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Contents

Introduction by James Goldgeier, George Washington University	2
Review by Matthew Dallek, University of California Washington Center and Bipartisan Policy Center.....	5
Review by J. Simon Rofe, University of Leicester	9
Review by Sarah B. Snyder, Yale University.....	13
Response by Jeffrey A. Engel, Texas A&M University.....	18

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Introduction by James Goldgeier, George Washington University

Americans don't usually look back on one-term presidents with great nostalgia, but George H.W. Bush continues to receive plenty of accolades for his management of the end of the Cold War. Such is the case in the *Diplomatic History* Special Forum on his administration's foreign policy. Highlights of Bush's tenure include the diplomacy that led to a unified Germany firmly ensconced in NATO and his leadership of an international coalition to expel Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait, two achievements any president would be proud to claim.

Two decades ago, however, Bush suffered plenty of criticism: he didn't have Ronald Reagan's vision; he reached out to China too soon after the Tiananmen Square massacre and stayed with Mikhail Gorbachev too long in Russia; he left behind a civil war in Bosnia, and Saddam Hussein was still in power in Baghdad when Bush stepped down from office. The conventional wisdom is that he lost his reelection bid in 1992 because he spent too much time on foreign policy, but at the time he was hammered from the right and the left either for doing too much (leading Patrick Buchanan to borrow George McGovern's 1972 campaign slogan "Come Home, America") or for doing too little. (Bill Clinton made a successful bid for the endorsement of neoconservatives frustrated with Bush's lack of interest in democracy promotion.)

Bush looks better twenty years later because we realize all the things that could have gone wrong in the Cold War endgame. He looks better because Bill Clinton's first two years were disastrous and because George W. Bush turned his back on his father's emphasis on diplomacy and coalition-building and left America in far worse shape than he found it. He looks better because his foreign policy background entering office was deep, and his team was talented across the board. Brent Scowcroft managed the White House process as well as anyone; James Baker was the cool, calculating lawyer who got the deals done; and Dick Cheney was a pragmatic Secretary of Defense who had not yet become Darth Vader to the Left.

Even President Obama came into office expressing his approval for the George H.W. Bush team's management of foreign policy and for its pragmatic realism. And it is Bush's realism that is at the heart of the roundtable reviews. J. Simon Rofe notes the importance of limits for Bush and the emphasis on order in international affairs. Rofe sees the realist thread running through Randolph Kluver's essay on China, Mary Elise Sarotte's assessment of German unification, Bartholomew Sparrow's account of Scowcroft's role, and Andrew Preston's analysis of Bush's problems with the Religious Right.

Matthew Dallek wishes there was more discussion of the roots of this realism in Bush's thinking. And Dallek rightly asks, what would a different worldview have meant for the 1989-1993 period? Related to this question is Sarah B. Snyder's query as to why such a transformative period gave rise to so little change in national security policy. Would a

different president and different team have led to new institutions and a new vision for world affairs as the Cold War ended?

The continuity from George H.W. Bush to Bill Clinton suggests that the answer is ‘not really.’ The biggest change from Bush to Clinton was the latter’s deep understanding of the processes of globalization and his recognition of the linkages between the domestic and international economies. But even so, Clinton managed these issues with the institutions he inherited, particularly the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, and followed the “Washington consensus” on market economics that was already developing. In general, even though Clinton was more idealist than Bush, his foreign policy was not radically different. Clinton provided more assistance to Russia, but he did not try to create new security institutions in Europe that would have given Moscow the voice it desired in the continent’s affairs. On China, Clinton talked tough at first, but soon dropped his insistence on the linkage between human rights and trade. He didn’t act on Bosnia until his reelection approached, stayed away from the Rwandan genocide (what could have been more realist than that?), and continued the containment policy toward Iraq.

Snyder is right to ask why there wasn’t more change, not just in the George H. W. Bush years, but also in the years to follow. And she ends her review by noting that Bush left no policy to replace George Kennan’s containment. While the desire to come up with containment’s successor was an obsession of many observers in the 1990s, over time most analysts have come to understand that a simple bumper sticker is not possible in today’s world. Barack Obama appears to have come to the same conclusion, which perhaps explains his focus on problem-solving realism rather than grand visions (other than espousing the hope of a nuclear-free world). The problem for realism, however, is the one identified by E.H. Carr in the mid-20th century and that hurt Bush at the end of the day: there’s no sense of the possibilities for progress, and people want to know that despite all the limits in international life, we can aspire to a better world. Realism may lead to better management of the international order, but it doesn’t strike a chord, as Bush learned the hard way.

Participants:

Matthew Dallek is acting director of the U.C. Davis Washington program, a visiting scholar at the Washington-based Bipartisan Policy Center, and the author of *The Right Moment: Ronald Reagan’s First Victory and the Decisive Turning Point in American Politics*. In addition to teaching at the U.C. Washington Center, he has taught courses on modern American history, media, and politics at the University of Notre Dame, George Washington University, and Virginia Tech. He was a 2007-2008 fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and he is at work on a book about the fear of attacks on the home front during the Second World War. His articles, reviews, and commentary have appeared in *The New York Times* online, *The Washington Post*, *Reviews in American History*, *The Atlantic*, *Slate*, *Politico*, and other publications.

