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Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall. *America's Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity.*

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Since the end of the Cold War, a number of specialists have contributed works that have covered the period from World War II to 1991 with different perspectives and intended audiences that range from undergraduate survey courses to specialists in U.S. diplomacy and international relations. Many emeriti and senior scholars enjoyed the different editions of Walter LaFeber's *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-2006*, now in its tenth edition; or John Gaddis' different assessments, most notably *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* in the revised and expanded edition of 2005, and *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* which offered an influential reassessment of the Cold War through 1963. Norman Graebner, with co-authors Richard Dean Burns and Joseph M. Syracuse, contributed to the reevaluations with *America and the Cold War, 1941-1991: A Realist Interpretation* (2010). A number of recent collections have also offered retrospective evaluations of the Cold War including Odd Arne Westad's *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, Theory* and the recently published *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, edited by Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad in three volumes.¹

In *America's Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity*, Campbell Craig and Fredrick Logevall have combined a synthesis that is accessible to undergraduates as well as an interpretive analysis that advances several distinct theses on U.S. policy with respect to whether or not the Cold War could have been reduced to a more manageable and less costly conflict by the late 1950s and what considerations, primarily domestic politics and interest groups involved in the military-industrial complex, kept the Cold War alive and flourishing until 1991. The authors focus on decision-making in the White House from Franklin D. Roosevelt to George H.W. Bush and they pursue the twists and turns of U.S. policy oriented around George Kennan's concept of containment, noting both success with respect to the reconstruction of Western Europe and NATO alliance to secure this vital area as well as major mistakes and failures in extending a Cold War perspective on a global basis, an interventionist approach against reformist, radical and communist oriented movements and regimes from Iran and Guatemala in the 1950s, to Vietnam and Southeast Asia where concerns of credibility and domestic politics overwhelmed the doubts, reservations, and realistic considerations of decision makers.

The reviewers welcome the succinct assessments of Craig and Logevall and their willingness to move beyond a familiar overview of each U.S. administration to advance several distinct propositions. The reviewers do raise questions concerning the authors' theses, and the authors provide a thoughtful response.

1.) To a certain extent, Craig and Logevall follow an interpretation advanced by George Kennan in his *Memoirs 1925-1950* in which Kennan argued that containment of the

¹ H-Diplo roundtables are forthcoming next fall on Graebner, burns, and Syracuse and the Leffler and Westad collection.

Soviet Union in Western Europe had been successful in establishing a political balance with the Soviet Union by 1949 and that the time was right to negotiate with Moscow. Several of the reviewers note that Kennan shows up throughout the study as a “Greek chorus” with warnings about U.S. policymakers abandoning restraint as they resorted to covert interventions, nuclear brinkmanship, and costly and destructive interventions around the globe. The reviewers raise several reservations on this thesis, specifically concerning whether the authors have adopted too much of a realist perspective and not devoted sufficient attention to the nature and impact of the policies of the Soviet Union and its allies, as well as the limits on contemporary perspectives. Michael Hunt notes problems in the authors’ “realist framing of the Cold War” and their downplaying of U.S. policy elites envisioning a global Cold War at the start in contrast to Kennan’s recommendations. Lloyd Gardner also notes that the Cold War extended beyond a realist balance of power preoccupation on the U.S. side. Emphasizing a U.S. desire from WWII on to provide global political and economic leadership, Gardner points to concerns advanced by Dwight Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy about a “general threat that Soviet policy might overturn America’s reputation for having an unbeatable mix of political/military and technological prowess” with its model, “... and that was why policymakers believed they could not abandon containment, or, as it was phrased for the situation in the world outside Europe — Liberation.” (3) Anders Stephanson points to excessive hindsight in Craig and Logevall’s assumption that the Soviet Union would have negotiated an accommodation in the early 1950s. As Stephanson emphasizes, U.S. officials had limited information about the status of the Soviet economy and the intentions of Moscow, and under Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet Union enjoyed significant appeal as a model of industrialization, an opponent of Western colonialism, and a leader of an expanding alliance of communist parties and allies. Instead of viewing the Soviet Union as on the decline and ready for accommodation, American officials noted the exact opposite.

2.) Stephanson has the most problems with Craig and Logevall’s use of containment as the overarching strategy that the U.S. developed and stayed with throughout the Cold War despite the ill-fated temptation to unify Korea, the rhetoric of Republicans about liberation in the 1950s, and Ronald Reagan’s aid to “freedom fighters” against communism from Nicaragua to Angola, Solidarity in Poland, and Afghanistan. Stephanson considers containment an “axiomatic” with fundamental assumptions, “which, in a way, is the reason [John] Gaddis can, indeed, must talk of “strategies of containment.” (4) Stephanson gives Walter Lippmann more credit than Kennan in giving strategic content to containment and suggests that the authors have not adequately identified Kennan’s ideas, the flaws in his analysis of the Soviet Union and its unresponsiveness to diplomacy. (5-6)

3.) Craig and Logevall’s thesis that “domestic variables predominated over foreign ones receives a mixed reaction from the reviewers. The authors point to Dwight D. Eisenhower’s reference to the military-industrial complex and “party politics and electoral strategizing” as more influential in the shaping of U.S. policy than foreign considerations within the international environment. (6-10) Westad welcomes the attention that the authors devote to the impact of domestic public opinion and

concludes that their emphasis on domestic politics is “basically correct,” although Westad points to the need for more development of the thesis since the book “never quite figures out the specific impact that domestic politics had on what really mattered during the Cold War and what determined its outcome.” (1) Hunt would prefer more assessment of the underlying factors shaping public attitudes and party politics, such as the “tightening grip of consumer culture from the 1950s onward, at an economy threatening the American dream of abundance and mobility from the 1970s onward, and at the deepening divide between have and have-not regions of the country.” (3) Gardner raises the Vietnam issue with respect to the domestic thesis, questioning whether American leaders in their quest to avoid “losing credibility—and especially not without trying their best—to win” really “provides a satisfactory framework for understanding Cold War decisions?” (3) Stephanson suggests that the authors’ realist perspective (-- a description which they dispute--) and use of Kennan leads them to downplay the value of democratic control of foreign policy. The “problem is not ‘contamination’ by the public but the systemic manipulation and distortion to which it is typically subjected,” Stephanson asserts; in short, the absence of a genuinely democratic public sphere when it comes to foreign policy.” (11)

4.) Craig and Logevall frequently refer to domestic influences shaping U.S. policy from the anti-communism precipitated by the emerging Cold War after 1945, and Soviet espionage and Chinese Communist success in China which provided conservatives and Republicans with powerful political weapons to use against the Truman administration. Yet significant international factors along with the North Korean attack on South Korea would appear to have had a more determining impact on White House decision makers. As the authors and reviewers note, policy makers do not leave records that reveal domestic political calculations on policy decisions or the impact of the military industrial complex. The authors do refer to evidence of political considerations such as Truman’s advisers noting benefits for the 1948 election from firmness toward Moscow (p. 80), from using NSC-68 for political dividends. (p. 109), and from an escalation of the Korean War from a limited objective of containment to liberation. (p. 134) By the early 1950s Craig and Logevall note the coalescing of political and economic interests behind the original containment stance to global containment in NSC 68: “many more powerful interests stood to benefit from a vigorous prosecution of the Cold War and from increased military spending—the armed forces themselves, civilian officials associated with defense issues, arms industrialists, labor unions associated with weapons industries, universities and businesses that benefited from military research ... [and] new, politically potent government entities, such as the CIA, the National Security Resources Board, and the Atomic Energy Commission,” the expanding Defense Department and “many communities in the West and the Northeast.” (p. 136) In the aftermath of the Cuban missile crisis and John F. Kennedy’s negotiations with Khrushchev, Craig and Logevall note the domestic resistance to the prospect of an end of the Cold War since “a great many people had a vested interest in the indefinite perpetuation of the Cold War, in the continuation of the arms race” and the Cold War escalated in the developing world. (pp. 214-215) At times domestic political considerations seem to have had the most influence on the timing of decisions based on a number of considerations. In their discussion of Richard Nixon, for example, the

authors point to the timing of the Nixon's trips to China and Moscow (p. 260) as well as negotiations with Hanoi as being linked to the 1972 election. (p. 72)

5.) In the "Endgame" chapter, Craig and Logevall give substantial credit to Mikhail Gorbachev's moves to end the Cold War in response to internal pressures rather than to Ronald Reagan's revitalized Cold War policies. The authors also applaud Reagan and Bush's rejection of anti-Soviet advisers and conservatives who dismissed Gorbachev as an unreliable communist and Reagan's fear of nuclear war. (pp. 346-348) Westad notes that "the heated contests for domestic power and the demonization of the outside world" had little to do with the way the Cold War ended. When the authors give credit to containment, the avoidance of nuclear war, and "processes of give and take with allies," Westad suggests that instead of the authors' emphasis on domestic political influence, the results "seem testimony to a remarkably coherent and uniform approach to international affairs (for good or bad), and thereby perhaps to the ideological underpinnings that much of U.S. politics and policies share." (2)

Participants:

Campbell Craig is Professor of International Politics at Aberystwyth University, where he teaches Cold War and Nuclear History. He has a BA from Carleton College, an MA from the University of Chicago, and received his PhD in 1995 from Ohio University. He is the author of *Destroying the Village: Eisenhower and Thermonuclear War* (1998); *Glimmer of a New Leviathan: Total War in the Realism of Niebuhr, Morgenthau, and Waltz* (2003); and co-authored with Sergey Radchenko *The Atomic Bomb and the Origins of the Cold War* (2008).

