughter, and Tony Smith, *The Crisis in American Foreign Policy: Wilsonianism in the Twentieth-first Century* (2009).

Ross Kennedy's *The Will to Believe: Woodrow Wilson, World War I, and America's Strategy for Peace and Security* is an important piece of scholarship. There is no other book that covers the full scope of Wilson's search for a viable strategy for peace and security during World War I. There are many books that deal with certain aspects of this topic but none that provides a comprehensive synthesis and analysis throughout Wilson's presidency, as this book does. This unique quality makes Kennedy's new book a welcome addition to historical scholarship.

This book examines President Woodrow Wilson's response to World War I, focusing on his approach to America's national security and his search for peace. It compares the president's vision of collective security with the alternatives that peace advocates (e.g., William Jennings Bryan, Jane Addams, Robert La Follette, Oswald Garrison Villard) and expansionists (e.g., Theodore Roosevelt, Elihu Root, Henry Cabot Lodge) offered during and after the war. Although he did not succeed, Wilson defined the agenda and dominated the debate over U.S. foreign policy. Kennedy notes the strengths and weaknesses in the arguments and political feasibility of these three alternatives but he is at his best in demonstrating the contradictory and false assumptions inherent in the president's worldview. Because the legacy of Wilsonianism continued to shape debates over America's national security for the next century, Kennedy's explication of the strengths and weaknesses of Wilson's ideology and statecraft during the First World War contributes as well to a better understanding of America's place in the world up to the present.

This book is an excellent synthesis and analysis of familiar material on Woodrow Wilson's response to World War I. It is based on extensive research in U.S. government documents and presidential papers (e.g., Arthur S. Link's edition of *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*) and in periodicals of the era. It also takes into account the existing historical literature. Its most important and original contribution to scholarship derives from Kennedy's sustained focus on Wilson's evolving strategy for peace and security in the midst of World War I in comparison with the alternatives. With this comparative analysis of American policy-making, Kennedy clarifies the president's vision of peace and security and reveals the limits of Wilsonian ideology and diplomacy. In my judgment, specialists in the field should welcome this fresh approach to what at first might appear to be familiar material. Kennedy places well-known events in a new perspective.

The unique quality of this book will give it a potential readership beyond specialists. For graduate seminars and undergraduate courses on U.S. foreign relations or international relations, Kennedy's book will make an excellent choice as the one book that covers Wilsonian diplomacy from U.S. neutrality at the beginning of World War I to U.S. intervention in 1917, from wartime relations with the Allies to the Paris Peace Conference, and finally from the defeat of Wilson's League of Nations in the U.S. Senate to the end of his presidency. No other single book deals in depth with all these aspects of Wilsonian diplomacy. Given the importance of Wilsonianism in ongoing public debates over U.S. foreign relations since World War I, Kennedy's book is likely to have a lasting appeal.

Because it is based on solid scholarship and offers a clear understanding of both the strengths and weaknesses of Wilson's diplomacy, it certainly should be read by anyone who wants to learn from history.

Review by Christopher Ball, Independent Scholar

Ross Kennedy has written a novel, incisive, and important analysis U.S. national security debates from 1914-1920. *The Will To Believe* offers a new classification of the political coalitions competing over the course of U.S. grand strategy and explains the complex reasoning behind their positions. Kennedy shows the contradictions both within each group's ideas about security and among the groups, and he differentiates their causal beliefs, empirical assessments, and political judgments. His conclusions challenge the prevailing interpretation of U.S. policy in this period and its consequences to the current day. I have some criticisms of *The Will To Believe*, but none of them vitiate the core claims, with one exception.

The leading accounts of debates over U.S. policy during World War I and the peace conference generally present a dichotomy of opinion (e.g., conservative internationalists vs. progressive internationalists, nationalist conservatives vs. liberal Wilsonians, Republicans vs. Democrats). In part, the dichotomization occurs because most works focus on the predominantly partisan treaty fight in the Senate. Kennedy, however, devotes equal attention to war-time debates over "preparedness," collective security after the war, U.S. diplomacy as a neutral, and U.S. entry into the war, alongside the treaty fight. He identifies three factions: liberal internationalists, Atlanticists (following Priscilla Roberts' terminology), and pacifists.¹ One can quibble about the nomenclature (e.g., few of the pacifists actually renounce force), but Kennedy presents a fair case that members of each group held common beliefs about the causes of war, the consequences of international relations for U.S. society, and the preferable solutions to U.S. security problems.

The Will To Believe examines ideologies of security and the political engagements of those that hold them. Rather than focus on the final political commitments—whether to support defense legislation, belligerency, or the peace treaty—and then search for common ground among the partisans' prior rhetoric, he instead examines how political activists, commentators, and office-holders agreed or disagreed in their thinking about security questions. Choices on specific policy issues may reflect differences in judgments about tactics, actual conditions, and feasible outcomes, rather than ideological commitments. For example, the editors of the *New Republic* were liberal internationalists, according to Kennedy, but they opposed the Treaty of Versailles without reservations, a policy position associated with the Atlanticists (208-10). Kennedy's categorization is sensible given that *New Republic* editors agreed with other liberal internationalists, for the same avowed reasons, over preparedness and entry into WWI, and that they articulated their opposition to the Treaty in terms familiar to liberal internationalists. Similarly, the pacifists support for U.S. belligerency in 1917 reflected changes in their beliefs about how much of threat Germany posed rather than an intellectual reversal (172).

¹ Priscilla Roberts, "The Anglo-American Theme: American Visions of an Atlantic Alliance, 1914-1933," *Diplomatic History* 21:3 (Summer 1997).

