Sequestration and Lessons for Defense Austerity
By Matt Fay (Ph.D. Student, Temple University)

With the 2012 election a thing of the past, legislators and policymakers turn their attention to more practical matters. One of the most pressing issues on the agenda will be the looming cut to military spending mandated by the Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011. The impending reductions, commonly referred to as sequestration, have led to predictable hysterics in various corners of the Beltway and desperate attempts to forestall the cutback. However, history provides lessons for dealing with defense austerity that should encourage policymakers to worry less should their attempts to maintain current levels of defense spending fail.

The contentious debt ceiling debate in the summer of 2011 led to a deal that established a bipartisan “supercommittee” to find $1.2 trillion worth of savings in the budget over the next decade. If not successful by November 21, 2011, the supercommittee’s failure would trigger $1.2 trillion in across the board cuts. Of these cuts, $600 billion would be taken from the Department of Defense, though the actual amount would be around $492 billion due to savings on debt-servicing costs. When the supercommittee failed to come to agreement, sequestration was set to go into effect in January 2013. Those cuts, made over a period of nine years, do not include an additional $487 billion reduction to the Pentagon’s budget mandated by the BCA. However, this initial cut was somewhat misleading because it was made against projected spending, while sequestration will begin eating into actual spending should it be implemented. While the total reduction mandated by the BCA comes to $979 billion, the cuts are spread over nearly a decade, which means in 2013 the United States will spend $491 billion on defense, or approximately what it spent in 2007 minus war funding. (1)

The prospect of nearly a trillion dollars in cuts to military spending has led to panic inside the Beltway. Defense contractors and lobbyists worried about their bottom line and legislators concerned about jobs in districts heavily dependent on the defense industries took center stage in the effort to prevent sequestration from going into effect. In an election focused on the economy, Democrats and Republicans in Congress wrangled over a deal to avert sequestration, with tax increases being offered on one hand and entitlement cuts on the other.

The parochial nature of this discussion was evident in the efforts by Pentagon leaders to forestall sequestration, with Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta presenting a bleak picture of a world where the United States is forced to reduce spending on its military to 2007 spending levels. As the supercommittee’s deadline approached, Panetta warned that dire consequences of sequestration meant “a ship without sailors… a brigade without bullets… an air wing without enough trained pilots. It’s a paper tiger… In effect, it invites aggression.”(2) Hawkish commentators and analysts echoed these sentiments, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey told Congress in February, “I can’t impress upon you that in my personal military judgment, formed over thirty-eight years, we are living in the most dangerous time in my lifetime, right now.”(3)

However, by any historical standard, the world is a far less dangerous place than many pushing for higher defense budgets assert. “The United States faces no plausible existential threats, no great-power rival, and no near-term competition for the role of global hegemon,” argued Michael Cohen and Micah Zenko recently in Foreign Affairs. “Although the United States faces a host of international challenges, they pose little risk to the overwhelming majority of American citizens and can be managed with existing diplomatic, economic, and, to a much lesser extent, military tools.”(4) Under such conditions, it seems excessive that the United States should maintain approximately 46 percent of global defense spending and a military budget higher, in inflation-adjusted terms, than it did during the Cold War.

Despite the world being more peaceful, critics of cuts to the military budget are not wrong to worry over how prepared the military might be should potential crises arise. However, they are wrong to assume that high military budgets guarantee a capable military. There are ways to maintain an effective fighting force even with a lower budget, and history provides some valuable lessons.

In the interwar period military spending fell sharply during the “return to normalcy” after World War I and during the Great Depression in the 1930s. These years were also a time of significant doctrinal innovation that eventually enabled the U.S. military to triumph in World War II. The Pacific War, or D-Day for that matter, might not have been possible absent the creation of an amphibious assault doctrine by the Marine Corps. Developed by the Marine Corps to maintain their quasi-independence in response to calls for their merger with the Army, the doctrine evolved from operations in the Caribbean and Latin America when the Corps was smaller than the New York City Police Department. It proved its worth at Guadalcanal, in “island-hopping” campaigns throughout the Pacific theater of World War II, and on D-Day when the Army borrowed from the Marines’ manual for the landings at Normandy. When doctrinal innovation failed during the interwar period, namely in the Army’s integration of armor and airpower capabilities, it had little to do with falling defense budgets. According to the RAND Corporation’s David Johnson, conservative army leaders were more interested in maintaining a place for the horse in the service’s war plans than integrating armor capabilities or creating more realistic expectations for the efficacy of strategic bombing.(5)

There are other examples of innovation during austerity beyond the interwar years. In the 1950s, the Navy developed the Polaris submarine-launched ballistic missile, the precursor to today’s Trident II, to break the Air Force’s monopoly on nuclear delivery systems and secure a larger piece of a reduced defense budget. Following the Vietnam War, critics claimed the Army had become a hollow force. However, it was during that time that
the Army developed AirLand Battle, its war fighting doctrine for the 1980s.

A similar dynamic is possible today. In January 2012, President Obama joined Secretary Panetta and the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Department of Defense to unveil the Pentagon’s new Defense Strategic Guidance. Crafted in response to the initial $487 billion reduction mandated by the BCA, the Strategic Guidance is a departure from the manpower-intensive counterinsurgency and stabilization operations prevalent over the past decade of conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan. Instead, the Guidance articulates a range of missions, but besides promising the ability to fight one war while deterring another, explicit statements about which missions take priority are largely absent.

Given that U.S. interests increasingly lie in the Western Pacific and East Asia, it is easy to see that one mission in particular, overcoming anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) challenges, will likely take precedence over others. China’s economic and military growth will likely present a challenge to U.S. prerogatives in the region and Beijing’s development of A2/AD capabilities, particularly anti-ship ballistic missiles that can target U.S. aircraft carriers, will require significant doctrinal innovation. That effort is currently underway with the Navy and Air Force and their development of AirSea Battle (ASB). According to the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, a Washington think tank that works closely with the Pentagon’s Office of Net Assessment, ASB is “designed to assess how U.S. power-projection capabilities can be preserved in the face of growing anti-access/area denial challenges, to include the most formidable challenge, which is posed by the Chinese military.”(6)

How this concept develops under sequestration is unclear. Neither the Office of Management and Budget nor the Pentagon has explained how they will implement sequestration if efforts to prevent it fail. However, doctrinal development and innovation are possible even in austere times when incentives are present. For the interwar Marine Corps this meant maintaining its quasi-independent status. For the Navy in the 1950s it was securing a place in America’s nuclear deterrent structure. And for the Army in the 1970s it was its failure in Vietnam. One option today may be inter-service competition. Harvey Sapolsky, a political scientist at MIT, has argued “When there is expectation of significant reward or loss, the services may offer up … new ideas, ways of both improving their military capabilities and protecting their roles and missions.”(7) This can be a messy process and one unlikely to fit neatly with ASB because of Navy and Air Force joint development. But competing for a $491 billion post-sequestration budget may also provide necessary incentives for the services to develop doctrines that meet challenges like A2/AD capabilities at a reasonable cost to American taxpayers.