Fredrik Logevall is a historian at Cornell University, where he also serves as director of the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies. He received his PhD from Yale University and previously taught at UC Santa Barbara, where he co-founded the Center for Cold War Studies. His recent publications include, as co-editor, *Nixon in the World: American Foreign Relations, 1969-1977* (2008), and, as co-author, *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States* (2008). Currently, he is completing work on a history of the struggle for Indochina after 1940.

Lloyd Gardner received his Ph.D. from Wisconsin in 1960, and teaches one course a year at Rutgers University. He is a former president of SHAFR, and the author of more than a dozen books on American foreign policy. His most recent books *The Long Road to Baghdad: A History of American Foreign Policy Since 1970*, and *Three Kings: The Rise of an American Empire in the Middle East after World War II*, attempt a discussion of the major factors in America's encounter with the Middle East. He is currently working with Marilyn Young on a history of Counter-Insurgency.

Michael H. Hunt is Everett H. Emerson Professor Emeritus at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His most recent books are *The World Transformed: 1945 to the Present* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004); *The American Ascendancy: How the U.S. Gained and Wielded Global Dominance* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), a *Choice* academic book selection; and *A Vietnam War Reader: A Documentary History from American and Vietnamese Perspectives* (Chapel Hill: University of North

Carolina Press, 2010; London: Penguin, forthcoming). His *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* appeared in 2009 in a second edition (notable for the addition of an Afterword). He is finishing a book on "The Arc of Empire: America's Wars in Eastern Asia, 1899-1973" with Steven I. Levine. For more information, visit his professional website at <http://www.unc.edu/~mhhunt/>. He can be reached at mhhunt@email.unc.edu.

Anders Stephanson is the Andrew and Virginia Rudd Professor of History at Columbia University. He is forever trying to write a conceptual history of the U.S. project known as 'the cold war.' Among his recent interventions is an article on Hegel and Haiti (new left review, Jan-Feb 2010), a critique of Susan Buck-Morss's book on that subject.

Odd Arne Westad is Professor of International History at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). He co-directs the LSE Cold War Studies Centre with Professor Michael Cox, is an editor of the journal *Cold War History* and the editor (with Professor Melvyn Leffler of the *Cambridge History of the Cold War*). Westad received his PhD in history from the University of North Carolina in 1990. Westad's main fields of interest are the international history of the Cold War and contemporary East Asian history. Professor Westad has published twelve books including *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (2006) which won the Bancroft Prize.

In their new look at America's Cold War, Campbell Craig and Frederick Logevall announce at the very outset that they are "consciously bucking the historiographical trend toward international history." While they find much to admire in that approach, they write, they do not believe that it is the only way to write Cold War history or that it is necessarily the most productive. In fact, the dangers of applying the international history yardstick to judge the success of a project include the possibility of fragmentation to a degree that reduces history to a series of individual episodes. It also risks downplaying the reality that in the postwar period, the United States "projected its power to almost every corner of the world." (p. 5) Of course, many would disagree, citing newly available archives in all countries – but especially in the former Communist bloc nations – as crucial to an understanding of the real dimensions of the Cold War. The debate is unlikely to be settled for a long time – if ever – but Craig and Logevall have made a strong argument for not abandoning the overall theme that comprehending the Cold War requires above all else an understanding of what ideas and forces motivated American policymakers, both specifically at key moments, and more generally as a result of long term political imperatives.

The book therefore begins with a speech that George F. Kennan delivered at Grinnell College in Iowa on February 1, 1984. As he neared his 80th birthday, the father of Containment was deeply worried about "the deeply ingrained features of our political system," specifically the "domestic self-consciousness of the American statesman." Spelling this out, Kennan asserted that the policymaker's fear of public opinion in the United States was greater than in any other country. Now, it would be hard to pick a time when Kennan was *not* deeply worried about the difficulties of making rational decisions about foreign policy in a democracy. In his famous set of lectures in Chicago more than thirty years earlier, published as "American Foreign Policy, 1900-1950," which became the handbook for "realist" critics, Kennan averred that the United States behaved like a somnolent crocodile in a swamp, until some irritation roused it to a fury, when it would thrash around destroying everything in its environment. In his histories of the pre-World War I era's fatal mistakes leading to that conflagration, Kennan extended his fears to Republican France, which he believed had entered into a dangerous alliance with Tsarist Russia as a result of popular pressures.

Kennan's personal career had suffered, he believed, as a result of the Republican vow in 1952 to end the cowardly containment policy, and restore to the nation its proper role as an activist champion of "Liberation." In 1984 Ronald Reagan was still talking about the "Evil Empire," and promising to build a "Star Wars" anti-missile system that would demonstrate, as the atomic bomb had supposedly demonstrated, that only in America, with its political freedoms, could such a technological achievement – which confirmed the nation's worthiness to lead the world – be possible.

But let's go back to 1953. The argument between Kennan and the new secretary of state, John Foster Dulles that led to the diplomat's resignation/firing, did indeed have to do with

containment versus liberation, but not quite in the way, or, at least, not entirely in the way, the argument is often posed. Dulles was convinced that the central questions determining the ultimate outcome of the Cold War would no longer arise in Europe but in what would soon be called the “Third World.” And it was true that Kennan did not believe containment would work in areas, which, in his opinion, lacked the elements of national identity and political maturity

The importance of the disagreement goes to the heart of the contentions advanced in “America’s Cold War.” In Kennan’s view (and it would appear the authors’ outlook) what could be called the essential Cold War might have ended in 1950 when the first Berlin crisis concluded with a Soviet back down. Most certainly, they argue, the decision not to enlarge the Korean War demonstrated the wisdom of the decision-makers in the Truman Administration. In addition, they point out, the imperatives that drove the great imperial empires of the past (especially in the industrial era), in the case of the United States did not lead to the expansion of overseas territories, but were absorbed by defense spending, which, moreover diffused the “benefits” issuing from the “military-industrial” complex somewhat more equitably than the benefits of the British Empire had been distributed. Certainly putting military defense contracts into as many states as possible, spread out the benefits to Congressmen and Senators, and substituted in a way for overseas bases in the classic sense of imperial outposts. (Today, of course, the United States has more military bases overseas than any previous empire.) In essence, military Keynesianism provided the intellectual foundations as well of Cold War liberalism. No better example, of course, was John Kennedy’s missile gap rhetoric during the 1960 campaign. In a telling commentary, the authors note that Eisenhower provided powerful evidence that the gap did not exist. “Accepting the president’s assurances of American superiority, however, would mean losing a lethal campaign weapon. This the senator would not do.” (p. 191)

In private, they write, Kennedy was not a reflexive Cold Warrior, but a cautious and quite cynical pragmatist. But that would not win elections. Several things are important here. First, Kennedy’s behavior thus fits into the thesis advanced via George Kennan’s Grinnell lecture that American policymakers are more wont to consider domestic opinion than their counterparts elsewhere. The authors find many more examples, and exploit them well as in this instance. But what is also intriguing is the use of the word “lethal.” I would expand that beyond the immediate question of the 1960 election campaign’s required rhetoric. Kennedy also hit hard on the Cuban issue. One might say, even harder than on missiles. Who lost Cuba was to be at the front of the Democratic campaign bandwagon, perched high with a trumpeteer-like blare announcing Kennedy’s determination to get American moving again. There is a clue also, because the major issues ahead, Cuba, Laos, Vietnam were all, with the exception of the new Berlin crisis, questions about American leadership in the “Third World.” In that regard, moreover, the authors perhaps missed an opportunity to take up JFK’s strong response to Khrushchev’s January 1961 speech professing an aim of supporting wars of national liberation.

That was what was “lethal” not only about the supposed missile gap, but the general threat that Soviet policy might overturn America’s reputation for having an unbeatable mix of political/ military and technological prowess. Indeed, as early as 1957, with the United

States in an economic recession, Eisenhower was deeply worried about American science education – and its failings – but also the impression that Soviet economic growth stood in contrast to the periodic problems of a capitalist economy. Of course these fears proved groundless, but they were very real, and colored thoughts about “losing” (more) parts of the third world, in, what, the authors very aptly identify, would be a psychological domino effect. Such a development would be, it was thought, “lethal” for the fate of the “American Century.” Going back to the origins of the Cold War, the authors point out that Roosevelt’s goal in World War II, after it became apparent that there would be no stalemate or negotiated peace, was “to have the United States succeed Great Britain as the leader of the western, capitalist world, and to replace its old imperial system with one based on free trade and decolonization.” (p. 33)

And further on, in opposition to this, “The USSR would remain a communist state, and by necessity therefore an autarkic one, relying upon its own economic devices rather than trading freely with the world’s capitalists, led by the United States.” (p. 38) This was the zero sum game the Cold War became; for American policymakers it was thought to be, as Arthur Schlesinger put it in 1967, a life and death struggle – or, as I would suggest here, a “lethal” question on all fronts. And that was why policymakers believed they could not abandon containment, or, as it was phrased for the situation in the world outside Europe – Liberation.

I have to agree with the authors, who posit in this book, and elsewhere, on the question of whether it was possible to have escaped the tragedy of Vietnam, that the period in early 1965 offered an opportunity to take up that challenge. In their view, LBJ then made it his war. But, without going into the many arguments about whether Johnson aborted Kennedy’s plans for a gradual disengagement or not, the men who advised both presidents had proved to be strong advocates, as the authors say, of not losing credibility – and especially not without trying their best – to win. My point in closing would be, then, to ask whether Kennan’s lament about the inclination of American policymakers to enslave themselves to public opinion provides a satisfactory framework for understanding Cold War decisions?

Well, one more point. Logevall and Craig have written a very stimulating synthesis of American policy in the Cold War, that I very much admire, and to do it justice would require a much longer essay. It ought to be widely read and discussed. It is in many ways a model for other historians who perhaps fight shy of painting on such a large canvas.