According to Kennedy, the national security debates in 1914-1920 revolved around three questions: the relationship between power politics and militarism, the implications of the world war for U.S. security, and the problems of reforming international politics. The first question pitted the Atlanticists, who were less worried about militarism in U.S. society and more accepting of power-politics (17, 21), against the liberal internationalists and pacifists. Both saw militarism as a grave danger to the American polity and power-politics as inherently war-prone, but the liberal internationalists saw the primary cause of war in the effects of international anarchy (13-14), while the pacifists focused more on reactionary, atavistic, and greedy domestic forces (10). The second question cast the pacifists against the Atlanticists and the liberal internationalists. The pacifists believed the United States was secure from external threats, even if Germany won the war, therefore only modest increases in U.S. military forces were necessary. Anything more risked militarism. The Atlanticists and the liberal internationalists disagreed, but for different reasons. The Atlanticists feared a German victory would imperil the western hemisphere; the liberal internationalists feared that too, but also that a decisive Entente victory would simply set the stage for another war later (32-33). The third question created a more complex divide among the factions. Liberal internationalists supported a collective security system with some kind of enforcement authority. The pacifists opposed an enforcement role because it might create an obligation to military intervention in power politics, and focused more on an international commitment to the democratization of foreign policy, anti-imperialism, and consultation. Atlanticists shared the pacifist skepticism of enforcement but for a different reason: it might distract the United States with matters unrelated to its vital interests. They preferred a set of legal rights and security commitments that more resembled a great-power condominium than collective security (58-59). Kennedy creatively uses the answers to these questions to explain the three coalitions' support and criticism of Wilson's neutrality policies, mediation efforts, war aims, and peace diplomacy.

Kennedy explicates two dilemmas that none of the group's can resolve within their own ideational frameworks and that create discord among them. Both dilemmas contribute to the failure of the Versailles Treaty in the U.S. Senate. The first is the German problem. In this case, the problem was that Germany needed to be defeated to end the war, but was needed as a partner in any post-war reform. If the Entente pursued a vengeful peace, Germany would not be a post-war partner, and any collective security scheme would fail. At first, pacifists and liberal internationalists believed that German cooperation was possible if Germany democratized, but only if there was a "peace without victory." The Atlanticists disagreed: only a profound German defeat would ensure a postwar peace (175). But by 1918, many liberal internationalists believed that a more decisive German defeat was necessary, and that even a democratic Germany might still be an unwilling partner (167, 179). By 1919, with the incipient Weimar Republic, these views change yet again. To many liberal internationalists, and certainly to pacifists, a peaceful, republican Germany has been established, and therefore a punitive peace would be counterproductive. When the Versailles Treaty produces such a peace, most pacifists and key liberal internationalists dampen their support for treaty, although many still support U.S. ratification (211). What stands out here is how their predictions of Germany's reaction to the peace settlement influence their views of the League's prospects. While liberal internationalists and pacifists seek to reform the international security order, their

assessments of future German diplomacy are based largely on the assumption that German policy will continue to reflect the power-politics calculations and nationalist sentiment that produced the world war.

The second unresolved dilemma was how to create a collective security order that would actually reform international politics. In early debates on collective security, the principle that international security was indivisible was only one element of greater reform. Transforming the nature of international politics required more than mutual commitments to stand against aggression: armaments needed to be controlled, autocracies needed to be replaced with republics, self-determination had to be granted, and commerce needed to be open (48-50). The Versailles Treaty did little of this. Pacifists feared that the League of Nations, as constituted, would perpetuate power politics under a new name (204-05). Along with the Atlanticists, they feared that under an ersatz collective security system, the United States would be embroiled in wars to further great power' imperial interests rather than prevent conflicts (215). Even a number of liberal internationalists rejected any strong commitments to follow the League's Council in matters that did not involve strong U.S. interests. The coalitions wanted collective security without contributing to its maintenance (213). If the League mustered a preponderance of power to support the international status quo, it constituted a great-power alliance—an improvement in the working of power politics, but not an alternative to it.

There are two methodological problems with *The Will To Believe*. First, Kennedy has no standard for discriminating among genuine beliefs, rhetorically useful ones, and politically or psychologically motivated ones. For example, when Lodge argues on 1 February 1917 that the League would enable smaller powers to drag the United States into war—before the voting procedures were even proposed—is Lodge really “preoccupied” and “compromising his attack” (60) or is he intentionally misrepresenting the League to undercut it? Did pacifists really change their views about the threat Germany posed because of worsening German aggression, or did they change their assessment because the political winds had shifted toward war or because blaming Germany was less discomforting than admitting a general error in their security beliefs? Unfortunately, we have a surplus of plausible explanations.

Second, it is not clear how much explanatory weight we should accord each idea or argument conveyed in particular writings or speeches. Should we consider most of the arguments of Henry Cabot Lodge, Theodore Roosevelt, or Elihu Root as authoritative among Atlanticists, or just a few? Should the *Nation* or the *Public* be the preeminent source for pacifists' beliefs? While public intellectuals hope their words matter, there is no reason to assume that the apparatus of their arguments is generally accepted. Kennedy's claims would be more compelling if he could connect each coalition's specific ideas with political action more systematically. However, these problems afflict most studies of ideas, and the methodological solutions—quantitative textual analysis, concept mapping—often create new problems. Such a price is not worth paying given the focus of Kennedy's analysis and the quality of his findings.