As legislators and policymakers turn away from the election and back to more practical matters, averting sequestration will likely be one of their top priorities. Should that effort fail, they can take comfort in knowing that the world is far less dangerous than they previously believed and military innovation is a distinct possibility even with a budget slightly reduced from historic highs.


3) General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, testimony before the House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Defense, Appropriations: Defense Department, 2nd Session, February 16, 2012.


6) Jan Van Tol, Mark Ganzinger, Andrew Krepinevich, and Jim Thomas, AirSea Battle: A Point-of-Departure Operational Concept (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2010), x.


The Rationality of Irrationality: CENFAD’s Film Symposium on “Dr. Strangelove’s America”

By Silke Zoller (Ph.D. Student, Temple University) and Sarah Robey (ABD, Temple University)

This past September, CENFAD hosted a symposium on Cold War film entitled “Dr Strangelove’s America” in collaboration with the U.S. Army War College and the Hertog Program for Grand Strategy. Prominent historians from Temple University and the U.S. Army War College gathered in the Russell F. Weigley Room to discuss the movies Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb and Fail-Safe in a meeting that seamlessly blended military, cultural, and political research interests. The symposium showcased the contributions of these movies to the study of the Cold War.

On Friday, September 21, CENFAD screened Dr. Strangelove and Fail-Safe in the Russell F. Weigley Room for a small but energetic crowd of professors and mixture of undergraduate and graduate students. The full-day symposium, held on Saturday, September 22, consisted of two sessions and plenty of stimulating discussion. Temple University Professor Richard H. Immerman introduced the program and praised the close collaboration between Temple University and the U.S. Army War College due to their mutual interest in Grand Strategy.

The first session, entitled “History and Film,” presented different approaches to the two movies. Temple University Professor David Farber began with his talk “The Popular Politics of Nuclear War.” In his talk, Farber focused on Dr. Strangelove, the context of its creation, and contemporary audience responses. In the late 1950s, the military debated indoctrinating and providing “ideological armor” for soldiers and civilians. Moviegoers would have recognized this contemporary motif within Dr. Strangelove.

In a talk entitled “Gendered Destruction,” Temple Professor and Acting Director of CENFAD Beth Bailey analyzed concepts of masculinity within both movies. Culturally, masculinity is connected with the capability for destruction. However, in the Cold War era, Americans worried about two specific “crises of masculinity.” One concern was that gender equality stifled male virility. The other was that conformity and advanced technologies took away men’s capabilities for independent action. Dr. Strangelove addresses the former and Fail-Safe the latter, thus showcasing cultural anxieties of the United States during the Cold War.

Professor G.K. Cunningham of the U.S. Army War College delivered a talk entitled “Truth Through Fiction: Dr. Strangelove as Social-Political Satire.” In his talk, he focused on how director Stanley Kubrick turned Dr. Strangelove from a thriller into a satire. By deliberately parodying very serious issues such as the arms race and capitalism, Kubrick created a dark, sordonic...
h humor which makes Dr. Strangelove very different from the more serious Fail-Safe.

Professor Craig Nation of the U.S. Army War College gave the final talk of the first session. His “No Happy Ending: The Limits of Strategic Defense” described the questions both movies bring up about the nature of Strategic Defense planning. Dr. Strangelove asks if strategic deterrence is a credible policy, since it presumes rationality on both sides. Fail-Safe, on the other hand, asks if deterrence can ever be a reliable foundation for strategic stability, as it is inherently unstable.

In the second session, after a lunch break, the focus shifted on how best to utilize the movies for the teaching of Cold War history. U.S. Army War College Professor Tami Biddle kicked off the session with a talk entitled “Teaching Dr. Strangelove and Fail-Safe.” She demonstrated how Fail-Safe’s characters present the internal logic of the Cold War in their actions and thinking. She argued that students could easily understand this logic’s inherent insanity through this movie. Professor Conrad C. Crane, also of the U.S. Army War College, followed her with a discussion of the characters in Dr. Strangelove. Since many of these characters were based on historical figures, the movie could be used as a basis for discussing individuals of the Cold War. Temple University Professor Kenneth L. Kusmer also presented a talk during this session. A specialist in the social history of film, Kusmer showed how director Stanley Kubrick’s use of satire in Dr. Strangelove permitted him to criticize the Cold War mentality without alienating his audience. The final talk of this session was delivered by Temple University Professor Jay B. Lockenour. In his talk, Lockenour problematized the way historians use film as a source, showing that films are stories with theses, much like a written history would be. He also demonstrated how films shed light on the society and culture in which they were produced. This session thus provided diverse methods for utilizing film in the classroom.

A roundtable discussion followed the second session. The discussion raised questions that united the various talks. These included the irrational premises of the Cold War logic of deterrence, the cultural importance of fear for this time period, the power of the military-industrial complex, and the discrepancies between rhetoric and reality in this era. As a result of Cold War developments, security has become a vital aspect of United States culture, and, paradoxically, preparations for war have become means to preserving peace.

In this fashion, the participants of the symposium united political, military, social, and cultural history to discuss Dr. Strangelove and Fail-Safe. In doing so, they showed interesting crossovers between various historical subfields which entice further research. All in all, they created a broad understanding of Cold War America, circa 1964.

**CENFAD’s Colloquium Series, Fall 2011**

By Matt Fay (Ph.D. Student, Temple University)

This fall, CENFAD welcomed four distinguished scholars to Temple University for its colloquium series. Osamah Khalil, David Ulbrich, Meredith Lair, and Aaron O’Connell provided fascinating talks dealing with area studies, military tactics, American culture, and the making of the modern Marine Corps.