This crisp, fluent, controlled survey is a realist's dream and a worthy addition to a venerable body of historical writing. *America's Cold War* is up-to-date on the policy literature. It takes a broad view, extending the treatment back to Woodrow Wilson and forward to George W. Bush and consistently setting U.S. policy in a domestic and international context. This skillfully constructed history should have broad appeal. That appeal should extend to the classroom as a text with an accessible argument that invites fruitful discussion.

Building on their earlier work on the origins of the Cold War, nuclear weapons, and Vietnam policy, Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall advance an important proposition. They claim that the Cold War should have started winding down by the 1950s. By then the major issues raised by Soviet expansion and by the advent of nuclear weapons had essentially been settled. The Red Army was not going to take western Europe. And the leaders of the two superpowers -- Dwight Eisenhower and Nikita Khrushchev -- were coming to understand the nightmare potential of nuclear weapons and the necessity of restraint. Confident in strong alliances and a dynamic economy, U.S. leaders were well positioned to reach a grand political settlement that would have defused superpower tensions.

This picture of the early Cold War leads the authors to their pivotal and engaging interpretive question: Why did the Cold War not wind down but instead persist for another three decades and at times intensify to an alarming degree? They find their answer in the naiveté of some U.S. leaders and in domestic forces that pushed policymakers and politicians alike toward hard-line positions that needlessly prolonged conflict. The costs were high: serious damage to the United States and the Soviet Union; terrible destruction visited on regions far beyond the strategic core of U.S. security interests; and harmful effects on U.S. policy still evident today.

The realist preoccupations driving this history will first become apparent in a narrative anchored in the White House. Already in the first chapter, Wilson and Roosevelt stand for U.S. policy outlooks before the Cold War. Subsequent chapters are organized around presidential administrations with a succession of presidents and their close advisers taking the spotlight.

A second early clue about lurking realism arrives in the person of George Kennan. The former diplomat turned essayist and policy guru pops in and out of the narrative like a one-man Greek chorus commenting on the unfolding drama. Presidents come and go, but Kennan is always there. The authors channel him in claiming that Truman devised a limited containment policy aimed at no more than protecting western Europe and Japan from the USSR. They trot him out again to endorse their claim that containment had succeeded by the 1950s with the security of those two vital areas assured and that the nuclear arms race had become too dangerous to continue. As the narrative unfolds of a Cold War that will not

subside, the authors draw on Kennan's commentary to bemoan missed opportunities and political excesses.

Finally, readers will see realism in the familiar stress on the malign effects that idealism, passion, and parochial, self-interested domestic pressures have on policy. Those old foes of sound decisions kept getting in the way of a grand settlement or made bad relations worse. This realist leitmotiv running through *America's Cold War* echoes Kennan's laments going back to the late 1940s over the messiness and irresponsibility of democracy and the deplorable way its domestic dysfunctions kept defiling the sacred domain of the policymaker and mocking and upending sound policy.

This distinctly realist framing of the Cold War gives rise to some familiar problems. First, the authors feel compelled to sort presidents into idealist and realist boxes. Some results are predictable. Richard Nixon and George H. W. Bush go into the realist box while Lyndon Johnson and Jimmy Carter get tagged as idealists. Regardless of their orientation, domestic politics dog them all, compounding Johnson's miscalculations, undoing Nixon's "Realpolitik," and undercutting Carter's "moralistic foreign policy." (p. 296) This approach tends to turn these leading players into stock figures and to assert rather than demonstrate the impact of domestic pressures.

Other presidents seem to resist the realist cookie cutter and thus don't come into sharp focus. Franklin Roosevelt was, like Wilson, committed to "an idealistic new order," yet he wanted a partnership with the Soviet Union as one of the four postwar policemen, and he was willing to accord Stalin control over eastern Europe. (p. 43) Is Roosevelt too complex to categorize in realist-idealist terms? Harry Truman figures as an idealist with his "black and white" view of the world, with his principled opposition to Soviet control of eastern Europe, and with his frustration over Moscow's rejection of U.S. plans for global reform. (p. 44) But the authors also credit him (in a nice semantic slight of hand) with grasping as a prime "reality" "the prospect of Soviet preponderance over Eurasia after the war." (p. 7) They also give Truman full marks for devising a cost effective and successful defense system -- "a model of careful multilateralism and strategic foresight." (p. 100) Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan are others who seem to resist easy realist framing.

A second difficulty long linked to realist works is the authors' unconvincing, Kennanesque conception of containment. They argue that containment was at inception narrowly focused on securing western Europe and Japan but that passions and politics led to a broadening, global application that fueled Cold War fires. The authors name the early, moderate version "Eurasian containment," a term that inadvertently suggests that U.S. cold warriors had a fairly broad conception from the start. The authors may be confusing the guiding ideas behind containment with its initially modest implementation. A cash-strapped, troop-short Truman administration had to assign priorities even as it wrung its hand over the communist peril arising at points around the world from China and Indochina to Guatemala to Iran. Policy elites already at the creation contemplated a global Cold War, and they did so for reasons largely apart from partisan pressures, not simply as a result of those pressures. Craig and Logevall's treatment of containment is vulnerable on a second point: that rollback may have existed alongside containment as an equally

appealing strategy -- at least until the Hungarian revolution of 1956 and the dawning nuclear nightmare put and end to thoughts of challenging Soviet control even on the margins of its empire.

Yet a third difficulty inherent in the realist genre that shows up here is the superficial and uninformative explanation for the persistence of the crusading mentality in American politics through the Cold War and beyond. It is hard to disagree with the broad point that policymakers are limited cognitively and situationally and that domestic politics impinge on policy in ways presidents may not like. But why? Is it in the nature of the human condition and democratic politics? Or was there something particular going on during the Cold War? If the former, then we are stuck. Policymakers will still err, crusading mentalities will live on and inflict harm, and democratic politics will remain messy. If the latter, how do we go about making good on the old realist bromides about selecting leaders who grasp international realities and insulating them from the vagaries of ideology and politics? Or is there some other lesson to draw? For an interpretive tradition devoted to the making of better policy, the silence on these points is striking.

A substantial body of literature could provide a fuller and perhaps more usable past on the domestic side. To understand public attitudes and party politics, it might help to look at the tightening grip of consumer culture from the 1950s onward, at an economy threatening the American dream of abundance and mobility from the 1970s onward, and at the deepening divide between have and have-not regions of the country. Also helpful would be the addition of race, gender, and nationalism as constructed categories that don't respect the neat distinction between policy thinking and politics. Nationalism, especially in its recent frustrated, divisive form, seems important to the puzzle that *America's Cold War* seeks to solve. Only in the conclusion do the authors allude to "nationalism" and "political culture." (pp. 364, 365) But they don't explore what those terms might mean and how they might help account for some of the features of U.S. policy and politics developed and lamented earlier in this study.

There is an equally formidable body of works on the international side pertinent to the "realities U.S. policymakers confronted. The emergence of multiple economic powers, the proliferation of socialist and then market experiments (not just capitalist triumph over communism), a phase of marked militancy within the third world, persistent global poverty and widening regional inequalities, the growing activism of NGO's and other transnational actors, the spread of transnational ideologies, upheavals in eastern Asia and the Middle East, the spread of nuclear weapons know-how, an environmental crisis at odds with the religion of economic growth -- these are only the most obvious developments. The case could be made that an international system in flux if not deepening trouble constantly impinged on U.S. Cold War policy and thus may be an indispensable element in explaining that policy.

America's Cold War is testimony to the continuing vitality of state-focused studies attuned to the concerns of policymakers and adept at using the documents they produced. The sharp insights and crisp propositions of realism continue to have their place in the study of foreign relations from Washington's perspective. Craig and Logevall demonstrate the value

of the genre by forcing readers to confront a set of big, perennial issues and challenging those not entirely persuaded by the treatment here to do better.

In the Land of Neo-Gaddisia

One must resist the early temptation to see this work as warmed-over John Lewis Gaddis, the realist or para-realist Gaddis from 1972 to 1986 or thereabouts before he begins, a bit tongue in cheek, to write pure ideology about ideology. One must resist the temptation because Craig and Logevall give the Gaddisian idea of some golden moment of the judicious and prudent mean between 1947 and 1950 a certain critical twist that the model figure never really could quite bring himself to articulate. I find the result unconvincing and in some ways empirically false but invigorating, both for what it says and what it obscures, and because it allows the authors to condense their important expertise on particular topics (respectively, nuclear strategy and Vietnam) in a larger frame.

To what genre does the Craig and Logevall opus belong? It is useful to pose that preliminary question, for genre as a system renders the place of any given work more precise as intentionality, as an *intervention*. Our genre (or sub-genre) here is what might be called 'the overview of the cold war with a strong take.' This is the kind of work that aims to do two things. First, one wants to give the imaginary undergraduate enough of an account of periods, facts and events to enable the book to serve as an ersatz textbook; and, second, one wants to distinguish oneself from dry textbook neutrality by providing the same undergraduate with a 'perspective' strong enough to allow for discussion and dispute, a feature that will also differentiate the work from others with similar aims. This second aspect is the 'take.' So one might initially class this work as an entry into a field comprising (to name but a few) Walter LaFeber's *America, Russia and the Cold War*, Gaddis's *Strategies of Containment*, Thomas McCormick's *America's Half-Century*, Mel Leffler's *For the Soul of Mankind*, Odd Arne Westad's *The Cold War* and, on the other side of the fence, Vladislav Zubok's *A Failed Empire*. As an overview, the Craig and Logevall book is unusual in one respect: any chance to foreground issues of nuclear weapons and strategy is eagerly seized upon. Otherwise it is for long stretches surprisingly conventional, as in 'stories we have heard before' (once again Truman telling Molotov where to get off); though a certain conventionality is inherent in any overview. One can disagree with a good number of such accounts. I find erroneous, for instance, their view of FDR as essentially a neo-Wilsonian; but this is no place for such disputes, the one exception below having to do with the fundamental question of the 'take.'