There are three, minor areas where I part with Kennedy's arguments. First, *The Will To Believe* marginalizes the role of economics factors in national security debates. Kennedy dismisses of claims that the "Open Door" or export-interests drove U.S. policy (26-27, 34-36), and I largely agree that a capitalist need for overseas markets was not the primary cause of U.S. policy. But in doing so, Kennedy almost excludes the political economy of national security. He mentions the economic aspects of pacifist and liberal internationalist arguments, but grants them a minor role in the debates of the day. However, the anti-imperialism of many pacifists and liberal internationalists was rooted in the Cobdenite idea that free trade would reduce conflict. As Kennedy notes (56), pacifists called for free trade, access to colonial markets, and nationalization of arms and munitions industries.²

This had two effects that he does not draw out. First, it deepened their differences with the Atlanticists, who backed protective tariffs. Not only were the groups' economic and security beliefs linked, but they reinforced their differences. Many of the pacifists were committed to social reform, while the Atlanticists contained a number of social conservatives. For pacifists, tariffs cuts would reduce a source of friction between countries and lower consumer costs; it would require progressive income taxation to partially replace government revenue and diminish funds for armaments. For Atlanticists, tariffs funded preparedness, protected industries, and avoided income taxes. To the pacifists, tariffs were an element of militarism in domestic society. The second effect was that it complicated their relations with mainstream liberal internationalists. Adding free trade, colonial access, and nationalization to the agenda for the postwar organization went beyond what most liberal internationalists supported. The League to Enforce Peace's platform was silent on economic issues. Kennedy himself notes these differences (173), but does not emphasize them.

Second, there is a lacuna on the role that U.S. policy toward Latin America played in the coalitions' debates and assessments of the Wilson administration. Pacifists and Atlanticists were critical, for opposite reasons, of Wilson's interventions in Mexico, Haiti, Santo Domingo, and elsewhere. Pacifists doubted his commitment to genuine reform, and Atlanticists doubted his commitment to American interests. Before the Paris peace conference, Wilson's foreign policy had a measure of lost political credibility.

Third the complexity of the arguments can become confusing for the reader, and on occasion for the author. For example, Kennedy claims that pacifists believed that the war, even with the possibility of a German victory, would not endanger the United States given the country's geographic distance and existing navy (39). Kennedy argues, however, that the fact that the preparedness movement gained support during the war contradicts the pacifist belief: "Evidently, then, the United States *was* deeply affected by the course of power politics overseas" (40). This is illogical. If I argue that witches are no danger, the

² Not all pacifists believed this, however. The "peace progressives" in the Senate supported tariffs and immigration restrictions that other pacifists, like the Women's Peace Party and *Survey's* editors, opposed. Kennedy categorizes the groups around their national security beliefs, not their broader political ideologies. See Robert David Johnson, *The Peace Progressives and American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 192-199.

fact that the anti-witchcraft movement gains support does not invalidate my position. Mostly, however, Kennedy is adept at both articulating his subjects reasoning and criticizing it.

These criticisms, however, do not seriously affect his overall argument or the importance of his broader interpretation of U.S. policy in the period. Kennedy parts with most other historians on the period in two ways.³ First, the failure of the United States to join the League is not tragic. The European states were not committed to collective security, and U.S. thinking about the collective security was wrought with contradictions. There was no clear path to reform the Versailles settlement or the League's operation even with U.S. participation.

Second, he argues that the intellectual legacy of the Wilson-era national security debates has had a persistent and pernicious effect on U.S. thinking about national security. The United States cannot safely engage in power politics, since it inevitably descends into war. But abstention from power politics allows menaces to magnify, confronting it eventually with the choice of heavily armed isolation, which will ruin U.S. democracy, or perilous entanglements. Only a transformation of international politics can produce peace, but this requires a considerable commitment to protect the peace until some mixture of disarmament, democratization, self-determination, and open commerce can be achieved. As a result, the United States avoided serious diplomacy toward Europe and Japan during the early 1930s, only to mobilize around a transformative agenda later in the decade (224-225). After World War II, the US feared becoming a "garrison state" if it withdrew, and pursued global commitments to save the world from Soviet influence and communism. The United States was unwilling to merely balance Soviet power in Europe.

For Kennedy, the basic Wilsonian belief in the need to transform international politics characterizes today's liberal and neo-conservative approaches in U.S. foreign policy today. Both seek fundamental change in international politics. Liberals believe this can be achieved by strengthening multilateral institutions to promote democracy and free trade. Neo-conservatives seek the same goals but believe the only unilateral exercise of American primacy can achieve these ends. Kennedy's conclusion about the ideological inability of U.S. political elites to balance ends and means in national security is not new, but he provides the most detailed account of its intellectual and policy roots to date (227).⁴ Kennedy goes a step too far, however, when he claims that U.S. foreign policy discourse, particularly in its neo-conservative reform, is based on the rejection of balance-of-power politics (227). This leap is related to a flawed understanding in the book of what collective security is.

³ The major exception is Lloyd E. Ambrosius, who commented on the manuscript (x). Kennedy largely agrees with his assessment in *Woodrow Wilson and the American Diplomatic Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁴ See also Colin Dueck's *Reluctant Crusaders: Power, Culture, and Change in American Grand Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

The flaw is manifested in the ambiguity of *The Will To Believe's* title. William James' 1896 eponymous essay on the epistemology of beliefs defended the formation of a belief that something is true even in the absence of proof of its truth, in particular the belief in God without proof. Kennedy may be implying that Wilson and the liberal internationalists believed that collective security would produce peace even though they lacked proof that it would work. Kennedy writes that "the premise of collective security [is] the idea that all states had an overriding stake in peace throughout the world" (222). But not all states would seek peace, and wars in some parts of the world do not affect states in other part, at least not in any direct, strategic way.