On September 24, 2012, Dr. Osamah Khalil returned to Temple, his undergraduate alma mater, to discuss his work on the growth of Middle Eastern studies in a talk entitled “A Time of National Emergency: The National Security Establishment, Aca-
In the semester’s final colloquium on November 19, Aaron O’Connell continued along the theme of military culture in his talk entitled “The United States Marine Corps and the Militarization of America.” Dr. O’Connell, currently an assistant professor of history at the United States Naval Academy and author of Underdogs: The Making of the Modern Marine Corps, delivered an engaging talk on the Marine Corps’ successful post-World War II efforts to forge a powerful identity in both military and popular culture. From the Korean War forward, Marines conceived of themselves as a military branch apart from the rest and lobbied military policy makers and even Hollywood to promote the branch’s continued tactical and symbolic importance in an age of nuclear weapons. This self-fostered narrative of exceptionalism allowed the Corps, described by O’Connell as an institutional “underdog,” to lobby successfully for increased funding despite shifts in military strategy toward tactical nuclear weapons. In his talk, O’Connell convincingly demonstrated how the Marine Corps maintained and augmented their superior status in the 1950s and 1960s to become the “few” and the “proud” of the American armed services.

CENFAD would like to thank all of our colloquium speakers for the Fall 2012 semester as well as the numerous students, faculty, and alumni who promoted and attended the talks. We hope to maintain or exceed this level of enthusiasm and participation next semester when we welcome Georg Schild (Universität Tübingen), Frederik Logevall (Cornell University), and David Kieran (Franklin & Marshall College) as colloquium speakers. CENFAD will also host a conference on the theme of “Military and Society” on Friday, March 1 through Saturday, March 2. Please stay tuned to the CENFAD website for more information concerning next semester’s exciting events.

Book Reviews:


By Carly Goodman (ABD, Temple University)

“Do you kids want to be like the real UN, or do you just want to squabble and waste time?” barks Principal Skinner at Springfield Elementary School’s Model United Nations in an episode of *The Simpsons.* The joke reflected widespread disillusionment with the ineffectiveness of the United Nations, and disappointment that it did not live up to the perceived promises of its creation after the Second World War.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the United Nations has frustrated critics with its seeming inability to pursue what they took to be its liberal, human rights-centered international mission. Freed as it was from the constraints of Cold War era bipolar politics, here was the UN’s moment to fulfill the potential of its founders’ dreams. Yet hopes for the new post-Cold War UN-driven world order vanished.

In *No Enchanted Palace* the historian Mark Mazower challenges the origins myth that drove these hopes and fueled their disappointment. The myth that the UN was a liberal and particularly American take on international order was not only falsely sunny, but it presented a utopian vision of what the UN was set up to do and generated expectations that were never intended by the UN’s founders. Both the achievements and the potential of the UN have thus far been and remain obscured. Mazower’s revisionist examination of the ideological origins of the UN is an important contribution to international history and presents an opportunity to move beyond the rehashing of past arguments.

As he has done before in *Dark Continent* and *Hitler’s Empire,* Mazower challenges the narrative of European history as the triumph of progressive and liberal internationalist thought over authoritarian nightmare. Based on a series of lectures Mazower gave at Princeton University in 2007, *No Enchanted Palace* is more concise than those prior works, and may seem incomplete in comparison. Yet in this brief volume, he presents a number of important challenges to existing histories of the UN, international law, and internationalism more broadly. This is not the new definitive history of the UN, but it will be required reading for those who take up the challenge to write that history.

Mazower’s key contribution is to uncover the imperial origins of the United Nations. He challenges the notion that the UN was born fresh in 1945, a gift of Franklin D. Roosevelt—a New Deal for the world, to borrow the historian Elizabeth Borgwardt’s phrase. Instead, Mazower insists on continuities between the failed League of Nations and the UN and suggests that British imperial thought, particularly the conception of the Commonwealth, drove the creation of the international organization. Mazower investigates the contributions of a few key individuals who were instrumental in creating the UN, and refreshingly, his choices are neither FDR nor Woodrow Wilson. He instead discusses Jan Smuts, the South African prime minister who helped establish the League of Nations, propagated the ideology of the British Commonwealth, and drafted the UN Charter; Alfred Zimmern, internationalist theorist; and Jawaharlal Nehru, who ultimately transformed the UN through his promotion of anti-colonialism.

Rather than dismissing great power politics and imperialism, Mazower argues that the UN upheld imperial hegemony in the name of liberal internationalism. In fact, empire and racism drove and shaped an internationalism that privileged state sovereignty over notions of international law and human rights. In rewriting the history of the UN’s origins to recognize its privileging of state sovereignty, Mazower accomplishes a great deal. First, he shows one reason why decolonization became a project of nation-state building; anti-colonialism was not necessarily nationalistic, but the UN legitimized nation-states, and nation-states became primary players in international politics. Second, he joins fellow Columbia University professor Samuel Moyn in arguing that human rights did not emerge after World War II or through the UN as many historians and human rights activists have thought. The UN at its founding rejected the minority rights protections that had been a key failure of the League of Nations and employed the rhetoric—but not the substance—of individual human rights. It left the promise of human rights hollow, by choosing not to enforce human rights norms through international legal mechanisms, and by reinforcing state sovereignty and nationalism. It is unfortunate that Mazower does not spend more time elaborating on the development of human rights beyond its stillborn birth, but his contribution here is an exciting jumping-off point nonetheless.

But, the UN is not all bad news: despite its imperial origins and its fondness for the nation-state, the UN has proven quite flexible and shows, Mazower writes, a capacity for reinvention “as remarkable as its shortcomings.” (191) In this, at least there is hope. A more rigorous examination of the underlying logic of the UN organization, as Mazower has provided, is a necessary tool for ensuring an accurate accounting of the UN’s strengths and deficiencies. Should we be grateful for the UN that
we have rather than resentful that it has not served to bring utopia to earth? The myths that have undergirded thinking about the UN have obscured the organization’s many contributions to the world, the lives that have been saved and bettered because of its agencies, and perhaps have kept critics of the UN from articulating more pragmatic and meaningful reforms for the institution.