Craig and Logevall's take, in its essentials, is as follows.

Methodologically (there is no theory), they focus on 'decision-making,' specifically 'American' decisions, even more specifically the decisions of a few policymakers; and on how the international and the domestic came into play in making those decisions, what the authors call 'the intermestic,' an ugly term which, despite the big play it gets in the introduction, rarely appears in the actual text. This angle allows them to distinguish themselves polemically (but again chiefly as an afterthought in the introduction) from the voguish notion of 'international history' (more about that dispute later). 'Decision-making'

has the flavor of IR theory and indeed there is a smattering of this throughout, initially some ill-advised talk of ‘variables but also, and, more substantially, a straight appropriation of Kenneth Waltz’s theorization of bipolarity and Robert Jervis’s precise analysis of the antinomies of nuclear strategy. Decision-making is indeed what interests the authors in their own respective practice as historians (decisions on strategy, escalation and so forth).

Historically, their take is this. The ‘free security’ of the United States came to an end around 1940, thus forcing policymakers to make real strategic decisions, decisions which, after the war had come to an end, required them to steer clear of the polar opposite errors of isolationism on the one hand and preventive war against the Soviet Union on the other. Luckily, the appropriate alternative, containment, became available in 1946-47, and in a series of deftly executed moves the United States managed to put a stop to Soviet expansion without becoming embroiled in any costly global struggle on every front. This realistic, essentially defensive strategy was in part, in very serious ways, damaged by the advent of the People’s Republic of China, the Soviet Bomb and the Korean War in 1949-50, thus giving public reality so to speak to the universalist rhetoric of anti-communism that, de facto, had hitherto been ignored in actual policy. Enter nuclear obsessions and the arms race, massive and unnecessary interventions in the third world, the creation of a domestic constituency of interests always already in favor of more and better globalized militarization; security was thus rendered insecure, when in fact the Soviet Union was already for practical purposes moribund, if not in 1950 certainly by 1960. Containment remained in force but in a much cruder, *unnecessarily* cruder, form. Eisenhower, the clear-headed and prudent Eisenhower, saw the truth of the nuclear predicament in his second Administration and was able to preserve the essentials of containment, the space for ‘neither isolation nor preventive war,’ drawing the dialectical (my word) conclusion that the answer to nuclear insecurity was the absolutization of nuclear weaponry, a policy of all or nothing. Various strategies ensue, some of which are egregious and senseless (Kennedy’s and Johnson’s policy in Vietnam, Reagan’s buildup in the cold war renewed), some of which are fairly smart and proper (*détente*), some of which are misguided or badly carried out (almost all of Jimmy Carter’s moves), but all of which remain within some rough approximation of the containment frame. Finally, in the second Reagan Administration, the elements came together for a proper finishing off of the pitiful Soviet adversary, courtesy of course to no little degree of Mikhail Gorbachev but also of Reagan’s lucid and prudent recognition of the historical truth that containing the Soviet Union rather than some excessive rollback policy was right, that cooperation and diplomacy was right and advantageous once Gorbachev began his ill-fated reforms and the Soviet Union eventually went belly-up.

Behind all these vagaries of policy, then, there remained the system, *the domestic system*, that Eisenhower had discerned so clearly at the end of his presidency: the military-industrial-congressional complex. Hence, even after the end of the cold war, the far flung apparatus is uselessly in tact.

I will present my critique as discrete points, going in reverse order from the historical (the summary is a radical reduction of course) to the methodological. I had resolved from the outset not to say anything extended either about ‘the cold war’ (as a period and a concept)

or 'George F. Kennan and containment,' the reason being that I have said enough (or too much) on both topics. I failed when it came to Kennan. He shows up in the first paragraph of the book and he shows up in the last. Kennan also shows up every thirty pages or so as a kind of one-man Greek chorus, usually to express 'worry' of some kind or other, over the course of events (for there was never a moment in Kennan's exceedingly long public life when he was not worried). More fundamentally, the entire Craig and Logevall argument stands or falls with their initial conception, taken directly from Gaddis circa 1974, of 'containment' and 'the turning point.' Their analytical arc is determined by that initial move. With a great deal of reluctance, therefore, I must elaborate on why I think that conception, that 'containment,' is false.

By contrast, I will eschew serious argument about 'the cold war.' Title notwithstanding, Craig and Logevall are not much interested in the cold war qua cold war, being, as they are, realists of a sort and equating, in the end, the cold war with bipolarity (typically, Kenneth Waltz is not much interested in the cold war as such either). What excites and drives them is indicated by the subtitle, 'the politics of insecurity' and its defining opposite, 'security,' which does not really exist except as a necessary postulate; from which follows the concern with the 'decisions' that pertain to that couplet, all within the larger frame of bipolarity. This analytical order is no small matter. 'Security,' more precisely 'insecurity,' appears as a transhistorical condition, 'the cold war' as a specific problem within it, a problem that can be handled more or less well (or badly) in terms of actual interests. What this book is about is thus competence in 'statecraft' during a period known conventionally as the cold war. Statecraft, on this view, always operates within a constitutive field of insecurity, though the United States enjoyed for the longest time abnormal degrees of security. What concerns Craig and Logevall concretely is how this task, a technique of sorts, ends up going astray largely because of the domestic structure. The axial event, then, is not (say) February 1946, March or June 1947, or any other moment in the immediate postwar period one might invoke in the 'origins' of the cold war. The axial event is 7 December 1941 when 'free security,' real or imagined, becomes 'insecurity' and a certain 'politics' of that new condition opens up. I begin a little later, however, with the golden moment.

I. Containment

Containment is not a strategy. Nothing 'strategic' follows from it. It is not even a policy. One might call it an 'axiomatic,' which posits three fundamental things: (i) the Soviet Union is by nature such that it will always destroy everything non-Soviet in the world; (ii) this unchangeable essence can only be destroyed if, in turn, it is itself stopped; and (iii) stopping it can never be done by diplomacy. How the stopping is otherwise to be done, tactically or strategically, is not said. What is axiomatic on that score is only a *rule*, the rule of 'resistance' or 'activity.' Henry Wallace, briefly, tried to challenge this axiomatic by proposing the (correct but pointless) alternative that the more intransigent the United States became, the more intransigent the Soviets would become in turn; but Kennan's axiomatic reigned supreme, much to his own subsequent regret. There were profound political reasons for this which can be glimpsed in his rhetoric. The language of containment could not be contained. Take your pick among the many suggestive metaphors but consider this. One does not negotiate with a cancer tumor: one cuts it out. One does not

negotiate with bacteria: one isolates it (no penicillin is as yet available). One does not negotiate with a wind-up toy: one sets up a barrier. One does not negotiate with an overflowing river: one builds a dam or some dykes to control it. None of this adds up to a strategy, which, in a way, is the reason Gaddis can, indeed *must*, talk of 'strategies of containment.'

The axiomatic, then, has to be filled with strategic and tactical *content*. The person who turns 'containment' into a strategy is not Kennan but Walter Lippmann and he does so by negation. In picking the X-Article apart in the fall of 1947, the pundit of all pundits invents containment as a name for something at once quite simple and quite elaborate (along with the term 'the cold war.'). Lippmann imputes to containment a strategic content, bad content as a matter of fact. It must have been a great ego-boost for Kennan, having so recently come in from the State Department doghouse, to be honored by such prominent attention; but in the process he was getting a blindsided bodyblow of the highest magnitude. Kennan had actually not purported to make any strategic claims. His Long Telegram and X-Article were analyses of *the Soviet Union*, analyses which produced a certain posture or reaction ('no diplomacy but force and power'). Nothing more. As it happens, it was not a very good analysis of the Soviet Union. Kennan himself always recognized this once the fog had cleared but he could never quite figure out, or at least articulate, exactly what had gone wrong. In 1967, retrospectively, he expressed 'horrified amusement' at it, comparing it, a bit excessively, to the views of the Daughters of the American Revolution, a contemporary reference indicating, in today's terms, something markedly to the right of Sarah Palin. His analysis of 1946-47, at any rate, was historically false ('the Soviet Union never compromises or deals,' as though World War II, the Non-Aggression Pact, Rapallo were all figments of the imagination); it was incoherent ('the Soviet leaders are ideological but at the same time not ideological,' 'the Soviet leaders can not see reality but at the same time they are realistic') and improbable ('the Soviet Union can never change but if it can not live out its internal nature, ie expansion, it will crumble'), and confused ('the Soviet Union needs to be hostile to the outside, therefore it is expansionist,' as though the functional need to have an external enemy can not be expressed in isolationism).

Lippmann saw this or most of it. In particular, he destroyed Kennan's central point, which is to say the incommensurability thesis. Lippmann said: we (the United States) can count soldiers, they (the Soviet Union) can count soldiers and such exercises entail no basic ideological problem. The idea of ruling out *interaction* is silly. The idea of a Hadrianic wall is silly. The whole idea of containment is silly or, to be more precise, bad strategy. What we (the United States) need instead is concrete moves in an Atlanticist frame to get the Soviet army out of Central Europe, and one way of doing that is to figure out if there is any way they will agree to that. It's called diplomacy and realism (since we can't go to war).