Jeffrey A. Engel is an Associate Professor and the Verlin and Howard Kruse '52 Founders Professor at Texas A&M University's Bush School of Government & Public Service. Educated at Cornell University, Oxford University, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, he is the author of *Cold War at 30,000 Feet: The Anglo-American Fight for Aviation Supremacy* (Harvard University Press, 2007), and editor of *Local Consequences of the Global Cold War* (Stanford University Press, 2008), *The China Diary of George H.W. Bush* (Princeton University Press, 2008) and *The Fall of the Berlin Wall: The Revolutionary Legacy of 1989* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

James Goldgeier received his Ph.D. in political science from U.C. Berkeley. He is currently professor of political science and international affairs at George Washington University and a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. His most recent book, *America Between the Wars: From 11/9-9/11* (co-authored with Derek Chollet) was named "A Best Book of 2008" by Slate and "A Favorite Book of 2008" by the Daily Beast. The book was featured in an H-Diplo roundtable at <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-X-1.pdf>.

J. Simon Rofe holds the post of Lecturer in International Relations at University of Leicester in the Centre for American Studies; and the Centre for Diplomatic and International Studies, in the Department of International Relations. His research interests focus upon U.S. foreign policy in the twentieth century, and particularly presidential diplomacy. His recent publications include: 'An Abortive Special Relationship? – U.S.-Russian Relations in the Post Cold War World', with Dr Alex Marshall, in *America's 'Special Relationships- Foreign and Domestic Aspects of the Politics of Alliance*, John Dumbrell and Axel Schafer (eds.), (Routledge: Oxford 2009); and *Franklin Roosevelt's Foreign Policy and the Welles Mission* (Palgrave: New York, 2007). His current research projects include a book entitled "Diplomats at War: The American Experience" with Dr Andrew Stewart; and a work on "The London Embassy: 70 years in Grosvenor Square 1938-2008" with Dr Alison Holmes.

Sarah B. Snyder is a Cassius Marcellus Clay Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of History at Yale University. She is currently finishing a manuscript on transnational human rights activism within the Helsinki process and its contributions to the end of the Cold War. In addition to chapters in a number of edited collections, her work can be found in forthcoming issues of *Cold War History*, *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, and *Journal of American Studies*. She received her Ph.D. from Georgetown University in 2006.

This *Diplomatic History* Special Forum is a thoughtful and insightful assessment of the foreign policy challenges of George H.W. Bush's administration. It highlights new directions in historical research while examining several themes in modern American diplomatic history. Historians Jeffrey A. Engel, Nicholas J. Cull, and Andrew Preston convincingly argue that President Bush was ineffective as a diplomatic communicator. Bush tended to stumble over his words, disdained the "vision thing," and disliked working with speechwriters and other communications advisors in the emerging CNN, 24/7 media environment.

Stressing the intersection of public diplomacy and foreign affairs, this forum also sheds new light on the strengths and flaws of Bush's 'realist' mindset and diplomatic policies. Bartholomew H. Sparrow's profile of National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft reveals Bush's aide as competent, pragmatic, and highly effective. Mary Elise Sarotte's article shows that Secretary of State James Baker's aversion to moralizing helped ease the road towards a peaceful German re-unification and the fall of the communist Soviet regime. Andrew Preston's article perceptively traces the sources of evangelical disenchantment with Bush's presidency to Bush's allegedly amoral, 'realist' foreign policy.

Taken together, this forum also showcases diplomatic history as a robust field -- featuring a range of intellectual interests from issues of religion and diplomatic strategy, domestic politics and public diplomacy to bureaucratic maneuvering and media effects. While several authors criticize Bush for numerous transgressions, they also suggest that Bush's foreign policy -- warts and all -- partially paved the way for a peaceful transition to a post-cold-war international order.

Bush made mistakes overseas; his foreign policy vision had its moral and practical blind spots. Yet his administration opened the door to an enlarged NATO, helped re-unify the divided Germans, endorsed democratic movements abroad, avoided a possible quagmire in Iraq, and assembled an international coalition that dislodged Saddam Hussein from Kuwaiti territory. Bush's considerable diplomatic skills and foreign policy achievements stand out in this impressive collection of articles.

Several curious omissions in this forum also are worth mentioning; other scholars would do well to address them (especially as more archival documents become available to researchers). Generally speaking, the authors minimize the question of how 'realism' came to dominate Bush's thinking and define his approach to diplomacy. In his intelligent and well-crafted overview, Jeffrey A. Engel observes that the cold war fundamentally shaped Bush's approach during his presidency. He and the other authors trace only sporadically how and why Bush's cold war mentality became so firmly rooted in the first place, and in particular, how the 'realist' tradition came to define Bush's presidency.

The authors establish links between Bush's White House years and his pre-presidential foreign policy views. Still, numerous questions remain unaddressed: For example, if Bush departed from Ronald Reagan's values-based approach to global challenges, how did Bush interpret Reagan's pragmatic streak in foreign affairs? Did Reagan's cautious approach towards the civil war in Lebanon, and his decision to embrace arms control with Mikhail Gorbachev, shape Bush's thinking about his own presidency? Reagan's pragmatic decision to avoid a potential quagmire in Lebanon in 1983 seems akin to Bush's controversial refusal not to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime in the first Gulf War. Instead of stressing the rupture between Reagan and Bush, these authors might have uncovered the commonalities yoking the Republican administrations together, too.

Reading these good articles, I wondered as well whether the bright line drawn between morals and values and 'realism' might not be so bright after all. Reagan took numerous pragmatic steps overseas, despite his soaring rhetoric, whereas the supposedly 'realist' Bush likened Saddam Hussein to Adolf Hitler ("Hitler revisited," Bush claimed) couched the first Gulf War as a battle for human rights, and his "new world order" construct cleverly mirrored the moral connotations of Reagan's "evil empire" sound bite.¹ Was Bush as allergic to morality and human rights concerns as some of the authors seem to suggest?