By Thomas A. Reinstein (Ph.D. Student, Temple University)

Warren Wilkins’s 2011 book *Grab Their Belts To Fight Them* examines how during the early stages of the Vietnam War, the National Liberation Front (NLF, commonly known as the Viet Cong) tried to win a quick and decisive victory by using big-unit tactics rather than fighting as guerillas. Wilkins’ work complicates the common belief that the NLF disdained large battles in favor of guerilla warfare for much of the war. A fellow at the Center for Threat Analysis, Wilkins uses a plethora of Vietnamese sources, including memoirs, Vietnamese unit histories and interviews. While his highly detailed approach occasionally hurts the book’s readability, *Grab Their Belts To Fight Them* is a valuable look at how high ranking leaders such as Le Duan and Vo Nguyen Giap approached wartime planning, and how big-unit tactics shaped the war’s early days.

Wilkins argues that North Vietnamese policymakers and military officials understood at the start of the war that the Americans possessed a vast advantage in terms of artillery and air support. The solution to this problem was to “grab the enemy’s belts:” essentially, cut off enemy soldiers from supporting firepower by fighting at close range during regimental-level assaults. Doing so would theoretically give the NLF the best possible chance to defeat the Americans in big-unit battles since many NLF officials believed that their troops were superior to the Americans in terms of equipment and fighting spirit. Wilkins shows that the NLF approached battle planning with scrupulous attention to detail. The NLF’s overall battle philosophy was “one slow, four quicks” meaning slow planning, quick advance, quick attack, quick battlefield clearance, and quick withdrawal. The NLF took “slow planning” very seriously; units would practice battlefield maneuvers for days or even weeks prior to engaging the enemy. Various committees would review and critique proposed attacks in order to make sure that the conditions for victory were absolutely right. Nothing could be left to chance in any attack because in the war’s early years, the NLF lacked enough radios to provide for effective battlefield communication and flexibility. Thus every soldier had to know his role in the battle precisely, since backup plans would be limited. Most soldiers also underwent heavy indoctrination to keep morale high.

Wilkins makes clear that from the beginning of the war, a major split existed between NVA and NLF leaders as far as military strategy was concerned. While the tactic of grabbing the enemy’s belts during battle was obvious enough, northern officials such as Giap advocated for a strategy based on protracted guerilla war, while southerners like Le Duan and Nguyen Chi Thanh argued for big-unit tactics, favoring a series of overwhelming assaults that would end the war quickly. Aggravating this split was the issue that as the war progressed, NVA troops were continually reinforcing the NLF and doing more than their fair share of fighting and dying. Northern officials therefore continually demanded a more active role in the NLF, but the southern big-unit war proponents successfully resisted this pressure.

Wilkins dedicates much of the book’s second half to examining a string of large battles including the famous Battle of the Ia Drang Valley where the NLF and NVA put their big-unit tactics to the test and won few engagements outright. Separating enemy soldiers from their supporting firepower had proven effective against the French due to the French army’s relative lack of mobility and improvisational skills, but the American military was much more capable in these areas. “Grabbing the enemy’s belt” requires that the enemy be unable to retreat, which was much simpler to do with a French army that relied on easily trapped armored personnel carriers rather than an American force that used agile helicopters instead. Additionally, French combined arms were inferior to what American forces used. Rather than a quick and decisive victory, big-unit tactics produced a string of frustrating defeats punctuated only by a few inconclusive stalemates. Wilkins’ writing becomes clumsy in this part of the book, as the battle narratives are somewhat overwritten, making them difficult to follow. He gives the reader a good idea of the battles’ scale, but often focuses too intensely on individual unit movements, thus needlessly complicating the narrative. Indeed, Wilkins is at his best when documenting political infighting and strategy formation among Communist officials.

One of the book’s most interesting features is Wilkins’ convincing argument that the big-unit war influenced the decision to launch the Tet Offensive. Le Duan and other hardliners generally thought that American troops were cowards who relied too heavily on overwhelming supporting firepower, and so big-unit tactics could work if Vietnamese troops simply got close enough. Indeed, Le Duan and his colleagues believed that big-unit tactics had failed only because they had not been used at the proper scale, and so the hardliners pushed for a nationwide general offensive that would end the war by inflicting unacceptably high casualties on the Americans. But the NLF had always suffered higher casualties than US forces in regimental-level battles, and the Tet Offensive saw its best units completely devastated. Therefore, the Communist forces never effectively countered US combined arms, or individual US troops were far more capable than NLF/NVA officials believed. Either way, Wilkins shows that the hardliners miscalculated badly in their decision to use big-unit tactics, with the NLF being rendered almost completely hors de combat the consequence of that mistake. Wilkins exposes the degree to which much of the Communist leadership suffered from groupthink and totally failed to recognize where and how big unit tactics had fallen short. In doing so he has deepened our understanding of the war.


By Bryan Bentley (M.A. Student, Temple University)

Complicating the standard narrative of declinist anxieties, *Strategic Visions* by former National Security Advisor Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski offers a path for the United States to perpetuate its indispensable status as the global superpower while accommodating aspirations of rising nations. It has become common wisdom that in the wake of China’s rise and the 2008 financial crisis the United States is a declining power. Without disputing the conventional narrative that a global redistribution of power has occurred, Brzezinski maintains that the discussion concern-
ing U.S. decline obscures the reality of America’s residual strengths. While decline is not inevitable, Brzezinski argues that the U.S. will suffer both a relative and absolute decline if reformist efforts are not immediately undertaken. Arguing against Ron Paul isolationism and Dick Cheney jingoism, Brzezinski maintains the world needs a historically enlightened America to engage with an East on the ascendency. Ideally, America must be “a promoter and guarantor of a revitalized West, while balancing and conciliator of the East.” (192)