Kennan, who had not thought of it as strategy and had only begun, pragmatically, to develop a strategy centered on Western Europe (the Marshall Plan which of course Lippmann liked), learnt a profound lesson from this. Thus, in 1948, he formulated a restrained strategic view of the world very much along Lippmannesque lines. The United States only needed to prevent the Soviet Union from taking over any of the three remaining non-Soviet industrialized zones of the world (Craig and Logevall are a little sloppy here as

they ascribe to Kennan the idea that the U.S. somehow needed to preserve U.S. *preponderance* in these areas, a very different matter from negative 'prevention' and indeed something he would have regarded as rather a nightmare, encouraging the dinosaur to globalism as it were). Prevention required no universalist precepts such as the Truman Doctrine but, on the contrary (PPS 23), a particularist approach and the restoration of some older balance of power concept based on traditional, older powers. Particularism demanded, concretely, scrapping the incipient NATO project and the whole militarization of strategy and policy that was taking place. Instead, Kennan proposed some kind of deal with Moscow on Germany, leading if possible (as Lippmann had intimated) to the mutual withdrawal from Central Europe.

As we all know, Kennan got nowhere with this view in 1948-49 and had a hard time figuring out why. In fact, he had already provided the powers that be with the invaluable axiom the doctor had ordered: the posited, fanatical uncompromising Evil Empire, now (March 1947) turned into the Totalitarian Empire, towards which all diplomacy was equal to appeasement.

It is necessary to be precise here. The Craig and Logevall account, following Gaddis, involves skating over rather breezily the ideological frame of 1947-1950 so as to highlight what they like to think of as the concrete strategy of containment, viz. the Marshall Plan, the Airlift, NATO, the restoration of rightwing Japan sans militarism. They focus on 'actually existing containment' if you will. It was, in their view, cheap and clever strategy, prudent and judicious, not too much, not too little. Forget about the 'rhetoric' (as realists they don't like it anyway); for, in actuality, containment worked rather as Kennan had intended it. The particulars might have not have been to his liking (i.e. the disagreement on NATO) but on the whole the spirit was right and the execution marvelous. Unfortunately, external events of 1949-50 combined with some emergent domestic forces conspired to undermine prudence and realism. It might well have been otherwise. Decision-makers could have taken a different, more restrained route.

I have indicated why I think this falsifies Kennan's position. One might think it is all a matter of 'interpretation,' one as good as the other, all things being equal, as all re-writing is interpretation, the substitution of one text for another. Craig and Logevall, however, offer no real interpretation. When one looks up the reference to their account of Kennan's containment, arguably the central paragraph in the entire book, one finds no original reading. What one finds is *Strategies of Containment*, Gaddis's synthesized and homogenized version of Kennan: Kennan stripped of contradiction, speaking Gaddisian. Just like Gaddis, in fact, Craig and Logevall are fairly unconcerned with Kennan's texts as *texts*. (This is not the only occasion when, in referring to important documents, they needlessly cite a secondary authority). The procedure and the attendant account is especially odd since Fredrik Logevall in his Bernath Lecture presents just such an interpretation, less concerned, typically, with the intricacies of Kennan's texts than with the general context of the moment but certainly a good deal more critical and extensive than the position here, accentuating in fact the no-diplomacy aspect while accentuating the

domestic explanation why Lippmann's version of things did not come to pass.¹ Craig and Logevall, by contrast, merely dismiss Lippmann's realism as being ahead of the game. They do not pose the question why Kennan got nowhere in 1948-49.

Kennan got nowhere because he had misperceived the 'logic' of his own Soviet analysis, or, more precisely, he had not grasped how and with what profit it could be used in a very different frame. Craig and Logevall refer to "the cool logic of containment" (134). They are quite taken with the word 'logic.' There are 'logics' left, right and yonder, 'logics' which at no point receive any logical exposition. Here, however, there actually was a logic of sorts in Kennan's original analysis of the Soviet Union but it was not what they say it was and it certainly wasn't cool: a uniquely unresponsive and antagonistic adversary whose entire behavior could be deduced from its internal structure and about which nothing *therefore* could be done by way of diplomacy, the DNA of the body politic producing 'with iron logic' the external policies. This was exceedingly useful (Kennan would spend a lifetime regretting it) because, of course, it fit admirably the new project of the cold war.

II. The cold war briefly (very briefly).

The Truman Doctrine, in fact, gets it exactly right from that angle. 'Universal freedom is under siege from the Evil Totalitarian Empire and we, the United States must do what higher authority plainly has ordained, namely, to save anyone anywhere who is suffering directly from that condition; otherwise we are all doomed; therefore, we need immediately to provide 400 million USD in military assistance to Greece and Turkey, perhaps not so democratically kosher but the prognosis on that score is decent if we come up with the aid.' This, in short, is a general principle combined with a concrete action. No one could, courtesy in part of George F. Kennan, dispute the basic principle. One could dispute what was to be done and where, but one could not dispute the principle and the frame. (It was another matter that, two months later, one proceeded for tactical reasons to do precisely that, namely, by offering Marshall Aid to the Soviet Union and its auxiliaries. This was obviously a 'logical' absurdity in terms of the Truman Doctrine - aid to Evil Totalitarianism anyone? Yet the aim was of course not to improve interaction but to end it by making an offer Moscow was forced to refuse, or so it thought. The strategic polyvalence of the Marshall Plan is indeed striking, embodied in the originating figure of Will Clayton, cotton trader extraordinaire among other things. Thus the Plan, unlike NATO, tends to generate a diverse historiography.)

'Containment' *in the guise of the Truman Doctrine*, then, is a perfect *carte blanche*, an axiomatic that can be filled with a wide range of strategic content. The beauty of the containment as cold war is thus not that it deals with the Soviet threat (always exaggerated anyway), but that it *brackets* the whole problem, that it turns it into dogma never to be questioned, rather on the order of the Immaculate Conception in Vatican orthodoxy. This bracketing operation gives the United States an open license to do whatever 'the

¹ Fredrik Logevall, "A Critique of Containment," Bernath Lecture, *Diplomatic History*, Volume 28, Issue 4 (September 2004), pp. 473-499.

policymakers' decide to do wherever and whenever. (A recent, postmodern pastiche here is the ill-fated 'global war on terror.')

It is difficult to think, truly, of a more convenient way for the United States, or its 'internationalists,' to legitimate putting the country once and for all in 'the world.' Not until the embryonic advent of a real nuclear balance of terror does that 'serviceability' come to an end. Yet, if the frame, the enabling principle so to speak, is unanswerably 'true' and can only be modified in some minor way by reference to putative American principles of budgetary restraints, the actual content is always up for grabs. That is, from the Truman Doctrine onwards, it is *always possible* to argue that the concrete strategic content of any given Administration is failing to live up to its fundamental promise, the promise of universal principles applying universally and the promise, indeed the obligation, not to relinquish anything, any people, any territory to the Evil Empire. Hence, already in 1948, the complaints about China. Hence the incipient notions of traitors and conspiracies.

The point is this: given the frame, there is *no way anyone can ever do enough*. There is always a systemic lack. One is always already in deficit. This 'logic' (let us call it that) is firmly and unequivocally established in the Truman Doctrine. It would rule, or overdetermine, the U.S. position until 1963. This is why Eisenhower never did anything truly decisive, or had anything remotely interesting to say, about the cold war as a cold war. Stay the course and, eventually, see to it that no nuclear war happens: that is the sum total. John F. Kennedy, by comparison, tried in the 1950s to break with the frame, chiefly by a considered and sophisticated analysis of the third world, for which he is rarely credited, partly and understandably because of what he actually did as president (this shift, on the whole, to relentless reaction is forever tantalizing since the preceding moment seems to hold out the possibility for another reversal, thus leading to endless speculation as to what he might have done down the line in Vietnam).

III. Containment of the Cruder Kind.

In the very different Craig and Logevall scenario, then, de facto particularism and clever strategy comes to an end in 1950-51 for reasons already outlined. A second stage is thus reached in history and in their argument: the 'objective' need for the no-diplomacy version of containment is over; but not only does it live on, it lives on in *much cruder form*. The predicament, generated by the domestic constraints and the mistakes of excess (expressed with great clarity in NSC-68), is how to maneuver within the polarity of 'isolationism' (Craig and Logevall use this deeply ideological term, created by 'internationalists' as a sign of opprobrium, a little too easily) on the one hand and preventive war on the other. The answer to this predicament is containment, albeit now a cruder, less agile and vastly more expensive form of it. To call the entire space between the two posited extremes by that designation is, the authors passingly admit, a bit on the hazy side but they stick to it. The Waltzian element is then hauled in: bipolarity, unlike multipolar (or presumably unipolar) systems, gives rise to intensified, domestic deepening of power balancing because there is no alternative. As a policymaker, as president, one can only tinker within that span, especially once a system of entrenched domestic interests has come into existence as a result. Truman did well in that respect to fire MacArthur; Eisenhower in his second Administration did much better by grasping the strategic implications of nuclear weapons;

Kennedy did well in the Missile Crisis and badly, very badly, in Vietnam but not as disastrously as LBJ, etc, etc. The historian(s) can sit back and hand out marks, good and bad, for policy and decision-making.

This is to turn 'containment' into nothing much. The procedure is an obvious case of 'neither-norism.' If the alternatives are 'isolationism' and 'preventive war,' pretty much everything is containment. Everybody is a container as it were. The notion becomes vacuous. It is a dead end. So we must do some back-tracking to find the complications, where Craig and Logevall argue otherwise.