Engel also plausibly characterizes Bush as not the "progenitor of something radically new"; Bush's "vision," he explains, "appeared unoriginal because" it was rooted in a Cold War mentality. The question therefore arises: what would a "radically new" vision have entailed from 1989 to 1993? Were Bush's detractors offering such an approach? Who were they (conservative anti-communists? Neo-conservatives? Liberal internationalists?), and what was their basis for criticizing President Bush?

Also, was Bush purely a creature of the cold war? On the war in the Persian Gulf, Bush assembled a U.N. coalition that was actually something of a departure from how America fought both the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Bush emphasized restraint, and appeared unwilling to go-it-alone compared to his predecessors Harry Truman, Lyndon Johnson, and Richard Nixon. On the Gulf War at least, Bush's approach – militarily and diplomatically – seemed to depart from his cold-war-era counterparts.

"Bush feared volatility most of all," Engel also astutely states (32). Still, I wanted to read more in these articles about whether or not Bush's penchant for order and stability produced results in the Middle East, China, and the Balkans. In hindsight, Bush's reluctance to intervene militarily in the Balkans appears a callous and overly cautious decision. His prudence in waging war against Iraq – refusing to "go to Baghdad" – appears increasingly level-headed and judicious—and his fear of volatility, perhaps bleak view of human nature and belief in America's limits as a world power deserve to be better understood and underscored.

¹ Steven Hurst, "The Rhetorical Strategy of George H. W. Bush during the Persian Gulf Crisis 1990–91: How to Help Lose a War You Won," *Political Studies*: 2004, vol. 52, p. 382.
<http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/pmt/exhibits/2348/Hurst.pdf>

A few additional issues raised by these articles: Nicholas J. Cull's piece asserts that Reagan's director Charles Wick "was impressive" and that his leadership of the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) was an "achievement," which raises the question: How and why did Wick become so successful? (47) If Reagan's "ideological barrage against the Soviet bloc" swayed Eastern Europeans and provided a model of public diplomacy in the 1980s, why did the Reagan administration apparently fail to win hearts and minds in other parts of Europe and the world? (47) The freeze movement gained momentum during Reagan's presidency; the simplistic (and unconvincing) portrait of Reagan as a trigger-happy American cowboy sunk roots into the international soil. Reagan's policies were deeply controversial; globally, his presidency was divisive. So beyond Wick's impressive managerial abilities, were Reagan's public diplomacy achievements really as substantial overseas as the author implies?

Another related question: if the USIA was indeed dysfunctional under Bush, why didn't the president – a devotee of alliance-building – put greater emphasis on public diplomacy beyond the first Gulf War? I wanted to learn a bit more about this striking contradiction.

Finally, which was more influential in guiding public diplomacy during the first Bush administration: the USIA as an organization or the substance of Bush's actual policies, presidential rhetoric, and concrete actions taken by the United States overseas? Put differently, does public diplomacy information and spin trump the substance of America's actual policies and activities abroad? Could even the best-run USIA succeed diplomatically if an administration's policies are internationally unpopular?

Randolph Kluver provides a multiplicity of perspectives on the Tiananmen Square protests—convincingly highlighting the lack of understanding separating Bush's administration from Chinese protesters and from the communist regime's leaders. Still: the article never adequately addresses whether or not conspiratorial thinking among Chinese officials was primarily propagandistic and symptomatic of an authoritarian regime feeling threatened from within. Kluver suggests that Chinese dissidents who depicted "themselves as the noble challengers to the corrupt government...left no options open to the government," implying that a crackdown was virtually inevitable. (92) Also unconvincing was the concluding comment that "the events of 1989 are...far away" from contemporary China and "irrelevant to the tasks of participating in a China that has fully joined the modern world." I'm not a China expert. But the legacy of repression and human rights violations, symbolized in the Tiananmen Square repression, remains an important feature of the political landscape in modern China. While economic freedoms have expanded since the 1989 bloodbath, human rights violations and repression of dissent of all kinds are still proliferating. (94)

Andrew Preston's provocative and smart article imputes possibly too much power to the role that foreign policy and the Christian conservative base had in Bush's 1992 re-election defeat. Bush was widely viewed as a foreign policy president who cared little for economic policy; to much of the electorate, he appeared out of touch with people's pain inflicted by the early 1990s recession. His triumph in the Gulf couldn't overcome his awkward marveling at a grocery store scanner. The defection of the GOP's Christian conservative

base from Bush's coalition was a factor in his defeat, but I'm not sure how significant it was, and in any case, some overarching mention of this broader political dynamic would have strengthened the author's argument and contextualized the influence of evangelical disenchantment with Bush's foreign policy on his re-election prospects.

Sparrow's article might have profited from a more detailed discussion of the history of 'realism' in Republican foreign policy—why is 'realism' such a controversial approach in the eyes of some Republicans? How did realism originate and evolve as a GOP foreign policy approach in the 20th century? What are the origins of the conservative critique of Bush's worldview? Still, Sparrow provides an illuminating, thoughtful, and thoroughly convincing portrait of Scowcroft's skillful performance as National Security Advisor—reminding us of what the first Bush administration got right as the Berlin Wall collapsed.

Revisionism is a loaded term. In looking at the Presidency of George H.W. Bush twenty years on from the midpoint in his administration and with memories fresh of his son's occupancy of the White House, the opportunities for blandishment or to punish the 'sins of the son' arise. That this special edition of *Diplomatic History* avoids this pitfall is testament to the convenor of the project, Professor Jeffrey Engel, and the other contributors who provide a worthy reappraisal of the Bush administration from a number of incisive angles. These different perspectives avoid a homogenous, or indeed wholly laudatory, view of the Bush administration.