To prognosticate on the geopolitical future, Brzezinski needed to assemble a rich and well supported body of evidence organized into a sophisticated conceptual framework. Unfortunately, the only evidence offered is a thin array of statistics primarily taken from the UN and the CIA World Factbook. The data gathered is cited only when Brzezinski needs a measure of quantitative analysis as a linchpin for a theory. Evidentiary warrants notwithstanding, the book, divided into four parts, opens strong as Brzezinski details how the awakening political consciousness of inchoate actors has created both tumult and opportunity for a West still recovering from the largest financial shock since the Great Depression. The former National Security Advisor frets that China’s growing success could become a systemic model capable of challenging the Western system of political economy. Brzezinski’s ability to recognize the potential of new politically reflective subjects and illuminate the relative autonomy of their subjectivity from neoliberal discourse places this work in a unique category within the current historiography. “In much of today’s world,” he writes, “the millions of university students are thus equivalent to Marx’s proletariat…Manichean visions rooted in reactions to subjectively felt racial, ethnic or religious humiliations…explain better what the young feel while legitimating their thirst for vengeance.” (31) This emphasis on how the development of inchoate actors’ aboriginal framework has prejudiced the development of international relations created the theoretical potential for Brzezinski to forge a path breaking, if not revolutionary, work. Strategic Vision continues to coherently develop into the second part, as Brzezinski sets out to assess whether the U.S. system is still worthy of global emulation by analyzing the economic, social, political, demographic and geographic vitality of the American system.

In the next two parts, the book takes a sharp turn and collapses under the weight of its own ambition. Essentially, Brzezinski’s strategic vision blurs as he speculates on what 2025 will be like with an opaquely defined “declined” America. Instead of defining a declined America, he goes on to effectively (albeit not explicitly) describe a hypothetical scenario where the United States is a nonfunctional actor. This essentially renders half of the book meaningless because even a declined United States would still radically influence the global balance of power. However, by describing a world absent of any American influence, Brzezinski lacks imagination as he ruminates on the most unlikely of scenarios: one where the U.S. has literally disappeared leaving the international community to fend for itself.

Brzezinski’s willingness to transpose a Cold War mentality onto 21st-century geo-economics represents the biggest drawback to this work. In an age where economics increasingly defines the nature of national power, his book is bereft of monetary policy. Given that monetary policy is the inseparable Siamese twin of fiscal policy, it is evidence of Brzezinski’s economic illiteracy that he fails to speak of how the current economic bubble is going to affect the geopolitical standing of the United States. Currently, the Federal Reserve can engage in policies of quantitative easing because global capital is buying an unprecedented amount of U.S. Treasury Bonds. If the bond bubble that this is causing were to explode in the same way the housing bubble burst, it is likely the U.S. dollar would suffer unprecedented levels of inflation. This economic question is tenuously addressed as Brzezinski recommends a deficit reduction plan. However, his deficit reduction plan is conditioned upon sinking the U.S. into a recession due to constriction of capital flow into the national economy. This is the foremost economic-based national security dilemma facing the nation. But due to Brzezinski’s lack of consideration of contemporary financial markets, his work on “strategic vision” sidesteps the nation’s most monumental short-term difficulty. Further muddling Brzezinski’s analysis is his inability to integrate formerly peripheral powers into his conceptual framework of a multi-polar environment.

While adequately describing the rise of Southeast Asia, Brzezinski woefully ignores the role of other rising powers and their impact on America’s geopolitical standing. Nigeria, South Africa and potentially Angola are major developing markets with energy resources capable of transforming the international community. With a skyrocketing population, greater energy reserves then Saudi Arabia, and a world class education system, Canada is destined to become a great power in its own right. Australia and New Zealand have positioned themselves as ideal interlocutors for South East Asian nations, suspicious of each other’s ambitions. South America’s leading role in shaping the current discourse on human rights is likewise neglected. Dr. Brzezinski cannot fully analyze how U.S. energy finds will alter the American economy without addressing how bilateral relationships with these increasingly important producers will affect the commodities market. One must wonder how durable is Brzezinski’s analysis when he fails to incorporate a third of the world in his study on geopolitical strategy? There could have been greater clarity if Brzezinski utilized Fareed Zakaria’s holistic methodology in his book Rise of the Rest and dissected U.S. power within the context of rising global powers.

Dr. Brzezinski is a man of depth, yet this book is not reflective of his intellectual prowess as it fails to perceive the nuance needed to probe the complexities of a 21st-century world. While the former National Security Advisor does an exceptional job recognizing the angst of each nation he chooses to scrutinize, unfortunately he fails to apply his formidable skills consistently. In the end, the book suffers from a failure of imagination as Brzezinski falls short in the task of conceptualizing and synthesizing new variables into the broader context of his strategic vision.


By Adam Reller (M.A. Student, Temple University)

As Cold War historian Victoria de Grazia has shown, the ideological battle between capitalist and communist forces in post-WWII Europe largely unfolded in the arena of popular culture. As a result, communists in Western Europe utilized public resentment against America’s cultural incursion as an instrument of propaganda. In Confronting America, historian Alessandro Brogi accesses newly released archival material from the U.S., Italy, France, and Russia, to survey and analyze the logic of American
psychological warfare used to “confront” communism in Europe during the Cold War. Brogi convincingly demonstrates how anti-Americanism stood at the center of the battle between the U.S. and communists in France and Italy, where control over visions of a post-WWII Western Europe was thought to lie in the realm of public opinion.

Brogi, professor of history at the University of Arkansas, explores the ways in which American psychological warfare influenced political developments and undermined communist power in France and Italy during the Cold War. Drawing from newspapers, journals, state archives, government hearings, biographies, memoirs, secondary political and historical studies, and intellectual and political writings on national memory by intellectuals including Reinhold Niebuhr, George Kennan, Palmiro Togliatti, and Antonio Gramsci, Brogi fashions a convincing synopsis of the many factors that shaped the context for, and perception of U.S. policymakers involved in the cultural struggle over ideology. Weighing issues of national well-being, independence, economic prosperity, European integration, modernization, and democracy against interpretations of national and public perception, Brogi utilizes this intellectual symbiosis as a means of explaining strategies offered to circles in Washington deemed capable of subverting the authority of the PCI (Italian Communist Party), PCF (French Communist Party), and communist trade unions. By examining U.S. perceptions in addition to the ideas and activities of French and Italian communist organizations, Brogi generates an historical assessment that adequately accounts for the formulation and selection of various strategies to discredit communists in the eyes of the public and entice their respective governments toward the American vision of Western Europe.