IV. Polarities.

Polarity (I think) is literally always bi, as it were, which would mean that notions of uni- and multipolarity are oxymorons and that of bipolarity is redundant, though obviously these terms are now accepted usage. The Craig and Logevall take, at any rate, features a sequence of three constitutive and related polarities. There is the initial polarity of 'security and insecurity,' wherein the United States moves historically in the 1940s from the first to the second. This move takes place within another and related polarity, the geopolitical 'bipolarity' of the Second World War to be followed by the 'bipolarity' of the conflict with the Soviet Union, which is to say, the cold war that comes to an end when the Soviets crumble. Being in that polarity produces a third polarity pertaining to action, the polarity between preventive war and isolationism. Containment, then, is the 'solution' to the problem of the third polarity but the second polarity, as overdeterminant, generates a material and political structure of interests that in turn produces excess, action, in other words, that is no longer adequate to the actual problem at hand. Crude Containment thus undermines what it was originally designed to solve, namely, the insecurity problem. At the same time (and this is where the complication arises), Craig and Logevall insist that Original Containment, the judicious and prudent kind, had already solved that very insecurity problem - as early as 1950. Another strategy, diplomacy, was now more adequate. Thus Craig and Logevall are critical of Crude Containment, its excesses of course but more basically its functional effect of prolonging the second polarity, that of bipolarity, more precisely the existence of the Soviet Union. The United States is objectively secure but rolls on like a windup toy in the name of insecurity. Some presidents, then, do better than others in keeping that manufactured insecurity within bounds but they all stay within Crude Containment because the alternatives are impossible, i.e. the extremes of the third polarity. This, in sum, is the structure of the argument though the authors do not exactly put it like that.

And so I need to say something about the Soviet Union and 'the moribund,' along with the Real.

V. The Soviet function.

Craig and Logevall chide historians, *some* historians, for bringing to bear on their accounts better information about adversaries and allies than the participants themselves actually possessed. This charge has some validity but not much. How can historians do otherwise?

One is not surprised, then, to see Craig and Logevall themselves bringing precisely such information to bear on their historical figures. Only by producing a yardstick, some 'objective' external Real against which actually existing strategy can be measured, can they make the kind of argument they make. This is what enables them to make the case that 'containment' had pretty much done the thing by 1950 (or, in a different register, by 1960).

There are two aspects, related but distinct, to the measuring act. One is the idea that the United States achieves such massive power in the postwar era (after the appropriate moves of containment) as to be essentially, but not completely, secure. That, presumably, 'defensive' containment then maladroitly goes haywire and becomes global anti-communism writ large is another matter (to which we will return). The dual shocks of 1949 (the Soviet Bomb-the PRC) and the ensuing Korean War in 1950 were not 'really' fundamental threats to the given achievement of Eurasian balance and so forth. Sensible people at the time understood that. The second idea is that the Soviet Union was always moribund, destined for the dustheap of history, as long as defensive containment stopped its expansion. The original Kennan was thus right: contained it will implode and 1989-1991 shows that he was right. Had the U.S. followed the defensive rather than offensive version of containment after 1950, the implosion would have happened much earlier than it now did. Soft power, Elvis Presley already rather than Bruce Springsteen, would have done the trick if nothing else. Besides the command economy could not compete at any time. All the Soviet Union could produce competitively was arms and armed force, above all nuclear weapons. So the whole forty years after the 'objective' moment of moribundity were in fact completely unnecessary, nothing short of "bizarre" in fact (11).

This, in my view, is a phantasmagorical vision (indeed a permutation of a later Gaddisian thematic). Almost all of it is wrong. I will only mention two things in the spirit of question marks, for the issues are not subject to resolution here. First, the matter of what one might 'realistically' have grasped in 1949-50. That Kennan himself could not imagine a powerful PRC is one thing; lots of others could well imagine that the addition (at it seemed though Stalin suspected otherwise) of the most populous nation on earth to the Soviet empire did really constitute some major geopolitical shift on 'the Eurasian landmass,' which is where China is situated. I leave aside the Soviet bomb which would obviously change everything about 'security' as indeed is clear from the book. It is another matter that this, along with the Korean War, generated the apparently clear validation of Kennan's containment in its most pristine, crystalline form, the notion of an inherently, relentlessly expansionist Soviet Union that had to be stopped. Given the globalist anti-communism of the Truman Doctrine, the magnified, globalist anti-communism of NSC-68 is a comprehensible extension, marking a qualitative leap but not in terms of the essential frame (the barely concealed quarrel with 'containment' in NSC-68 is not with the analysis of the Soviet Union but with the presumed lack of a political scope appropriate to the global threat that it posited). This is obviously not to argue that the idea of a nasty, worldwide threat was 'right' or that NSC-68 had it 'right;' it is to argue the continuities between the Truman Doctrine and NSC-68 and that the preceding framing had made the interpretation of the events that actually came to pass plausible and workable. It is to argue that the whole notion of a properly limited containment and the auxiliary trivializing of the globalizing principle of anti-communism is untenable. There is, again, a *reason* that Kennan the Realist was being

marginalized by late 1948.

The second matter, a much larger one, is the Soviet Union itself and its alleged moribundity. The authors are nothing if not cocksure about this, to the point of being flippant. A little more by way of critical distance would have been in order, not least because these are matters subject to extensive, continuous debate. At a moment when (I am exaggerating slightly) the future of capitalism is being perpetrated by the wise and farsighted leadership of the Communist Party of the People's Republic of China, there is reason, at any rate, to pause a bit for reflection. No such reflection is forthcoming. What of the startling claim, more specifically, that the Soviet Union is essentially a goner by 1960? Nineteen-sixty is the year when, for the first time, a truly global communist and 'progressive gathering of parties took place in Moscow, representing a whole range of emerging and powerful communist parties and allies (Indonesia, India, Cuba, etc). Khrushchev was about to blast off hundred-megaton bombs in Novaya Zemlya. The Sino-Soviet conflict had not yet broken out in full form. The Soviet model of industrialization enjoyed unprecedented prestige among thirdworld elites. Thirdworld nationalists, indeed, were more than likely to look to Moscow for congenial support. It is hard to think of a moment when the international self-confidence of the Soviet Union was in fact higher. This was a situation which no one in responsible position in Washington, D.C. could treat with any flippancy.

'Objectively,' nevertheless, the Soviet Union might have been moribund though the Soviets themselves along with the best and the brightest failed to recognize it. This is not true either but one might legitimately debate degrees of moribundity just as one can debate the crisis of the 1980s. One just wishes Craig and Logevall would have done so instead of providing a variation of the Gaddisian thematic of the Emperor's Clothes. In the mid-1970s, meanwhile, no great power had suffered a decline, relatively speaking, as profound as the United States: prestige damaged, economy seemingly in tatters, position in the third world under siege, the kind of stuff of which neo-conservative dreams are made. This wrenching crisis of the 1970s actually marked the transformation of U.S. capitalism (as well as its global system) in a postmodern direction, which in turn set the stage for the highly contingent events of the 1980s. Craig and Logevall allow for that contingency in the sense that they focus on the fortuitous confluence of two personalities, Ronald Reagan with his distaste for nuclear weapons, and the reform-minded Mikhail Gorbachev: thus, with different characters, it could have gone horribly otherwise. For the Soviet side, the authors invoke the authority of Vlad Zubok but never tell us of his brilliantly unflinching demonstration of Gorbachev's lack of statecraft, the stupendous naivete the Soviet leader revealed in dealing with his western counterparts. It might have been a good thing, depending on one's vantage point, that Gorbachev sold the farm for a farthing but indisputably he did not perform well from the purely technical standpoint of statecraft. (Nor do Craig and Logevall do anything with Zubok's unconventional account of Brezhnev and his will to cooperate; instead, they brush aside decrepit Leonid with rhetorical ease). Speaking of moribundity, there was to be a great deal of it subsequently in the ex-Soviet Union, which suffered during the 1990s a decline in living standards and obverse increase in mortality rates of epic proportions, historically unprecedented in any industrialized country. (They also seem to imagine that 'autarchy' in the Eastern bloc came to an end with the Soviet empire. This would have come as a surprise to the Polish communists, for

instance, beholden as they were as of the early 1970s to western banks.)

Notably, the authors have very little to say about the People's Republic of China: it comes up now and then, prominently in the Nixon-Kissinger moment (though détente gets very few pages). It is, however, never dealt with in any systematic fashion, perhaps because it would disturb the doxological bipolarity, which is constitutive and essential for the whole exercise. From a realist or neorealist perspective, the PRC is to be sure easier to account for than it is from, say, the vantage point of those who actually believe the cold war is not bipolarity but an ideological conflict (as does the later Gaddis): how can 'anti-communism' make any sense if one is *de facto* carrying on a geopolitical alliance with the most radical communist regime around? Nixon did not have to answer that but Carter did, or should have, and certainly Reagan who nourished the alliance, loving words about Taiwan notwithstanding. Whatever the degree of realism, however, the bipolar lens exacts a prize in the Craig and Logevall view of things.

All of which brings us to the hated site of the Domestic.

VI. Egregious Contamination.

In Craig and Logevall's terms, there has to be an explanation for the absurd exaggerations that followed after 1950 when things go awry (though, one recalls, not fundamentally). There are some culpable policymakers and the aforementioned Waltzian effects of bipolarity; but the main explanation is the domestic one. Clarity is, not to put too fine a point on it, *contaminated* by domestic considerations: politics instead of policy. No realist likes domestic considerations and so Craig and Logevall condemn the political pandering to anti-communist sentiment as the perversion of what they like to think of as "the common good" (11). Obviously, policymakers themselves (Truman? Acheson?) were partly responsible but the chief staying power of the problem is to be found in the systemic interests created by Crude Containment of the global kind. 'Eisenhower was right.'