Rather than merely précis each article in turn I endeavour here to highlight to the readers of H-Diplo an outstanding, if according to Engel, 'ill-defined' theme that illustrates the qualities of the volume: the description of Bush as a 'realist' in his foreign policy decision making. That is a pragmatist, cautious to grandstanding responses to a rapidly changing geopolitical topography. And while scholars of International Relations would want to take a discussion such as this further, Andrew Preston succinctly characterises realism as 'essentially the recognition and imposition of limits.' (103) Importantly, in reading this collection it is clear this is an understanding Bush would recognise given that he 'prioritised order over justice – he valued both, of course, but when the two conflicted, order usually prevailed.' (102)

This understanding is examined in relation to the administration's response to events in the summer of 1989 in Tiananmen Square by Randolph Kluver. Kluver identifies an underlying belief in an 'Open Door' within the administration that meant 'increased contact, including trade contact, would be a catalyst for social change' in China (88). Kluver argues that this predominated and meant the administration did not break off relations with Beijing pointing to Bush's later recollections that 'relations with China were too critical to allow them to be destroyed over the incident.' (71) And further revealing of his realist instincts – i.e. it could have been worse – Bush argued that 'that had he not kept the lines of communication open, it would have taken significantly longer for China-US relations to heal.' (71)

Mary Elise Sarotte picks up the realist theme in her account of the diplomatic negotiations surrounding NATO enlargement as a consequence of German re-unification. What quickly emerges from this account is the gravitas of the four bilateral negotiations that are covered in the article between the leaders of the Soviet Union, West Germany and the Bush administration. The last of these meetings at Camp David between Bush and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl would, Sarotte argues, 'shape the future of post-Cold War Europe' (136). Elsewhere, Sarotte's article is revealing of the different political and cultural perspectives and contexts that influence the course and outcome of high-level diplomacy. She highlights how James Baker's cultural and legal background meant that he 'understood the dynamic between negotiation and agreement: that much could be said, contested, denied, or suggested in discussion, but that what resulted in writing at the end was what

mattered' (127), while contrasting this with Mikhail Gorbachev who emerged 'from a political culture in which the word of a leader overruled the law' (128).

The realist theme is most plainly evident in Bartholomew Sparrow's article on General Brent Scowcroft. Sparrow's aim is 'to take a fuller view of Scowcroft's role of national security adviser' (144) and in doing so he portrays the National Security Advisor and the President in firmly realist terms. Sparrow argues there was a real meeting of minds between NSA and President, suggesting that Scowcroft was 'arguably the most influential person making U.S. foreign policy and grand strategy between 1989 and 1993, outside the president.' (149) Sparrow attributes this to their 'shared political instincts, personal disposition, and years of foreign policy and governmental experience' (148) the antecedents to which stretch back to their experiences of the post-World War II world. He characterises Scowcroft as 'conservative and cautious in the realist sense' (172) so that when it came to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait Scowcroft would argue that 'Iraq's actions had to be counterbalanced by the United States and its allies' (167). Of note is the call to counterbalance and not overwhelm the actions of another state and reflected the track of administration's thinking on who would replace Saddam if anything more than counterbalancing were undertaken. In his article Sparrow succeeds in his aim by providing readers with a balanced account of Scowcroft as a measured thinker of the U.S. place in the world; a good manager of people and process; an articulate spokesman for the administration to press and publics around the world; and someone who had a grounded understanding of economics.

The realism identified here is also evident in Preston's explanation of the role religion played in the administration. In explaining how Bush courted religious groups within the Republican Party, Preston explains, in 'all walks of life ... Bush was a pragmatist' (96). In the 1988 election this worked for Bush but that the administration followed a realist foreign policy, alongside other factors such as the reversal of the 'no new taxes' pledge, contributed to the cleavage between Bush and the Religious Right which contributed to his defeat in 1992.

While less obvious perhaps in his analysis, Nick Cull's erudite exposition of public diplomacy's 'strange death' in the Bush Administration, does add to the account of a versatile realism here. Cull's previous work on public diplomacy makes him expertly placed to account for the demise of the United States Information Agency (USIA) during the Bush Administration. Cull outlines three case studies addressing Tiananmen Square, the end of communism in Eastern Europe, and the Gulf War which contributed to the demise of the USIA despite the possibilities for success. Combined with a Director in Bruce Gelb who for a variety of reasons failed to provide leadership, Cull remarks of USIA failings in the Bush administration that '[o]ne reading would be that it [the administration] simply did not think public diplomacy was significant enough to justify such exertion.' (51). The undervaluing of public diplomacy is seen in contrast to the emphasis placed on personal diplomacy by the President which is illustrated by Engel in his analysis. Engel identifies, 'his devotion to personal diplomacy' (28) as an important aspect in addressing foreign

policy. This is something that emerges strongly in working amongst the President's papers in College Station.¹

The subsequent criticism of the administration from Left and Right for not having been more dynamic in addressing the 'times that try men's souls'², is explained in good measure by all the analyses provided here. Engel's opening analysis argues that Bush was a creature of his times and his 'world view' or 'mental map' was shaped by 'American leaders at the height of the World War II and in the first years of the Cold War' articulating an 'American-led international order' (28). Importantly, Engel argues, 'the post-Cold War world he envisioned was itself an extension of American maxims' (28), and not anything radically new: he believed '...change was best pursued cautiously' (34). Indeed, the careful husbanding of U.S. resources be they political, economic or military epitomised the administration's approach. This meant they 'favoured flexible consideration of American needs and power above inviolable statements of principle' (25) and 'they assess[ed] and pursue[ed] national interests on a case-by-case basis.' (170). Put more colloquially by Sparrow and then Engel, the administration had 'witnessed what could go wrong and preferred the devils they knew' (172) being 'well aware that the wrong move at every turn could snatch defeat – and anarchy – out of the jaws of potential triumph and peace.' (27) In summation the picture that emerges of George H.W. Bush is not of an 'International Bright Young Thing'³, something that might have been said of his successor, but as a prudent and thoughtful hand on the tiller of US strategy during stormy waters.