Confronting America is organized into eight thematic chapters on American psychological warfare policy during the Cold War. The study begins with a discussion of initial American ambivalence toward the communists as WWII came to a close, describing each nation’s institutional structure of power and engaging the reader in the intellectual underpinnings of each nation’s sense of identity, memory, purpose, and position toward American influence. Beginning in 1947, however, purges and unrest in Europe caused Washington to take a more aggressive stance against European communism and communist participation in government. In 1951, the PSB (Psychological Strategy Board) was created to formulate and coordinate operations with key academics, the director of the CIA, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the undersecretary of state, and the Deputy Secretary of Defense. The PSB was created by the Truman Administration to deter militancy, undermine anti-American political parties, and encourage European cooperation and integration through cultural programs and economic incentives. But by 1953, American policy makers in the Eisenhower Administration changed strategic course and chose to permit the participation of French and Italian communist organizations less likely to be controlled by Moscow. This was done to utilize rather than isolate European nationalism as a way to enhance European interdependency and encourage citizens to support leaders who did not appear to be overwhelmingly pro-American, yet still supported European integration.

Continuing to offer economic programs, the PSB utilized as a tool association with American organizations and unions, privileged status in NATO, and preferable solutions to developments in the decolonization of the Mediterranean. The study goes on to demonstrate that, by the 1960’s, the Kennedy administration had essentially neutralized both parties by “Opening to the Left,” fostering the PCI’s entrance into an Italian center-Left coalition, and by winning over De Gaulle to Atlanticism via American aid. By catering to the Left and permitting them admission into national political coalitions, and by winning favor with De Gaulle, the Communist parties became subject to attack by the Italian Christian Democrats, and by De Gaulle’s government in France. The final chapters address the 1970’s, where Brogi refers to as the “epilogue of communist power in Western Europe”, when the declining strength of the USSR coupled with the increasing role of democratic participation in Western Europe brought anti-American radicalism to a close.

While the study glosses over specific operations codenamed “Cloven,” “Clydesdale,” “Demagnetize,” and “Midiron,” detail is minimal. These operations aimed at purging, sabotaging, and sowing general discord among communist trade unions and parties offer a fascinating look into psychological warfare that warrants more attention. Similarly, little attention is given to obstacles the PSB was able to surmount, such as structural impediments and conflicts that arose with Congress and the State Department.

These shortcomings aside, Brogi’s text is replete with historical insight. He explains, for example, how the PCI and PCF initially appeared as a major threat to America policy makers who feared communist participation in Europe’s domestic institutions and increasingly integrated political system. By embedding party machinery into the parliamentary process, the communists would create a permanent foothold in national politics and an integrated Europe, subsequently wielding greater influence. Similarly, Brogi illuminates ways in which American diplomats were forced to confront their own methods and models of diplomacy, choosing to adapt policy towards the PCI and PCF by focusing on flexibility and soft power in order to create a more efficient strategic framework capable of meeting objectives without isolating public opinion.

Anyone interested in Cold War psychological warfare will find this study nourishing. Not only does Brogi add to de Grazia’s assessment of Americanization as an essential instrument of the Cold War, he also uncovers new grounds in psychological warfare and diplomatic history.

News from Faculty, Students, and Alumni
Compiled by David A. Guba, Jr. (Ph.D. Student, Temple University)

Faculty:

Beth Bailey is enjoying the opportunity to serve as Acting Director of CENFAD while Richard H. Immerman is on a well-deserved sabbatical. She has shifted the balance of talks and conferences toward her own research interests in military history for the year, and has organized a workshop that will bring scholars from around the nation to discuss the state of the field of Military and Society scholarship. She’s also been privileged to attend the West Point Seminar in Military History in 2012 and the US Army War College National Security Seminar in 2011. She has recently given invited talks about her research on the US All-Volunteer Force at the University of Australia, University of Paris-Diderot, American University of Beirut, and the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam. Her current research is on the ways that the US Army attempted to manage race during the 1960s and 1970s.
Jay Lockenour is pleased to announce the publication of his article on German war films of the 1950s in the January 2012 edition of the Journal of Military History as well as the forthcoming publication of his essay, “The Demilitarization of Germany 1945-2010,” commissioned for a volume on the subject of demilitarization in contemporary world history due to appear any day now. The film essay will be the subject of a meeting of the joint symposium on German military and security policy sponsored by Washington and Lee University and the Virginia Military Institute.


Students:

Earl J. Catagnus, Jr. (ABD, Temple) is currently writing his dissertation, “Getting Rid of the Line: Toward an American Infantry Way of Battle,” under the direction of Dr. Gregory J. W. Urwin. He was awarded a fellowship to the 2012 West Point Summer Seminar in Military History, which he attended in June. Catagnus won the 2012 Robert L. and Robert C. Ruth Fellowship from the Army Heritage and Education Center. The fellowship allowed him to conduct dissertation research at the U.S. Army Military History Institute for the entire month of August. While there, Catagnus was informed that he was awarded a 2012 Marine Corps Heritage Foundation Dissertation Fellowship. In addition to the above, Marine Corps Gazette published his article, “On Snipers: Connecting Capabilities with Future Warfighting Concepts,” in its August issue. During the summer, Catagnus provided on-camera historical expertise in a Military Channel documentary on the Second Battle of Fallujah. Titled “Fallujah: The Taking of Terror Central,” the documentary aired on December 16, 2012. Catagnus served in the Second Battle of Fallujah in November 2004 during his service with the U.S. Marine Corps. In addition to being interviewed for “talking head” commentary, Catagnus assisted Arrow Media in the production of this documentary as a fact checker.


Steven Elliott (Ph.D. Student, Temple) has received a 2012 Graduate Student award from the New Jersey Studies Academic Alliance in honor of a paper based on his M.A. thesis, “Sustaining the Revolution: Civil-Military Relations, Republicanism, and the Continental Army’s 1780 Morristown Encampment,” which he completed last year in the Federated Department of History at Rutgers-Newark/New Jersey Institute of Technology. Elliott’s paper will be published next year in New Jersey History, an online peer reviewed journal.

Matt Fay (Ph.D. Student, Temple) had two publications come out this Fall, including a review of Philip Taubbaum’s The Partnership: Five Cold Warriors and Their Quest to Ban the Bomb in Cato Journal and any day now, an article in the American Historical Review, with a team led by Columbia University Historian Matthew Connelly, titled “‘General, I Have Fought Just as Many Nuclear Wars as Your Have’: Forecasts, Future Scenarios, and the Politics of Armageddon.”