But this reading of James, and of collective security, is, at best, incomplete. Indeed, James outlines the real premise behind collective security:

A whole train of passengers (individually brave enough) will be looted by a few highwaymen simply because the latter can count on one another, while each passenger fears that if he makes a movement of resistance, he will be shot before any one else backs him up. If we believed that the whole car-full would rise at once with us, we should each severally rise, and train robbing would never even be attempted. There are, then, cases where a fact cannot come at all unless a preliminary faith exists in its coming.⁵

Collective security is not actually premised on the belief that peace is indivisible; it is premised on the belief that states should act *as if* peace is indivisible.⁶ Put differently, collective security is based on acceptance of a political principle that peace is indivisible, not an empirical statement that peace is indivisible. Article 11 acknowledged this: "Any war or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the Members of the League or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League..."⁷ Kennedy cites this article (193), but interprets it as a factual claim rather than a conscious social construction. The League was *intended* to will a belief. If a would-be aggressor believes aggression will be met with overwhelming resistance, it will forgo aggression, and collective security succeeds. Collective security fails when an aggressor believes that it will fail, and so resorts to force. This is one reason why Wilson was adamantly opposed to Lodge's reservation to Article 10. By rejecting *any* obligation to "respect and preserve" members' territorial integrity or political independence, it undermined the core understanding of what collective security was about.

Collective-security's critics are correct: peace is not really indivisible, and universal peace-enforcement would require frequent interventions in areas of slight strategic concern to some, if not many, states. But many of proponents of collective security, like Wilson, recognize this, and this is why they link collective security to more fundamental changes in

⁵ William James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1921), p. 24.

⁶ John Gerard Ruggie, "Multilateralism: the Anatomy of an Institution," *International Organization* 46:3 (Summer, 1992), p. 571.

⁷ See http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp

the international order. For Wilson and other liberal internationalists, the League was “a compass rather than the final destination,” as Thomas Knock put it.⁸ The League of Nations was intended to have been more than merely a device to replace ad hoc alliances against aggression with a standing, preponderant coalition. It was to have been more than an international body at which the United States would have one vote. It would have been, in one of Wilson’s favorite terms, “organic,” growing and changing based on the participation of its members. The United States could have shaped the League by acting within it. Diplomacy would not have began and end with speeches and a vote before the League Council. Ongoing collaboration would have created new understandings and perceptions of interests. This further reinforced Wilson’s opposition to Lodge’s reservations, which sought to distance the United States from actual political commitments to international reform.

Therefore, the book’s argument that collective security was flawed within its own terms and the related conclusion that Wilsonian ideas about the balance of power influence contemporary neo-conservative discourse on U.S. foreign policy are wrong. The dilemma of how to reform international politics is still present, but that is not due to an inherent problem with collective security. The neo-conservative concept of preponderance is at best distantly related to a Wilsonian critique of the balance of power.⁹ While realist international-relations theorists disagree over which configuration of power (unipolar, bipolar, or multipolar) will reduce great-power war, they agree that power politics is inevitable. In the neo-conservative view, peace remains divisible, and the national security focus is on great powers.¹⁰ Preponderance provides security only so long as the United States is the preponderant power. A multi-polar order would be preferable to another country holding that position. Even with these objections, however, *The Will to Believe* is a convincing and compelling study.

⁸ Thomas J. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 127

⁹ The connection to democracy promotion is another matter. For the connections between contemporary liberal and neo-conservative ideas, see Tony Smith’s *A Pact With The Devil: Washington’s Bid for World Supremacy and the Betrayal of the American Promise* (New York: Routledge, 2007). See also H-Diplo’s Roundtable Review, 7 Nov. 2007 <http://www.h-diplo.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/APactWithTheDevil-Roundtable.pdf>. For a connection between liberal ideas and the balance of power as an equilibrium see Deborah Boucoyannis, “The International Wanderings of a Liberal Idea, or Why Liberals Can Learn to Stop Worrying and Love the Balance of Power,” *Perspectives on Politics* 5:4 (Dec. 2007).

¹⁰ See Barry R. Posen and Andrew L. Ross, “Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy,” *International Security* 21:3 (Winter 1996/97). Dueck is more supportive of Kennedy’s view, cf. *Reluctant Crusaders*, pp. 119-120.

Review by Sally Marks, Independent Scholar

Wilson's World Order, Pro and Con

In *The Will to Believe*, Ross A. Kennedy carefully analyses Woodrow Wilson's effort to reform the existing system of international politics and the response to his proposals of three competing American coalitions. He progresses chronologically from 1914 to 1920 on the basis of thorough research in American archives, private papers, and published materials. Chapters essentially alternate between Wilson's practice of diplomacy toward his goals and the debate about it, pointing out the inconsistencies of both.

Kennedy labels the three coalitions as follows: 1) the ostrich-like Pacifists, including W. J. Bryan, Robert LaFollette, left Progressives, and moderate Socialists; favoring disarmed isolation; 2) Liberal Internationalists led by Wilson and his administration, a heterogeneous group containing William Howard Taft and The League to Enforce Peace as well as Samuel Gompers; and 3) the Atlanticists, Republicans such as Teddy Roosevelt, Henry C. Lodge, and Elihu Root, who were more attuned than others to the realities of international politics. For every issue such as militarism, national security, and collective security, the views of each group are examined in detail, including variations within a group. Eventually this becomes arid and repetitious, as one is told yet again that Pacifists opposed the war and that the Atlanticists became marginalized because they did not believe that the balance of power was necessarily evil.