A notable quality of this collection that should also not be overlooked is its value as a teaching resource. The different subject matter and the varied approaches provide numerous access points for students at a variety of levels. One can easily imagine a fruitful seminar discussion amongst different groups of students who had been charged with reading the articles. Further, these students need not be restricted to one particular academic discipline. In asking students, 'how does your reading of the article chosen/allocated inform your thinking of a) the presidency of George H.W. Bush; or b) the processes and procedures of American government; or c) the nature of high level negotiations and public diplomacy; or d) of the realism and idealism as modes of thinking to understand the international system; or e) *simply* an overview of the issues surrounding

¹ As an example Bush writing to German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl on the eve of the Helsinki conference in 1992 and thanking him for 'the wonderful hospitality' made for the American delegation to the Munich conference, he ends 'To sum, it all up – well done, my friend, well done'. Letter from President Bush to Kohl 8 July 1992, IT005 International Conferences: White House Office of Records Management, (WHORM), George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, College Station TX.

² Thomas Paine, quoted by George H.W. Bush, 2 October 1990 televised address to the nation on the Budget. White House Office of Records Management (WHORM), Box. 143, George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, College Station TX.

³ Engel makes reference to Jesus Jones' 'Right Here, Right Now' release in his article. Their next single was entitled 'International Bright Young Thing (IBYT)' which reached the top 10 in the UK.

the end of the Cold War?', this volume could engage students of Contemporary History, American Politics, Presidential Studies, Diplomatic Studies, and International Relations.

In concluding this review, brief mention of a somewhat conspicuous omission to the collection in the form of an article focusing on the role of James A. Baker III as Secretary of State, something that will no doubt be addressed within the pages of *Diplomatic History*. Nevertheless, the value of this Special Edition is its ability to provide breadth *and* depth; new approaches *and* valuable reappraisal in the study of the George H.W. Bush administration, and I commend it.

This roundtable brings together a significant group of scholars examining George H. W. Bush's foreign policy from a range of perspectives and disciplines, making their efforts an early, important attempt to evaluate United States foreign policy in the immediate post-Cold War world. Too few of the articles, however, critically engage Bush's policy, and by and large, they fail to address the question of how an administration could confront such fundamental transformations in international affairs with such limited revision of national security policy.

At the outset of his contribution, Jeff Engel notes the increasing availability of archival materials at the George Bush Library in College Station, Texas and urges historians to begin examining Bush's presidency. While only limited documents relating to Bush's foreign policy have been declassified, the materials used by the contributors suggest it will be a productive resource for many years to come. Engel succeeds in capturing the cautious nature of Bush foreign policy, which was best exemplified in its attention to stability and order. He describes a leader that seemed more responsive to events than active in shaping them, and one who remained mired in an outdated vision of the role of the United States in the world rather than one who identified or articulated a new vision for United States policy. Engel's contribution raises questions about the extent to which Bush should be considered a caretaker president; in his conclusion, Engel writes that Bush intended "to keep the world moving in the right direction" rather than to transform the role of the United States internationally. (45)

In Engel's characterization, Bush is well versed and comfortable in the details of United States diplomacy. Yet, at the same time he suggests that Bush not only failed to articulate his vision of a "new world order" but that his administration never reflected internally on what that order might be. Engel offers a convincing explanation for why the Bush administration did not take the United States in new directions in the wake of the Cold War, arguing that for Bush, the reasons for the American Cold War victory offered an outline for its future – Bush hoped to preside over the transatlantic order the United States had aspired to throughout the Cold War. Engel also highlights some of the most common and apt criticisms of Bush's foreign policy, namely that he did not carry his policies through to fruition, or to put it more plainly, that in the case of Iraq, he did not finish the job. Engel could go further, however, in evaluating how the limited ambition of Bush's foreign policy influenced the United States' ability to protect its interests in the world.

Perhaps the most important contribution Engel's piece makes is his analysis of how the leadership of United States President Ronald Reagan and National Security Adviser and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger shaped Bush's style in the White House; in Engel's view, Bush learned from and defined himself apart from these earlier Republican leaders. Whereas Reagan focused on the broad outlines of policy and left the details and implementation to subordinates, Bush wanted his aides to engage in vigorous debate before he arrived at a decision. With regard to Kissinger, Engel argues Bush thought it unwise to have United States policy so closely tied to one individual, instead preferring to

hear a range of opinions. Throughout his article, Engel persuasively demonstrates how Bush's previous positions in Beijing, at the United Nations, as head of the Central Intelligence Agency, and as Reagan's vice president shaped his conception of the role of the United States in the world and led to the distinctive imprint he brought to the conduct of United States foreign policy. In particular, Bush's emphasis on reaching out to other leaders and statesmen had its beginnings in his time in New York, according to Engel, and served Bush well as he sought to forge an international coalition to oust Saddam Hussein from Kuwait.

Nicholas Cull's article focuses specifically on the history of the United States Information Agency (U.S.I.A.) in the years after Reagan left office and characterizes Bush's presidency as marking an erosion of the agency's position in United States foreign policy. Cull highlights the problems caused by centralizing all elements of public diplomacy during the Bush years and outlines what he sees as the missed opportunities by the Bush administration to integrate public diplomacy into the national security structure. Unfortunately, Cull gets too bogged down in the details of the shortcomings and failures of Bruce Gelb, who was Bush's first agency director, without connecting his discussion to the administration and its diplomacy as a whole. In one example, Cull argues the Bush White House did not anticipate or adequately address problems that developed under Gelb's leadership, which he attributes to low estimations of U.S.I.A. without offering sufficient evidence for this explanation.