From what Archimedean point is one to define 'the common good'? It is hard to tell. One reply, my own, would be to say that foreign policy should be subject to democratic control and that the problem is not 'contamination' by the public but the systemic manipulation and distortion to which it is typically subjected, in short, the absence of a genuinely democratic public sphere when it comes to foreign policy. The Craig and Logevall position, by contrast, really amounts to this: public interference with the identification of the public interest in the foreign relations of the United States is on the whole pernicious. They might counter this condensation either by saying that the 'public' is an imaginary construct, a Phantom Public, just as Walter Lippmann said in his famous polemic with John Dewey, or by arguing that it was precisely the manipulations and the distortions in the name of a rhetorically excessive anti-communism that led to the possibility of making political hay from all manner of crassly self-serving lies (an approach exemplified in particularly clear form by Richard Nixon in his early career). They could also counter by pointing (as they partly do) to the specific influence of lobbies. They could, in the last instance, point to the dysfunctional nature of the U.S. political system which invests the Executive with a remarkable license to act in matters of 'national security' while making it nigh-on

impossible to enact anything fundamental in matters domestic. They could explore further Logevall's Bernath argument about (in a way) national culture and the constraints on understanding identity and difference. What they chiefly do, however, is to complain about 'politics' and invoking the common good.

VII. Decision-making and 'International History.'

A structural source for the complaint about 'politics' is their focus on decision-making which automatically puts them precisely in the subject-position of a policymaker who is making decisions and dislikes interference from outlying and ill-informed quarters. Kennan is the archetype, having spent a lifetime complaining about this but also, to his credit, drawing the appropriate conclusion that the United States, being incompetent at policy, should do a minimum of it. Decision-making as an object of inquiry is of course legitimate. It is hard to see how it could *not* be, given the manner in which decisions are indeed made in the United States and the enormous effect they sometimes have for the lives and wherewithal of people and peoples very far away. What the White House decides is of essential concern, as any Iraqi citizen will testify. However, decision-making as an enclosed sphere of inquiry threatens to land the historian in the territory of mirroring the prince (to use an ancient term and genre), writing court histories designed, if not to teach the prince directly how to do things then at least to inform the vast apparatus of organic intellectuals devoted to the princely office how one might go about the business more profitably. One ends up, virtually but inevitably, on the inside. Much of the subfield of IR theory in political science is in that sense on the inside. It makes no pretense otherwise. If the historian chooses to go that route, it ought to be (in my view) with a strong dose of dialectical awareness, the kind of dual order of reflection which requires thinking about the action at the same time as one thinks about the conditions of possibility for that action, material and conceptual.

At the outset, Craig and Logevall polemicize, a little too hastily, against 'international history,' which they distinguish from their 'intermestic' area of decision-making between, or at the intersection of, the domestic and the international. They imply, correctly, that there is nothing intrinsically right about being 'international.' It is not good to be provincial or narrow but the opposite of that is not necessarily 'several' or 'international' perspectives if the problematic is badly posed or the result is superficial. More precisely, there is no *a priori* reason to think that one could not do a micro-history of a given decision that will yield much better or more interesting knowledge than the widest possible inquiry. Method, as Foucault always indicated, is a matter of what is to be studied. Nor is every matter, even in foreign relations, always 'international.' One likes to think that rigor and precision are of the essence. Let us call it 'disciplinarity.' (Our own historical subfield, which used to be known as 'diplomatic history,' is of course now rapidly being dissolved into the suitably nebulous and all-encompassing 'area' described as 'the U.S. in the World.')

Conversely, however, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with the 'international' either. It is usually, in fact, impossible in diplomatic history not to be 'international' in some sense. Craig and Logevall themselves make statements about the 'true' Soviet Union and about the 'true' Vietnam which they use to measure how decisions are made and what they do, their validity in short: epistemically, what kind of knowledge with what results? More important,

the problem with U.S. history overall has not only been the (palpable) absence of comparative or (say) transnational perspectives, whatever they concretely may mean; the problem, too, has been the absence of interest in *how* history about wholly different areas and questions is being done. This is a different matter. 'Internationalization' in that sense is all for the best precisely because, again, one likes to think that rigor and precision is of the essence.

VIII. The Moment of Truth in Craig and Logevall.

Derrida, in one of his sudden flashes of insight, says (in 1980) that putative revelations of the End are really about Truth: the end destination is revealed to be Truth, which in turn signals that the End has indeed come. The end of 1989-91 is such an 'End.' Suddenly, there is 'Truth.' The period, if not History as such, turned out to be about the revelation of Truth. When it came, the period was over; and, retrospectively, Truth informs what the historian can say about it. Craig and Logevall, however tempered by their realism, fall into this. The end is the truth, in this case Soviet morbidity and U.S. supremacy. The Panglossian aura is then disturbed by a critical, not always coherent undercurrent, a dark sentiment that while things were going well they were also, by some dialectical negation, going very badly indeed. This is not, as one might think, the playing out of some Security Dilemma, whereby designs to achieve more security automatically produce more insecurity. Policymakers in Craig and Logevall are in a political space of indeterminate reach and character, in a realm for which there is a name (the intermestic) but no analytical frame. Thus they are never able to impose any narratological unity on the whole, any determinant judgment, in part because their chosen moment of Reversal, the moment of crudity and excess, is not complete or decisive. There is in fact no real 'politics' here, as there is, for better or worse, in Gaddis's imperial quasi-epics of vanquishing enemies. On the contrary, their final tally on success and failure is marked by dissonance and doubt.²

I take this lack of resolution to be encouraging and stimulating. Meanwhile, they have much of interest to say about decisions on nuclear strategy and decisions on Vietnam.

² See Fredric Jameson's extensive remarks on Paul Ricoeur and narratological closure in *Valences of the Dialectic* (London: Verso, 2009), part VI

I like this book very much: It is well written and very well laid out. I also agree with its central thesis: That domestic public opinion in the United States has, since the 1930s, had an increasingly hawkish impact on U.S. foreign policy, and that more humility and understanding of the world is called for in the country's public discourse. I also see the reasons, well presented by the authors, why this is unlikely to happen: The more partisan U.S. politics become, the more parochial their effects will be for the world; the more party leaders accuse each other of moral corruption, treason, and worse, the greater are the chances that they will also view the world in inimical terms, as a series of crises that will need to be handled with force so that American values and American security do not come under threat. It is a rather bleak picture, but then so is the world at times.

Craig and Logevall argue that the study of the impact of U.S. domestic politics on foreign policy making has often been underdeveloped in recent literature and they set out to rectify this error. Their argument is basically correct: As the study of the Cold War has internationalized, the domestic aspects of U.S. policies have become less visible among historians studying the conflict (though it has by no means vanished; see John Gaddis's or Anders Stephanson's arguments, for instance – both put the domestic developments of the United States squarely at the center of the Cold War, though for very different reasons). The book under review tries to deal with the impact of domestic politics without getting too preoccupied by ideology, and this is both a strength and a weakness: It is a strength in terms of finding a balance between different approaches to the study of the relationship between domestic politics and international affairs that helps convince the reader about the 'Der Primat der Innenpolitik'. But it is a weakness in terms of the ability to concentrate on the key argument: Far too often this book veers towards becoming a general history rather than a sustained argument. It also never quite figures out the specific impact that domestic politics had on what really mattered during the Cold War and what determined its outcome. The latter criticisms are not in any way reasons not to pick up what is a very accomplished book (and perhaps the best short discussion of U.S. Cold War policies available). But I put them forward here for the sake of further discussion.

Thankfully, Craig and Logevall dismiss one form of scholarly U.S.-centeredness very early on: Developments from the rise of Nazi Germany to the collapse of the Soviet Union "were international realities, not socially constructed tropes (p. 9)." What happened in the world mattered and had a causality of its own, away from U.S. perceptions. The competition for advantage in US politics did, however, lead to the public being presented with real or potential threats to the United States as kinds of mirror images of the United States and especially of U.S. values; reverse reflections of America; evil empires against the righteous republic. During the Cold War, this constant invocation of fundamental threat fed and was fed by Richard Hofstadter's famous 'paranoid style' of American politics (Hofstadter, for some reason, does not appear in the book – he should). As a result, countries that have disagreements with the United States were (and are) demonized in the public discourse to a degree that is uncommon in international affairs, even in places that are far less democratic and open than North America.

I wonder, while the authors generally do not, what the impact of religion was and is on this discourse. There is a very useful recent literature on the relationship between religious certainties and foreign policy in the United States (William Inboden and Andrew Preston – who has blurbed the book -- are names that come to mind). The point they make, from very different angles of view, is basically this: Uniquely among twentieth century great powers, the United States came to put religion at the core of its domestic political contests and much of its view of the world. The sense that the United States was superior because of the faith it represented became a source of strength for many Americans and a source of puzzlement for the rest of the world. “How can we be sure that there is not some kind of mystical and transcendental faith at the heart of the US drive to dominate the world,” a Chinese foreign-policy maker asked me recently. Well, how indeed? Religion matters in the United States, not least in terms of what has bound the various strains of U.S. domestic politics together, in spite of their quarrelsomeness toward each other.

And it is here, surprisingly, that the book ends up: In spite of the significance of the heated contests for domestic power and the demonization of the outside world that was, at least to some extent, connected to these contests, the U.S. victory in the Cold War was not caused by any of them. “The U.S. victory came because of the systemic and ultimately fatal weaknesses of the Soviet system (p. 353),” the authors argue. Containment was therefore the correct policy, and it was adhered to by all U.S. Cold War presidents, the authors indicate. They also see two other principles of US foreign policy supported by all administrations as key to the U.S. victory: The principled avoidance of nuclear war (I have trouble with this one – Kennedy during the Cuban missile crisis; NATO’s planning for first use?), and the willingness to enter into processes of give and take with allies (better on this one, but still great variations between administrations). The main difficulty, though, is that none of these principles reflect the role of contentious domestic politics. On the contrary, they seem testimony to a remarkably coherent and uniform approach to international affairs (for good or bad), and thereby perhaps to the ideological underpinnings that much of U.S. politics and policies share.