Kennedy, who is not an admirer of Wilson, points out his inconsistencies, as well as those of others. Chiefly, Wilson and much of his coalition sought collective security to replace power politics but would use coercion to gain it as well as a military build-up to force disarmament, essentially using power politics to end power politics. Further, he wished both to constrain Germany and to conciliate it, opting in the end primarily for the former. Kennedy provides a brief but incisive account of Wilson's "hierarchy of race" (49) which would afford Poles self-determination not permitted to Africans and Asians. One is struck by Wilson's absolute determination to impose *his* peace terms, however murky, on the European Allies who were doing most of the fighting. Kennedy argues that American exceptionalism was a factor in Wilson's thinking, but not decisive. Nonetheless, the president really believed that the United States would lead the way from its perch on the moral heights. Extraordinarily, according to Kennedy, he thought that Britain and Germany (France seldom intrudes) agreed and that for this reason his policy would succeed. In fact, both David Lloyd George and Georges Clemenceau thought him a sanctimonious prig, while the Germans deemed him a hypocrite. In Kennedy's view, Wilson's policy was typical of that of any great power and not launched from the moral heights. It produced "the worst of all possible worlds" (102), war with Germany while not satisfying Britain, and a more contradictory set of policies.

Kennedy writes well, especially in the chapters devoted to Wilson's diplomacy. One can clearly see Wilson talking himself into war and not facing the growing contradiction in his policies, which American leadership as God's instrument would somehow solve. Kennedy

notes Wilson's deference to Britain but not his longstanding Anglophilia. The analysis of the three coalitions is careful, systematic and exhaustive and certainly proves that a case can be made for any argument, however silly. More importantly, the picture of Wilson's idealism and that of others in conflict with realism and diplomatic necessity is convincing. Interestingly, Kennedy argues that Wilson did not deem "the people" wise but thought they had the capacity to be wisely led by elected leaders; even so, though he sought a democratic Germany, he distrusted the German masses. All in all, Kennedy's assessment of Wilson's views and actions is effective. Undoubtedly, he has accomplished what he set out to do.

However, what Kennedy set out to do is of limited ambit. The book raises several interesting questions which are not addressed. For example, Kennedy rightly says that the United States had a long history of hostility to militarism, but that hardly explains why in 1914 in the midst of a raging global conflict most everyone (except some Atlanticists) from the president on down felt that, in a country of nearly 100 million souls, increasing the army by 40,000 from its existing puny level of 100,000 would endanger the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and traditional American liberties. Granted, Dwight Eisenhower warned four decades later of a military-industrial complex, but why in 1914 was the Constitution so widely thought to be acutely fragile? And given the extreme distrust of the officer class, how did the nation produce any able generals at all? Why did so many (again, excepting some Atlanticists) assume the balance of power to be inherently unstable and unable to produce extended peace when in fact it had just prevented a pan-European war for a century? Why such intense hostility to Germany and such great fear of a German victory from the very outset of the war? The old historical debate over whether it was really in American interest to join the Allies does not figure here. Curiously, the Pacifists did not fear Germany because they assumed that victory would exhaust it, and thus it would be no danger to the United States. Why, then as more recently, was democracy considered a panacea?

In addition, *The Will to Believe* lacks context. The Republican and Democratic parties and the Congress receive little attention, as does the domestic political process. Although Kennedy claims to survey the entire political spectrum, the early supporters of Germany receive only passing mention and other elements none at all. The size and political clout of the three coalitions is not indicated. Whereas the *New Republic* and the *Nation* are quoted frequently, we are not told their circulation, readership, or influence. Lesser known individuals, such as William English Walling, Lincoln Colcord, and Theodore Marburg, require proper identification and some indication of why their views matter. One wonders whether Wilson believed that Poles were ready for self-government, as Lloyd George emphatically did not, or was mindful of the Polish-American voting bloc in the Democratic party. And taking the public statements of politicians at face value, as Kennedy consistently does, is always risky. For these reasons, *The Will to Believe* is not suitable for assignment to undergraduates.

The book lacks flavor, personality, or wit. Most individuals are merely names. Amid too much alphabet soup and repetition, the only leavening is the comment of British historian George Otto Trevelyan that Wilson was "surely the quintessence of a prig." (98) It would also help if the absurdity of some quoted views were noted. For example, Teddy Roosevelt

complained that tiny Belgium “inspired no fear” (19) in mighty Germany; the *New Republic* maintained in December 1917 that “...the Entente’s failure clearly to embrace Wilson’s peace terms was a chief factor behind revolutionary Russia’s disaffection from the war...” (168); and those who complained that Wilson’s best efforts at Paris did not achieve immediate transfer of Shantung (Shandong) peninsula to China seemed blissfully unaware that only war with Japan could achieve that. The combination of naiveté, narrowness of vision, and ignorance has, alas, recurred since regarding Yalta, the “who lost China” debate, and Iraq, among others.

Kennedy himself is not surefooted outside the United States. He refers several times to wartime loans to the Allies without noting that these were essential to the Entente’s continuance of the battle. There are innumerable calls—mostly in quotations—for the advent of democracy in Germany, presumably meaning responsible government since the Reichstag was democratically elected but lacked authority. Kennedy says Murmansk is “near” (144) Archangel, which is akin to saying that Baltimore is near Boston. There is confusion over the Kaiser’s abdication, the admittedly complicated situation of the Czech Legion in Siberia, and misstatements that after 1871 France tried to retaliate against Germany. Otherwise, France, the war’s battleground, is rarely mentioned. Some treaty issues are muddled; among others, the reason for the temporary treaty restriction upon German commercial policy was not as advertised here but rather to prevent Germany’s intact and healthy economy from swamping those of devastated Belgium, France, and Poland. And the explanation of why the German people were so outraged by the Versailles treaty is very partial at best. Nonetheless, such slips and lacunae are minor in a work focused on the debate over American policy. Here Kennedy is accurate if sometimes less than fully complete.