Cull outlines conflicts in United States policy between Voice of America and the U.S.I.A., with each representing one aspect of the American approach toward China – to preserve the long-term stability of the Sino-American relationship versus encouraging the free flow of information, ideas, and objective news coverage. One element largely missing from Cull's study, however, is how tension between the State Department and Voice of America was related to the Bush White House or James Baker's leadership at State. Indeed, Bush's White House is almost absent from Cull's account. Such an omission may be the result of his argument that the U.S.I.A. was largely missing from the administration's policy formulation, but he needs to make the existence or absence of U.S.I.A. connections with the State Department, National Security Council, and White House clearer.

At times, Cull seems to attribute too much agency to the U.S.I.A. For example, his statement that the "USIA and the Bush administration managed to conduct the war without provoking a backlash from the Arab streets or wider sections of Islamic opinion" might have the order of influence of those two actors in reverse. (59) Similarly, when discussing initiatives in Eastern Europe, Cull writes that "the United States had a fundamentally flawed foreign policy structure," but he is primarily focused on the poor integration of public diplomacy, which is less critical to the broader implementation of American policy. (59)

Randolph Kluver's examination of what he terms the "rhetorical trajectories of Tiananmen Square" addresses the collision course between the student protesters and communist officials, which made compromise between the two groups "impossible." (80) Kluver argues these mutually exclusive visions were not understood in the United States at the time given Western views of the students as making a "peaceful, democratic attempt to

move the nation forward in its trajectory of internal reform” versus Chinese party leaders’ characterization of them as “counterrevolutionary and unpatriotic.” (72) Kluver outlines administration struggles to balance support for the students with its relations with party leaders and suggests the United States wanted to avoid the appearance of “interfering” in domestic affairs. (87) Though relevant internal documents may remain classified, I wish Kluver had explained the evidence on which he based his conclusions. Kluver analyzes American efforts to heal the Sino-American relationship and bring China back into world standing in the wake of Tiananmen, but his account focuses on the tactics rather than the content of American policy. I was interested to see more discussion addressing why the United States pursued such a policy and an evaluation of the values and principles guiding American policy. Kluver concludes by arguing that studying the “rhetorical visions” of Chinese students, Communist Party leaders, and Bush administration officials “reveals some interesting aspects of the Bush administration’s diplomacy during this period.” (91) At times, however, his article slighted engagement with the broader questions raised by the roundtable. The real strength of his article is his close attention to the worldviews, goals, and tactics of the two parties in China; more work is needed to integrate United States actors into the story. Finally, Kluver’s account relies primarily upon English-language sources; a brief outline of the availability of Chinese-language sources for this period would be of considerable use to future scholars on these questions.

Andrew Preston’s article offers an useful exploration of the role of religion in the first Bush presidency, one not often regarded as particularly influenced by faith, which Preston argues can be attributed to Bush’s regard for religion as “private, not public.” (96) The bulk of his article traces Bush’s long, awkward relationship with the conservative wing of the Republican Party as well as his difficulties in gaining and maintaining the support of evangelicals and the Christian Right. Bush recognized the political importance of reaching out to evangelicals and made appointments and alliances intended to curry favor with the Religious Right. During the 1988 presidential campaign, he even went so far as to assert, “Jesus Christ is my personal savior.” (100) Bush viewed these steps as essential to securing the Republican nomination, especially with televangelist Pat Robertson in the race. Once in office, however, Preston argues that Bush paid little attention to the Christian Right or its agenda. Instead, he returned to his roots as a moderate and, in Preston’s telling, only reengaged when he faced a 1992 primary challenge from Patrick Buchanan.

Preston’s piece is one of the few to engage Bush’s foreign policy critically. He evaluates Bush’s worldview and characterizes it as “ill suited to the times.” (103) According to Preston, religion didn’t particularly shape Bush’s foreign policy; he was a realist, not a crusader. Preston suggests the Bush White House had little interest in human rights and was not focused on a post-Cold War world that could turn its attention to poverty, discrimination, and other social ills. As Preston writes, “This was not a foreign policy designed to win hearts and minds.” (104) Preston suggests that the end of the Cold War led religious liberals to press for a new framework for United States foreign policy, and evangelicals were similarly distressed by the administration’s inattention to human rights concerns. They and others expressed frustration that Bush did not seem more delighted by the Cold War’s end. Preston also outlines the complicated responses of religious believers to Bush’s war in Iraq, including critical questions about the extent to which it was a “just”

or moral war. (111-2) Preston suggests that Christian conservatives were so opposed to or betrayed by a number of Bush's policies that they stayed home on Election Day in 1992 and contributed to his electoral defeat. In his article, Preston does an excellent job of marrying diplomatic, political, and religious history together in a coherent whole. One question, likely of considerable interest to readers of this roundtable, that Preston might have addressed was how Bush's relationship with the Christian Right shaped his son's relations with the same constituency.