We thank H-Diplo for commissioning this roundtable and the four distinguished reviewers for their thoughtful and engaging essays. There is much that could be fruitfully discussed here concerning areas of agreement as well as disagreement; for the present we'll try to confine ourselves to a few points. To begin with, as the subtitle suggests and as we state in the introduction, *America's Cold War* is a political history whose principal concern is policymaking. This is not the only approach we might have taken, of course, and we note the proliferation of works that examine the Cold War through the lens of, for example, gender, ideology, race, and culture. No approach is ever definitive. But hard choices must be made when examining a half-century of superpower foreign policy in a relatively short book. We chose the approach we know best, the one we believe has the most explanatory power.

It is incontrovertibly true that decision-making is shaped by the social and cultural world beyond the halls of power. What goes on inside the heads of officials is inseparable from that broader setting. If we don't underscore this point more forcefully and at greater length in the book it is in part because we also retain some skepticism regarding the "cultural turn" in U.S. foreign relations history, and especially as it pertains to foreign policy. In particular, this literature has too often run aground on the failure to link cause and effect. Too often, it has struggled in relating general assumptions to specific attitudes on particular policy issues, in relating why policymakers took one particular course over another. That is to say, it lacks causal force. In addition, we find power in Thomas Schwartz's observation, in an otherwise sympathetic assessment of this cultural turn, that the "neglect of so many political, military, and administrative questions in the study of foreign relations . . . left me with a sense of deep regret, that as our field seeks to lessen its distance from other parts of the historical profession, we have abandoned some of what made us distinct, and dare I say, relevant, to the larger society."¹

Odd Arne Westad wonders if we ought to do more to explicate the role of religion in U.S. decision-making in the Cold War. "Uniquely among twentieth century great powers," he writes, "the United States came to put religion at the core of its domestic political contests and much of its view of the world." This is inarguable, and we concur that important work is being done on the relationship between religion and U.S. foreign relations.² Here again, though, it is useful to draw a distinction between foreign relations and foreign policy, and ask: what is the causal connection? To use specific examples in the period covered by our book, did Woodrow Wilson's and John Foster Dulles's avowed Presbyterianism drive their foreign policy? We're skeptical, just as we're skeptical that religious considerations were

¹ Thomas Alan Schwartz, "Explaining the Cultural Turn—or Detour?" *Diplomatic History* 31:1 (January 2007): 147.

² See, for example, Andrew Preston, "Bridging the Gap between the Sacred and the Secular in the History of American Foreign Relations," *Diplomatic History* 31:1 (November 2006): 783-812.

crucial in the decision to back the Catholic Ngo Dinh Diem as leader of South Vietnam in the mid 1950s. Likewise, if one were to explain Jimmy Carter's major foreign policy decisions between 1977 and 1981, would Carter's evangelical Christian faith and the prescription that flowed from it stand out? Again, we're unconvinced. At most his faith was a hazy guide to general behavior—hardly irrelevant, but ultimately of limited explanatory power to the historian of decision-making.

It is a notable irony that many of the studies utilizing these new approaches exhibit the same shortcoming that can be found in older, traditionalist works that adhere strictly to a national-security approach. That is to say, leaders in these studies seem to operate in a bubble, the contours of which are defined by ideology, or masculinity, or the international system, or historical analogizing; seldom if ever are they confronted by domestic political dynamics or pressures (whether real or imagined). *America's Cold War*, by contrast, as both Westad and Lloyd Gardner point out in their insightful reviews, proceeds from the conviction that foreign policy is always a political matter in the United States. It is not always a crass partisan matter—it is well to remember that the parties historically have tended to speak for different constellations of values and interests, different constituencies with genuine philosophical differences about America's place in the world, and that these differences have sometimes also been evident within parties. But it is always political, a point that the existing Cold War literature, valuable though it is in many ways, drastically underscores. To use another example, how can one adequately explain the collapse of détente and Carter's travails without giving due attention to the domestic attack on the policy and the rise of the New Right? Answer: one can't.

In this regard we are bemused by Michael Hunt's critique of our supposed "realist preoccupations." The close attention paid in our book to domestic politics in fact puts it at odds with the predominantly interstate approach of realist historiography and political science. According to mainstream realist scholarship, policy-making naturally or even inevitably reflects the purposes of the "state" rather than the interests of "unit-level" economic or regional or partisan actors. Policymakers, many traditional realists would also argue, have a superior understanding of national interest and privileged access to intelligence data, and therefore usually weigh their decisions with the long-term objective of their state's security in mind. Ours is a different, more skeptical view: in the post-1945 era, as at many points before, presidents and their aides often chose policies based on calculations of short-term political needs, electoral advantage, and careerism.

George Kennan understood this reality earlier than most analysts, which is one reason he figures prominently in our book. Hunt, in this essay as well as other writings, takes a dim view of Kennan the strategist and thinker; he is not being complimentary when he notes in his review that Kennan "pops in and out of the narrative like a one-man Greek chorus commenting on the unfolding drama." And again: "Presidents come and go, but Kennan is always there." Indeed he is. We don't endorse Kennan's occasionally elitist critique of American society and culture, but his assessment of the Cold War, though not without inconsistencies, was more sophisticated and penetrating than Hunt's depiction allows. He saw more clearly than most the impact that domestic politics could have in strengthening doomsayers in Washington and propelling the nation into unnecessary wars.

Nor, Kennan understood, did the end of the Cold War change the dynamic. In February 2003, just a few weeks before his 99th birthday, he expressed his dismay at the Bush administration's all-out campaign to justify the forthcoming Iraq War: "What this is doing has already acted like a burning match to dynamite for the American media, particularly television, which immerses itself delightedly in what it already perceives as a new war." A few months earlier he had denounced the Bush administration's case for war as "pathetic" and the Democratic Party's response to this case as "shabby and shameful."³

Kennan looms large also in Anders Stephanson's lengthy review, which ranges across a large number of issues and embarks on a dizzying array of conceptual detours. We're flattered that Stephanson took our book seriously enough to give it such detailed attention; here we will confine ourselves to his criticism of our engagement with Kennan, and to his claim that we seem to favor an undemocratic foreign policy.

Stephanson wants to remind us that Kennan's initial call for containment portrayed the USSR as a uniquely cynical regime, one with which any kind of diplomacy was pointless, and that the explanation for America's heavy-handed, Manichean approach to the Cold War could therefore plausibly be laid at his feet. This is a reasonable argument, one that Stephanson has laid out in his own writings, but we remain dubious. Kennan later acknowledged that he exaggerated his claims about Soviet intransigence at the outset of the Cold War in order to rattle a Truman White House that he believed remained wedded to legalistic postwar notions of a Grand Alliance. Probably, too, he initially believed these claims to a greater degree than he later allowed. And to be sure, Kennan's rhetorical skill undoubtedly contributed not only to the Truman administration's decision to confront the USSR but also its rejection of diplomacy, as Walter Lippmann argued and as Kennan himself later lamented. In the book we examine Lippmann's critique and Kennan's response, though certainly not as comprehensively as we might have.

Our larger point, though, is that American political culture had a lot more to do with the expansion of America's Cold War than did Kennan's tactical exaggerations in 1946 and 1947. Kennan wanted very much for the United States to embrace *Realpolitik* after the Second World War, but the U.S. political system made such an approach difficult to sustain. This was not, we argue, because Americans are congenitally unsophisticated and naive, as Kennan sometimes suggested. Rather, it was because the long condition of Free Security (we adopt C. Vann Woodward's useful phrase), whereby the United States for more than a century had faced no plausible threats to its survival, created a tradition in which politicians and other actors became used to playing politics with foreign policy. Operators in Washington were accustomed to advocating heedless and alarmist foreign policies for their own short-term political and material gain, because the stakes of them backfiring were relatively low. A finite and clearly delineated program of peacetime containment was

³ Kennan letter to his nephew, quoted in John Lukacs, *George Kennan: A Study of Character* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 187; Kennan interview with Albert Eisele, *The Hill*, September 25, 2002.

not well suited to such a political tradition. Stephanson slights our concept of Free Security throughout his review but nowhere does he contend with this central claim.

Which takes us to the second point. Stephanson accuses us of possessing a realist contempt for democracy, of believing that “public interference” in foreign policy-making “is pernicious.” Such an allegation might be fairly made against Kennan; against us, it is baseless.

We believe, and try to show in our book, that alarmists in Cold War Washington—certain politicians, military leaders, “defense intellectuals,” and others—succeeded in selling inflated threats to an American public that was, at least until the early 1970s, inclined to trust its government, and that this process explains much of U.S. Cold War foreign policy. It is to say the least puzzling that Stephanson considers our criticism of this process to be somehow “undemocratic.” Surely he’s not suggesting that any exposure of duplicity in Washington represents contempt for the democratic system, or that our criticism of, say, Johnson’s deceptions about the Gulf of Tonkin in 1964, really reflects our scorn for the American voter. But what he means is not clear.

Eisenhower in his Farewell Address showed that he understood what some later historians may not. He said that “only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry” can stop the military-industrial complex from endangering “our liberties or democratic processes.” Like Eisenhower, we favor more “public interference” in foreign policy making, not less, in order to wrest control over it from the militarists and alarmists (elected and unelected) who wielded immense power in the Washington of 1961—and who still do so today.

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