Christopher Golding (ABD, Temple) defended his dissertation prospectus in the Spring of 2011 and taught at Temple and Rowan in the Fall of 2011 and at Rowan and Rutgers-Camden the following Spring. Golding also presented his paper, "Sir Home Popham's 'Contiguous' Atlantic: The British Expeditions to Buenos Aires, 1806-7," at the Mid-Atlantic Conference of British Studies in April 2012 and has a forthcoming article in the Journal of the Society of Army Historical Research entitled "Amphibians at Heart: The Battle of Copenhagen (1807), the Walcheren Expedition, and the War against Napoleon."

Carly Goodman (ABD, Temple) passed her comprehensive exams, and will on December 17 defend her dissertation prospectus. Her dissertation is on a provision of U.S. immigration policy called the diversity visa lottery and the lottery's impact on West Africa in the 1990s. In January, Carly will depart for Ghana where she will spend the Spring semester doing dissertation research.

Eric Klinec (ABD, Temple) has accepted a fellowship from the Research Participation Program for the Joint POW/MIA Account-
Tim Sayle (ABD, Temple) defended his dissertation prospectus and has recently undertaken several research trips in the United States, United Kingdom, and Europe to support his study of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. His research has been supported by grants from the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson Foundations, as well as a SHAFR Bemis Grant and the CENFAD Votaw Fellowship. He continues as a SSHRC Doctoral Fellow and in October 2012 was a Doctoral Fellow at the German Historical Institute in Washington D.C. Most important, Tim’s son Henry was born in June 2012. Although there is an 18.5 minute gap in the recording of the conversation in which Henry’s name was decided upon, Tim continues to deny that his son was named for a former National Security Advisor and Secretary of State.

Matt Shannon (ABD, Temple and CENFAD’s Davis Fellow in 2010-11) received a Graduate School Senior Doctoral Fellowship for Spring 2013 from Temple’s Center for the Humanities. Matt intends to defend his dissertation, “Losing Hearts and Minds: U.S. Foreign Relations and Iranian Student Migration during the Cold War” after next semester.

Jason W. Smith (ABD, Temple) defended his dissertation, titled "Controlling the Great Common: Hydrography, the Marine Environment, and the Culture of Nautical Charts in the United States Navy, 1838-1903," in May and will graduate in January 2013. In the spring, Jason presented a paper, "Twixt the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Navigating the Blockade of Cuba, January-August 1898" at the 2012 Society for Military History Conference in Arlington, Virginia. Meanwhile he teaches at Howard Community College in Columbia, Maryland, has begun revising his dissertation, and is applying for tenure-track teaching positions.

Matthew Unangst (ABD, Temple) completed his comprehensive exams in November 2011. He is beginning a dissertation on German East Africa at the turn of the twentieth century. This past March he co-chaired Temple’s James A. Barnes Graduate History Conference.

Joshua Wolf (ABD, Temple) has been hard at work on his dissertation. He presented some of his most exciting findings on the statistics and demographics of impressment at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Military History in May 2012. In addition, Joshua, with Chris Golding, devoted a great deal of time developing the narrative for the American Maritime Artists Association’s commemorative website on the War of 1812. He has reviewed for the Journal of Louisiana History, H-Net, and the Journal of the Early Republic. Joshua is also contributing an essay on naval fighting in the War of 1812 to a new military history textbook from Routledge Press.

Alumni:

William Ashbaugh (Temple Ph.D., 2000) recently finished his second year evaluating Fulbright applications for scholar placement to Japan, Korea, and Mongolia for the 2013-2014 school year. His co-authored article, “Peace through Understanding: Science Fiction Anime Mobile Suit Gundam 00 Criticizes U.S. Aggression and Japanese Passivity," which came out of research during his Fulbright to Japan in 2010-2011, will be published in Asia Journal of Global Studies Vol. 5, No. 2 in the summer of 2013. He continues as department chair and associate professor of history at SUNY Oneonta.

John A. Bonin, (Temple Ph.D., 2006), Colonel, U.S. Army (ret.), continues to serve as the Title X Professor of Concepts and Doctrine at the U.S. Army War College located at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. In July 2011, the college promoted him to full academic professor. This past summer, the college reorganized his office into the Department of Strategic Leadership Development where he provides doctrinal advice to the staff and faculty. He is currently working on a U.S Army Training and Doctrine Command project to redesign the Army of 2020. He also continues to serve as a resident course seminar historian, provides an elective on land power, and conducts lessons for the Basic Strategist and Joint Force Land Component Commanders Course. As an additional duty, he has again been selected as the lead author to revise Joint Publication 3-31, Command and Control for Joint Land Operations, which describes how U.S. joint land forces (Army and Marines) conduct modern land control operations. As part of this project, he traveled to Fort Bliss, Texas, in September to assist the 1st Armored Division headquarters in preparation for an overseas contingency operation.

Michael R. Dolski (Temple Ph.D., 2012) successfully defended his dissertation, “‘To Set Free a Suffering Humanity’: D-Day in American Remembrance,” this past January. Since that time, he has continued to work as a historian for the Joint Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Accounting Command based in Hawaii. Michael presented a paper on relative commemorative disinterest in the Korean War at the Society of Military History conference in Crystal City, Virginia. He and several co-editors have a contract with the University of North Texas Press to publish in 2013 their anthology titled D-Day in History and Memory: Comparative Perspectives of the Normandy Invasion.

Richard Grippaldi (Temple Ph.D., 2011) successfully defended his dissertation, "Birth of the U.S. Cavalry: The Regiment of Dragoons, Military Professionalism, and Peacekeeping along the Permanent Indian Frontier, 1833 - 1836," in July 2011. It was written under the direction of Gregory J. W. Urwin. He is currently a part-time lecturer in history at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

In the spring of 2013, the University Press of Kentucky will publish Exposing the Third Reich: Colonel Truman Smith in Hitler's Germany by Henry G. Gole (Temple Ph.D., 1991). Smith was Military Attaché in Berlin 1935-39. He used Charles A. Lindbergh to penetrate the Luftwaffe, an intelligence coup that gave the United States chapter and verse regarding the characteristics and numbers of German military aircraft that fought WW II. His lifelong relations with senior German and American leaders made
Andrew C. McKevitt (Temple Ph.D. 2009) is an assistant professor in the Department of History at Louisiana Tech University, where he began teaching in the fall of 2012. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in U.S. foreign relations and Western European history. He will also assume a leadership role in the American Foreign Policy Center at Louisiana Tech. In spring 2012 he served as the Hollybush Fellow in Cold War History at Rowan University, where he worked to establish a new center dedicated to the study of the Cold War at Rowan.