Most strikingly, Kennedy quotes Wilson as fearing in 1916 that if the Allies won decisively, they might impose “an unjust peace...sure to invite further calamities” and weakening Germany through “the annexation of her colonies, the allot[t]ing out of the territory of her allies, and an indemnity” for reconstruction and some Allied war costs. He predicted that “Such an outrage to [Germany’s] pride would never be forgotten” and peace would not last.(32) Though Kennedy delineates the contradictions in Wilson’s policy exhaustively and suggests irrationality more than once, he also argues that the treaty was reasonable in the balance of power terms Wilson was seeking to avoid. Under the circumstances, surely some brief comment on the similarity of the Versailles treaty to what Wilson feared in 1916 would be in order. Also, when one discusses any of the Big Four at the Paris peace conference, it is always wise to point out that none of them had unilateral power of decision. As Kennedy says, Wilson bumped into reality.

Finally, there remains the question of the book’s title, which is never directly addressed. It is a snappy title, easily read and easily spoken. However, in view of the multiplicity of groups, subgroups, publications, and individuals examined in the work and all their assorted views, one is left asking: whose will to believe what?

Woodrow Wilson's grim, angular face must surely adorn more book covers than any other president. Since World War I, studies of Wilson's diplomacy have become a veritable cottage industry within the field of historical publishing. Given the abundance of literature on Wilson, one might reasonably wonder if there is anything new to say about his international policies. But Ross Kennedy's book breaks new ground on several fronts.

Perhaps most importantly, Kennedy expands on the contemporaneous debate over Wilson's foreign policies that raged between 1914 and 1919 by giving more attention than have most historians to Wilson's critics on the left, a group he categorizes as "pacifists." Too often, debates over Wilsonian foreign policy have been framed primarily as a two-way controversy between Wilson and his Republican critics on the right. Although Thomas Knock devoted some attention to pacifists in his landmark study of Wilson, his primary focus was on those leftists who supported Wilson's policies until becoming disillusioned by wartime repression and by the shortcomings of the peace treaty.¹ Kennedy, by contrast, emphasizes a three-way debate over national security that developed early in Wilson's presidency and never abated between pacifists who remained outside the Wilsonian fold, "liberal internationalists" who rallied behind the president, and "Atlanticists" like Theodore Roosevelt who were more hawkish on most foreign policy issues than Wilson.

By devoting considerable attention to the pacifists, Kennedy helps to restore historical contingency, demonstrating that there were other analyses and options besides those adopted by Wilson and his famous Republican adversaries. Indeed, Kennedy helps remind us that pacifists constituted a powerful force in American society between 1914 and 1917. They opposed preparedness and militarism because they believed that it was at odds with American democratic values, a view shared by many, if not most, Americans on the eve of World War I. They agitated against U.S. intervention in World War I because they did not believe that the "outcome of the war would in any vital way affect the security interests of the United States." (25) Pacifists, suggests Kennedy, could make this argument because they defined U.S. national security "narrowly"; the United States needed only to ensure security from physical invasion of its territory--not a difficult task given the vast expanse of oceans by which it was surrounded--and to achieve democratic control of U.S. foreign policy so that plutocratic and militaristic interests could not plunge the country into war against the will of the democratic majority. (38) By contrast, both liberal internationalists and Atlanticists assumed that a German victory in World War I would create an unstable balance of power within the international system and would therefore be a security threat to the United States, although they disagreed about how much of a threat and what to do about it. Kennedy also highlights pacifist criticism of Wilson for pursuing policies that were pro-British and that therefore undermined U.S. neutrality. Pacifist criticism of the

¹Thomas Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

president, Kennedy makes clear, helped hinder the Wilson administration from more consistently pursuing preparedness and a pro-allied strategy.

Yet while Kennedy's treatment of the pacifists is in many ways illuminating, by lumping them all together he misses some of the differences that existed between them and underestimates the breadth of their programs for strengthening American security. Many pacifist agendas for improving national security were ultimately premised on the notion of international social transformation rather than on enhancing national defense, achieving a stable balance of power between nation states, or creating a league of nations that would collectively preserve peace. For example, while Kennedy briefly mentions that feminists often blamed war on male aggression, he fails to capture the extent to which they genuinely believed (whether male or female) that war could be eliminated by bringing the "mother life" into international politics through the world-wide enfranchisement of women. Many socialist and labor groups assumed that achieving security from war for working people would not only require more democratic controls over foreign policy but also the democratic control of industry, a revitalized international labor movement, and a more equitable division of labor and wealth within the global economic system. Such beliefs were held not only by radicals but also by the conservative labor reformers who helped to construct the International Labour Organization (ILO) during the Versailles Conference—a subject neglected by Kennedy. As the text creating the ILO in the Versailles treaty explained, its goals were to prevent "conditions of labour . . . involving such injustice, hardship and privation to large numbers of people as to produce unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperiled."²

Racial and ethnic groups often assumed that peace could be assured only when imperialism, and the cultural assumptions of Anglo-Saxon superiority that undergirded it, were eradicated. Their heady aspirations for reforming international affairs through the promotion of international racial and ethnic equality were also in evidence in Paris in 1919, not only during the debate over the Japanese racial equality clause, but also at the Pan African Congress and during the deliberations of the League of Oppressed Nationalities. In sum, Kennedy could benefit from a more systematic integration of the new literature on international social reform during this era, particularly Alan Dawley's 2003 book: *Changing the World*. Despite its limitations, however, Kennedy's discussion of the three way debate among pacifists, Atlanticists and liberal internationalists illuminates the divisions that emerged in American society over Wilsonian internationalism far better than other diplomatic histories.³

²"Final Texts of the Labor Section," in *Origins of the International Labor Organization*, James T. Shotwell ed., (New York, Columbia University Press, 1934), vol. 1, 424.