Mary Elise Sarotte's article on the murky history of American and West German commitments on expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) relies upon the widest range and volume of sources of any contribution to the roundtable. Sarotte's work makes excellent use of interviews with policymakers and diplomats at the time as well as research in the United States, Germany, and Russia. To be fair, Sarotte has recently published *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*, and her article and book draw upon the same body of archival research and interviews. Sarotte, faced with divergent interpretations of Western commitments to the Soviet Union regarding NATO expansion, seeks to uncover how such different understandings could have developed. Sarotte's account outlines how Washington and Bonn both confronted the challenge of managing German reunification and integration into NATO. She begins by explicating what she terms the "mental maps" of the key participants in the critical negotiations. In particular, she explores how the backgrounds of Baker and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev shaped their approaches to diplomacy. Sarotte explains how flaws in Soviet policy formulation and implementation contributed to the confusion over the commitments made to Gorbachev. For Sarotte, as for the leaders twenty years ago, the crux of the confusion is that nothing was written down at the end of the critical Baker-Gorbachev meeting of 9 February 1990. Sarotte suggests that Gorbachev intended to rely on Baker's oral commitment that the "zone of NATO" would not expand. (128) She aptly demonstrates, however, that Baker had not intended his proffer to be a firm commitment but rather one step in a series of talks over the matter. The two leaders thus held different perceptions of whether an agreement had been reached.

Sarotte argues that Gorbachev unadvisedly made a concession on German unification based on his understanding that Baker and West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl had agreed NATO would not extend further east. She characterizes Gorbachev as conducting impetuous diplomacy and failing to secure written assurances. Her telling, however, suggests manipulation of Gorbachev by Baker and Kohl, though it does not engage more deeply whether or not Clinton-era parsing of Baker's language was disingenuous. Greater evaluation of their actions would have been interesting. In addition, a more detailed discussion of Gorbachev's negotiating style would have added to Sarotte's account; for example did he normally forego written agreements or had previous experiences negotiating with Kohl and Baker convinced the Soviet leader the two meant what they said as a commitment?

Bartholomew H. Sparrow's article examines the role of National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft in shaping the foreign policy of the Bush administration. Sparrow writes a laudatory account and suggests Scowcroft's contributions to foreign economic diplomacy

and public relations have been overlooked thus far. Sparrow's overview of the most common characterizations of Bush's foreign policy team and specifically Scowcroft's role differs from those of the other contributors in the sampling of harsh assessments of Bush's foreign policy that he cites, including criticism that it was "mis-guided," "morally obtuse," and "trapped in a time warp." (143) Despite highlighting others' strong criticisms of the administration's policies, Sparrow rates Scowcroft positively and enumerates what he sees as Scowcroft's most important accomplishments. Sparrow points to Scowcroft's temperament, close relationship with Bush, and effectiveness as a manager. He devotes less space to discussing Scowcroft as a foreign policy thinker or to a potentially useful comparison with the role of Bush's Secretary of State James Baker. This reader also would have appreciated a greater sense of Scowcroft's worldview and, in particular, how it shaped his commitment to expelling Iraq from Kuwait. Sparrow's discussion of the administration's China policy might more explicitly have addressed how great a role Scowcroft played given that Bush was, in the words of one of his aides, his own "China desk officer." (38) Sparrow's account argues that Scowcroft's role was integral on a wide range of policy issues but does not adequately explore the extent to which Scowcroft formulated rather than managed United States policy. Furthermore, Sparrow too often lets Scowcroft's justifications speak for themselves without offering his own analysis. (168) The strongest argument that Sparrow makes in support of the Bush administration's foreign policy is that on a wide range of issues, it has persisted. But, he acknowledges that when the administration left office, it had not left a "post-Cold War doctrine" or "contemporary analogue to George Kennan's X article." (175)

This forum owes much to many. Robert Schulzinger and Tom Zeiler guided it expertly through the editorial and production process for *Diplomatic History*, never wavering in their support. Thanks as well to the reviewers tasked by H-Diplo with consuming and then critiquing our work. Their perceptive insights are the subject of my remarks below. Thanks to Tom Maddux and the editors of this electronic forum for facilitating this discussion, and so many more like them. Ultimately the most profound thanks must go to the authors who contributed to this *Diplomatic History* forum in the first place: Randy Kluver, Mary Sarotte, Andrew Preston, Nick Cull, and Bat Sparrow. I learned much from each, and daresay we each learned much from integrating another scholar's (or in this case, five) perspective on a subject close to our own. Adding to this melting pot of ideas were not only historians trained in European and American traditions, but a communications specialist and a political scientist as well. I hesitate to speak with a single voice for such a multifaceted group, and thus while each contributor may choose to subsequently address individual critiques offered by our H-Diplo reviewers, these remarks are aimed at their comments considered collectively.

This forum unfolded at a particular moment in time. New documents were coming on-line, just as the policymakers who first composed them faded from the scene with increasing frequency. It was also composed during the last years of the George W. Bush administration. The term "Bush foreign policy" thus held particular emotional weight for contributors grappling with their work on the past. Future historians may well gain insights into the 2000s by the way we reconsidered a generation before.

I raise this point in response to the three insightful responses to our *Diplomatic History* forum on George H.W. Bush's foreign policy, from Sarah Snyder, Matthew Dallek, and Simon Rofe, because each grappled not only with our essays and their subject, but more profoundly with a key question for our own day: the underlying motivations for policies. Each notes that realism colored every major decision and moment of the Bush years. This might be but the first of many ways the times during which we wrote influenced those about whom we wrote, as debates over realism and its alternatives filled the air during 2007 and 2008. Bush's realism, as Rofe accurately notes, appears particularly stark given the ideological fervor of his son's presidency. Brent Scowcroft, as Sparrow notes in his essay, became a celebrated figure for those interested in critiquing the 2003 invasion and subsequent invasion of Iraq because his own critique was explicitly framed within the language of realism, presumed (by its proponents) to be value neutral and thus above the typical partisan fray.