John McNay (Temple Ph.D., 1997) has a chapter on “George V. Allen and the Origins of the Cold War” coming out in Diplomats at War The American Experience, eds. Andrew Stewart and J. Simon Rofe (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Republic of Letters Press, forthcoming). Allen was ambassador to Iran in 1946 and 1947 during the first crisis of the Cold War, and McNay’s article explains Allen’s actions and strategy based on his unpublished memoir. McNay has also delivered talks on the subject at two recent conferences, including the Transatlantic Studies Conference and a conference on memory and foreign policy at the Clinton Institute of American Studies at University College Dublin.

Kelly Shannon (Temple Ph.D., 2010) is currently an assistant professor of history at the University of Alaska Anchorage, where she teaches courses on U.S. history, U.S. foreign relations, Cold War America, U.D.-Middle Eastern relations, and the modern Islamic world. Although the first winter was brutal (2nd snowiest on record), Kelly reports that she is loving Alaska so far. Dr. Shannon also has several recent publications. These include her chapter "The Right to Bodily Integrity: Women’s Rights as Human Rights and the International Movement to End Female Genital Mutilation, 1970s-1990s" in The Human Rights Revolution: An International History, eds. Akira Iriye, Petra Goedde, and Will Hitchcock (Oxford, 2011), and her article "‘I’m Glad I’m Not a Saudi Woman’: The First Gulf War and U.S. Encounters with Saudi Gender Relations" which appeared in the June 2012 issue of the Cambridge Review of International Affairs. Dr. Shannon is also working on turning her dissertation into a book manuscript, tentatively titled Veiled Intentions: Islam, Global Feminism, and U.S. Foreign Policy Since 1979.

David J. Ulbrich (Temple Ph.D., 2007) is currently the command historian at the U.S. Army Engineer School at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri. He directs staff rides and gives lectures on Engineer Branch History, Battle Analysis, and Role and Use of Military History. Ulbrich has conducted oral history interviews with Army Engineers of all ranks. He has also participated on three lessons learned collections teams with units returning from Afghanistan. As co-author with Captain Scott Sann and Specialist Jerry M. Hallman, Ulbrich published “Army Engineer Divers: First in Port-au-Prince Harbor” in Engineer: The Professional Bulletin of Army Engineers in 2010. Apart from his Army duties, Ulbrich continues to be active in Marine Corps history. His first book, Preparing for Victory: Thomas Holcomb and the Making of the Marine Corps, 1936-1942, received the “2012 General Wallace M. Greene Jr. Prize” from the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation. This book was also named a finalist for the “Rear Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison Prize for Naval Literature” by the Naval Order of the United States. Ulbrich received the “Brigadier General Edwin Simmons and Henry I. Shaw Award” for his work with the Marine Corps History Division. Ulbrich has lectured at the Army War College (three times), the Naval War College, the National World War II Museum, and Brookdale Community College’s Center for World War II Studies. Ulbrich was interviewed by Bobby Wintemute (Ph.D., 2006) for “New Books in Military History,” and by Mary Beth Wells for Toginet Radio. These lectures and interviews are webstreamed or podcasted. The French military affairs journal Défense et Sécurité Internationale published “L’entre-deux-guerres, âge d’or de l’histoire du Corps des Marines Entretien avec David J. Ulbrich” ["The Inter-war Period: The Golden Age in the History of the Marine Corps," interview with David J. Ulbrich] in a special issue on the U.S. Marine Corps in 2012. Most recently, Geoffrey Rossano’s Hero of the Angry Sky: The World War I Diary and Letters of David S. Ingalls, America’s First Naval Ace is the inaugural volume in Ohio University Press book series “War and Society in North America,” which is co-edited by Ulbrich and Dr. Ingo Trauschweizer. Looking to the future, Ulbrich is working on three collaborative textbook projects on American military history (with Dr. Matthew Muehlbauer), amphibious warfare (with Dr. Mark Fessel), and race and gender in modern war (with Dr. Bobby Wintemute).

Michael Weaver (Temple Ph.D., 2002) began work this past spring semester on his second book: “National Policy and Air Power Effectiveness in the Vietnam War.” The Air Force Research Institute awarded him a six-month sabbatical, during which he culled previously classified documents at the Air Force Historical Research Agency with which to write the core of his manuscript. Weaver is an associate professor of history at the Air Command and Staff College.

Lt Col Grant T. Weller, USAF (Temple Ph.D., 2008) was named Chief, AFOG C3 Division (AFWATCH) this past July. The AFWATCH provides continuous monitoring of US Air Force operations for the Chief of Staff of the Air Force and the Secretary of the Air Force, and produces daily operations summaries and briefings for the senior leadership of Headquarters, Air Force. In December, Grant will be leaving the Pentagon to return to the US Air Force Academy’s Department of History, where he will serve as an Associate Professor of History. He has recently contributed reviews to several journals, and is in the final stages of revision of “A Motor-Minded Army,” which is under contract with the University Press of Kentucky. The book is a revision of his Temple dissertation, completed under the direction of Professor Gregory J. W. Urwin.

Upcoming CENFAD Events:

Spring 2013 Colloquium Speakers: Dates TBD
- Georg Schild (Universität Tübingen)
- Frederik Logevall (Cornell University)
- David Kieran (Franklin & Marshall College)

Spring 2013 “Military and Society” Conference, 3.1-3.2
- Themes: Militarization of American society; Imagining combat; the military and social change; veterans and social policy; civil-military relations; a symposium on teaching US military and society; a roundtable on the scholarly state of the field.
Strategic Visions

Editorial Staff:
David A. Guba, Jr.
Carly B. Goodman
Seth Tannenbaum
Sarah Robey
Jean-Pierre Beugoms

Faculty Advisor: Gregory J.W. Urwin

CENFAD Acting Director: Beth Bailey