³ Dawley argued convincingly that the American desire for reform "did not stop at the water's edge, but neither did world affairs stop at the U.S. border." He suggested the importance of including foreign policy and social reform in the "same frame of analysis." See Alan Dawley, *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 5-6 and in general. See also, Reiner Tosstoff, "The International Trade Union Movement and the Founding of the International Labour Organization," *International Review of Social History* 50 (2005): 399-433; Jasmien Van Daele, "Engineering Social Peace: Networks, Ideas, and the Founding of the international Labour Organization," *International Review of Social History*, 50 (2005): 435-466; Elizabeth McKillen, "Pacifist Brawn and Silk-Stocking

Another area in which Kennedy breaks new ground is in illuminating the contradictions of Wilson's policies of "ostensible neutrality"—both during the war and the peace conference. (80) Two trends have persisted in the historiography on Wilson. His critics often portray him as a leader who tilted at the windmills of nineteenth century international naval law and who was out of touch with the realities of power politics during World War I. Others tend to glorify Wilson by portraying him as a messianic proponent of a "higher realism" who was ahead of his time in recognizing the values of collective security.⁴ Kennedy hews a different path: he portrays Wilson as a leader who played power politics in order to end it, and in the process became hopelessly caught up in the contradictions of his own policies. During the war, Wilson pursued "a policy designed to appear neutral while in fact the United States cooperated with Britain's war effort." (80) Kennedy demonstrates convincingly that this had less to do with Wilson's interpretation of international law than with his assumption that this policy would "increase U.S. influence with the Allies while containing Germany but not alienating it, thus positioning Wilson as a mediator between the combatants." (80) Yet Kennedy demonstrates in great detail that the inconsistencies in Wilson's policies alienated both the Germans and the British, as well as significant segments of the American public, who accused him of pursuing pro-British policies.

Kennedy also demonstrates that Wilson was not simply a tool of British and French leaders in meting out a harsh peace for Germany; rather he supported many provisions that undermined German economic and military strength because he believed that until Germany was thoroughly democratized, it might be a continuing threat to American democracy. According to Kennedy, Wilson's hypocrisy at Versailles in promoting a peace without victory while framing a peace treaty that punished Germany was "nothing new," but rather reflected the contradictions that had been "at the core of his approach to national security affairs" since 1914.(201)

Finally, it should be noted that Kennedy also breaks new ground in highlighting the ways in which Wilson's beliefs about American exceptionalism led him to backpedal on questions such as the Monroe Doctrine and how binding collective security should be during the peace conference.

In sum, readers will find much that is new in this book and it is likely to stimulate yet a new wave of scholarship on Wilson. One only hopes that Kennedy's groundbreaking research

Militarism: Labor, Gender and Antiwar Politics, 1914-1918," *Peace and Change* (July 2008): 388-425; idem, "the Mexican-American and Irish-American Immigrant Left and U.S. Foreign Relations, 1914-1924," *Diplomatic History* 25(2001): 553-587.

⁴ See especially, the two recent incarnations of these perspectives, Robert Tucker, *Woodrow Wilson and the Great War: Reconsidering America's Neutrality, 1914-1917* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007), John Milton Cooper, *Breaking the Heart of the World: Woodrow Wilson and the Fight for the League of Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), and Arthur Link, "Wilson's Higher Realism," in *Major Problems in the History of American Foreign Relations*, Dennis Merrill and Thomas Paterson eds., fifth ed., vol. 1 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 510-523.

on pacifists will also stimulate new books adorned with photos of understudied internationalist thinkers of the American left such as Eugene Debs, Kate Richards O'Hare, Jane Adams, Frank Little, Frank Walsh, and W.E.B. Dubois.

Author's Response by Ross A. Kennedy, Illinois State University

I'd like to thank Professor Maddux for organizing this roundtable and the reviewers who participated in it. I have enormous respect for their work and look forward to scholarly exchanges with them in the future.

Since the review of Lloyd Ambrosius was quite positive and generous, my remarks will concern the comments of Chris Ball, Sally Marks, and Elizabeth McKillen, as they raise some criticisms of the book's argument that should be addressed. I especially found Ball's points about economic factors and Wilson's policies in Latin America to be insightful. Although I did note the pacifist tendency to see free trade as a pathway to peace, I did not dwell on it and, as Ball cogently argues, it constituted an important area of disagreement between them and the Atlanticists. Similarly, I wish I had said something about the pacifist and Atlanticist reactions to Wilson's Latin American policies. Those reactions did color the pacifist and Atlanticist evaluation of Wilson's national security strategy to some degree, although I would still maintain that the president's posture on the war in Europe by itself had a far greater impact on their views.

I take more issue with Ball's other two main assertions concerning my argument. One point can perhaps be cleared up fairly easily. Ball thinks it "illogical" for me to point to the rise of the preparedness movement as something that contradicted the pacifist claim that the war did not endanger America. But pacifists were quite blunt in arguing that the war did not endanger any vital interest of the United States, including its domestic political stability. Even as they made this argument, though, they were alarmed by the growth of the preparedness movement, to the point of denouncing it as a direct threat to America's democracy and free way of life. And the preparedness movement, as the pacifists themselves admitted, was obviously fueled by the war; the war, they perceived, sparked fears in the American people that were easily manipulated by the advocates of military expansion. How, then, could pacifists insist that the war posed no danger to America? Their own analysis of the preparedness movement indicated that the war did in fact threaten the United States because it heightened the risk that militarism would engulf American politics.

Ball also criticizes my interpretation of collective security and of the conception of this idea held by Wilson and other liberal internationalists. He emphasizes that "collective security is not actually premised on the belief that peace is indivisible; it is premised on the belief that states should act *as if* peace is indivisible." He thinks that liberal internationalists held this view as well: they recognized that peace was not really indivisible but thought that generating a *belief* in the indivisibility of peace was crucial for establishing a new world order. The League was designed to foster this belief, and to do so not through its voting and enforcement mechanisms, but through its very existence and its development as an institution. It would serve as an inspiration, in Ball's words, to "new understandings and perceptions of interests" over time. Ball implies this program made sense; I am wrong, he states, to argue that "collective security was flawed within its own terms."