These reviews reinforce realism's ingrained malleability. Not only is the term perpetually ill-defined, it is also commonly if not universally self-ascribed. I know of few policymakers throughout history who laid claim to a "surrealist" foreign policy, or who argued that their will could surmount reality (the frequently cited quote from a senior George W. Bush advisor to the contrary notwithstanding). More common is the belief in one's own calculated logic.

Yet we as scholars frequently ascribe ideological motivations to policymakers convinced of their own rationale and value-neutral realism. Tension thus naturally exists between the hard-edged realistic appraisal most policymakers espouse, and the way historians subsequently classify their cognitive worldview. George H.W. Bush and those around him had a complete, cogent, and logical ideological framework for the world. Yet asked point-blank, I can't think of one who would not describe their entire administration as realist in the extreme, lacking in the ideological blinders they might ascribe to others. This hypothetical response, I should add, would most likely be offered only after a quick roll of the eyes of the kind reserved for inane academic questioning by scholars who spend a lifetime studying great decisions but rendering comparatively few.

Matthew Dallek's thorough and thoughtful review of this forum addresses this question of realism's ubiquity and malleability head on. "I wondered as well," he wrote, "whether the bright line drawn between morals and values and 'realism' might not be so bright after all." He notes that Bush's team yearned to differentiate their policies from their Reagan-era predecessors, despite having participated in many of the policy debates of the previous eight years, and wonders in particular about the difference between the Bush commonly considered "realist" and the Ronald Reagan so-often considered more passionately driven by ideas.

To which one must respond, which Reagan? The fervent hawk of moral certainty who uttered "evil empire" and then years later, "tear down this wall?" Or the man who eagerly negotiated with Mikhail Gorbachev and once-sworn communist enemies within the Kremlin? Each Reagan believed history was on his side. What could be more ideological than that? Yet each disparate Reagan not only overlapped (and shared DNA), but also made hard decisions based upon a calculated measure of pros and cons seemingly at odds with the righteousness of his convictions, the Lebanon pull-out a central case in point. Or at least, this Reagan acquiesced in decisions brought to him for final approval by his principal advisers.

Bush, it seems to me, was no different in his faith in the rightness of his beliefs even as he embraced a thoroughly different decision-making process than Reagan's. He responded time and again to events and crises fully confident in his perception of the world and of the national security options shepherded to this desk by Scowcroft, without pausing to question the underlying tenets of his or his administration's general worldview. I suspect few policymakers ever pause for such introspection, and one would be forced to question their ability to make effective decisions were they so inclined. Effective intelligence and introspection are not often handmaidens. The Bush of 1988 distanced himself from Reagan—in effect, ironically, becoming more like the Reagan of 1980—more for political than for ideological reasons. He wanted that realist if not hawkish moniker for the upcoming election. His campaign was about his resume and his experience, for the way his life fit neatly in the paradigm of responsible Cold War leaders of the past more than for any sort of radical vision for change. To his mind, and to those around him, there had already been change aplenty in the world system by 1988 requiring further digestion. Furthering the irony, of course, more change was still to come.

Dallek is thus entirely correct to note the divergent meanings of realism ingrained within the essays for this forum, a point Rofe eloquently reinforces. Rofe notes that even Andrew Preston's discussion of religion's influence over Bush's foreign policy is, at heart, one of electoral and strategic calculations. He concludes by noting of the entire forum that "the picture that emerges of George H.W. Bush is not of an 'International Bright Young Thing', something that might have been said of his successor, but as a prudent and thoughtful hand on the tiller of U.S. strategy during stormy waters." Beyond Rofe's impressive display of late 1980s British pop culture lies a conclusion that Bush, Scowcroft, Baker and the rest would like historians to offer of their time in office, in particular given the difficulties later faced by a subsequent Bush administration less keen on realism and more open about its ideological convictions. One wonders, therefore, not only if our essays were composed as markers of the time, when we as historians found realism within the past because we sought it in our own times, but also if Rofe might in turn have found a different conclusion if he read the forum years from now. Our collective calculations of George H.W. Bush, which the authors of this forum consider rationale, reasonable, and thus realist from our perspective, might seem downright idealistic if not ideologically driven to future generations of scholars.

Snyder makes a similar point, noting that through our focus on explaining and understanding Bush's worldview, his presidency is spared serious critique within this forum. Critiques do arise, particularly for his inability to articulate a profoundly new direction for American foreign policy at the end of the Cold War. Perhaps a second-term Bush might, like Reagan, have changed stripes, favoring human rights over realist appraisals. His 11th hour intervention in Somalia offers a teasing possibility of just such a change that might have occurred given four more years in office. We will never know. The one-term Bush had time, given the pace of events during his time in office, to reveal his stripes but once, displaying tried and true Cold War stripes. Snyder emphasizes, for example, Preston's conclusion that Bush's foreign policy was "ill-suited to his times." Ultimately Snyder's final point of emphasis might well serve as a conclusion for the entire forum, its contributions and H-Diplo critiques alike. She notes that Bush's advisers never produced a George Kennan for their times, one capable of synthesizing the global struggle at hand and charting an overarching strategy for success.

In the absence of a Kennan for the 1990s one finds a concluding point both of the entire forum, to my mind at least, and of the incisive H-Diplo critiques it prompted: to Bush and his national security team, success was already won. To their strategic thinking couched as realism but in reality a systematic worldview of its own, the world was already moving in America's direction. Bush felt no real need to develop a new vision for the world after 1989 and even after 1991, because doing so would have entirely unmoored him from the Cold War world he inhabited, and quite frankly, enjoyed and embraced. Bush's vision and ideology, which he considered realist, were inextricable from the Cold War that formed his views, and his very life. How one differentiates realism from ideology, then, as each of our reviewers explicitly or implicitly wonders, seems a question to ponder indeed.

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