In some ways, Ball and I are not in disagreement here. As I am careful to note, Wilson consistently thought of the Covenant more as embodying a set of general principles and attitudes about world affairs than as a list of specific commitments to action (see 130-131, 189, 193-194). I also argue that liberal internationalists such as the writers of the *New Republic* viewed the creation of a peace league as itself a transformative event in world politics, as it would lead statesmen to have faith that collective security was a viable enterprise (181). This idea, indeed, in part lay behind my choice of the book's title: "The Will to Believe" is a reference both to the enthusiasm of most of the liberal internationalists for pragmatism and to their perception that however radical and problematic a peace league might be, it *had* to be made to work so that America could avoid a future of militarism and it *could* be made to work through the leadership of the United States.

But Ball's more basic discussion of the concept of collective security and of how liberal internationalists understood that concept is unconvincing. Whether statesmen believe that an indivisibility of peace really exists or think that the acceptance of the "political principle" of such a peace is sufficient to transform world politics is irrelevant to the issue of how they should behave if they want to build a world order based upon collective security. In either case, they have to respond to *any* aggression *anywhere* otherwise collective security would lose all credibility. Wilson and other liberal internationalists were reluctant to face up to this fact and to its implications for American foreign policy. On the one hand, they thought that the war showed that an indivisibility of peace likely existed; certainly, as Ball suggests, they realized that collective security would only work if statesmen believed in the notion of an indivisible peace. But at the same time, they did not want the United States to lose its sovereignty over war and peace decisions and did not want to have to intervene in "distant wars" around the globe. Yet if the U.S. avoided such interventions, the credibility of collective security would be fatally compromised. Wilson tried to square this circle by making the Covenant as vague as possible and by stressing its "organic" character. Under the League, he thought, the U.S. could refuse to intervene in a "distant war" and, since it technically would not be in breach of the Covenant, its behavior would not undercut the viability of collective security. Ball may find such logic persuasive, but I do not. As the Atlanticists argued, it was a formula for a spineless peace organization sure to fail in a crisis or to generate conflict among its members as they haggled over what its ambiguous provisions really meant. In short, however liberal internationalists perceived the interdependence of peace, whether as a reality or as a belief they wanted to generate, they had to commit the U.S. to uphold peace around the globe if they wanted to create a new world order. And this, in the end, they were unwilling to do.

Sally Marks' review is more mixed than Ball's. While praising my assessment of Wilson's "views and actions," she makes a number of stylistic and substantive criticisms of the book. Perhaps most significantly, she asserts that what I set out to do "is of limited ambit." Given that *The Will to Believe* attempts to analyze the ideas of three major groups of national security commentators, something no other book has tried to do, and puts forward an interpretation of Wilson's national security strategy that challenges the views of such major historians as N. Gordon Levin, Arthur Link, and Thomas Knock, I find Marks' point here a bit hard to fathom, to say the least. She explains her complaint by claiming that the book "raises several interesting questions which are not addressed." But of the five topics

she lists, four of them—American views of militarism in 1914, the notion that power politics was inherently unstable, fears of Germany, and the idea that democracies were peaceful—are covered throughout the book. They are, indeed, in large measure what the book is about. To be sure, it could be that Marks would like to see an extended discussion of the history of American attitudes concerning these issues *prior* to 1914. But that would be a different book – or series of books—altogether. My topic was the national security debate of 1914-1920. Likewise, I did not discuss Marks’ remaining question, in which she wonders how Americans produced any successful generals given their hostility to professional soldiers, because the book is not a study of the development of America’s officer class.

Marks also charges that I pay little attention to the domestic political process and, echoing a point made somewhat differently by Ball, she wishes I had explained the “size and clout” of the three groups I discuss. Although I do briefly deal with domestic politics and the political strength of each group at various points in the book (see xii, 63, 93, 124-27, 163, 172, 178, 217-20), the reviewers are correct that the politics of national security policymaking do not receive a sustained analysis. For the most part, I wrote the book because I was interested in the intellectual content of the debates surrounding the meaning of World War I for the well-being of the United States; I wanted to find out how leading Americans conceptualized “national security” during this crucial moment in American history. I therefore sought to trace the interplay of ideas more than anything else, rather than write a political history of the policymaking process, something that other authors have ably covered. As Ball observes, there are pitfalls involved in doing this, in writing what is essentially an intellectual history book, and no doubt I fell into some of them. Still, I think I was careful to make reasonable interpretations of what the actors said and wrote, not just in public but in private too, and to take into account the political motives behind their arguments when it was appropriate to do so.

Elizabeth McKillen, lastly, praises the book for its interpretation of Wilson and for including the pacifists in its analysis of the debates surrounding Wilson’s policies. She thinks the national security ideas of the pacifists could have been examined more carefully, however. Specifically, she argues that the book slights the pacifist belief in “democratic control of industry, a revitalized international labor movement, and a more equitable division of labor and wealth within the global economic system” as paths to peace. This criticism is largely on target. I note the pacifist faith in domestic social reform and democracy as key to “real preparedness” and peace, but I do not get into the details of their vision of what a reformed America would look like. In addition, I should have explored their anti-imperialism in a bit more depth, as well as their view of the significance of the International Labour Organization. Here I think I fell victim to my interest in the pacifists’ more narrow political-military views (e.g., their perception of how arms races caused war and militarism), an issue largely ignored in the existing literature.

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