“A Terrific Plunge...” A Conference on the Legacies of World War I

By Carly Goodman (Ph.D. Candidate, Temple University)

In late April 2014, I had the good fortune to attend as a representative of CENFAD a conference on the legacies of World War I, on the occasion of the centennial of the war’s outbreak. James McAllister, Professor of Political Science at Williams College and the Director of the Stanley Kaplan Program in American Foreign Policy, organized the program in collaboration with Thomas Zeiler, Professor of History at the University of Colorado Boulder, and the editor of Diplomatic History. The conference brought together an impressive array of senior and emerging star scholars and experts in international and foreign relations history. In the idyllic setting of Williams College in the upper Berkshires in Massachusetts, we spent a full day discussing not just the Great War but its historical framing—something we as historians continue to transform and expand one hundred years hence. We used the conference as a workshop for papers that will be published in Diplomatic History in a dedicated World War I edition later this year.

On Friday evening our hosts at Williams welcomed us with a reception, dinner, and a lively keynote address by Tony Smith, the Cornelia M. Jackson Professor of Political Science at Tufts University. Dr. Smith gave a spirited talk on Woodrow Wilson’s early foreign relations thinking and writing. Advocating a rejection of false interpretations of Wilsonianism (those of “neo-Wilsonians”) Smith argued that American foreign policy should uphold Wilson’s ideas about democracy promotion abroad. After this laudatory speech on Wilson, however, the workshop shifted its focus largely away from the president, indeed away from many of the themes most commonly associated with the Great War and the century it sparked.

In the first panel, for example, Professor Anders Stephanson, the Andrew and Virginia Rudd Family Foundation Professor of History at Columbia University, bracketed Wilson entirely, speaking instead on themes related to American conceptions of civilization and their transformation during the war. The most important event of 1914, he suggested, might not have been the assassination of the Archduke, but the opening of the Panama Canal. Both events made clear the connectedness of peoples across the globe. Akira Iriye, the Charles Warren Professor of American History, Emeritus at Harvard University, spoke about the historiographic legacies of the war, pointing out that it wasn’t until the end of the twentieth century that historians took the global turn. Throughout the conference, the global turn of our field was in evidence, as we grappled with questions about how the war and the history of the war reconfigured the globe.

In the second panel, Erez Manela, Professor of History at Harvard University, spoke about a new project on the war that answers Dr. Iriye’s call to think more carefully about the war as a global moment and to broaden historical focus so that war is not the only thing. A forthcoming edited volume on the war, co-edited with Robert Gerwarth, titled Empires at War, 1911-23 (Oxford University Press), recasts the war as a global war among empires, spans a broader time span, and follows the war out of Europe to Asia and Africa. Matt Jacobs, an associate professor at the University of Florida, then spoke about the war in the Middle East, a theater that was actually larger and deadlier than Europe and had an even greater impact. Klaus Schwabe, a retired professor of modern history at the Technical University (RWTH) at Aachen Germany, rounded out the panel by discussing the consequences of WWI on German political development, and particularly the rise of Hitler.

In the afternoon, Dietmar Rothermund, Professor Emeritus of South Asian History at the University of Heidelberg in Germany, spoke about the economic implications of the war. Christopher Capozzola, associate professor of history at MIT, followed with a discussion of the legacies of the war for citizenship and categories of belonging in the United States, linking the war to a new state regime for streamlining membership and allegiance in the country. Andrew Preston, a reader in American History and a fellow of Clare College at Cambridge University, spoke about the war’s transformational effect on American religion, producing a major schism in American Protestantism and laying the groundwork for the emergence of a “tri-faith” United States. American religion also had an effect on America’s entry into the war; in the absence of direct threats to American security, Preston argued, President Wilson relied on moralistic—perhaps religiously-based—arguments about keeping the world safe in order to spur the United States to action.

Launching the final panel of the day, Julia Irwin, assistant professor of history at the University of South Florida, spoke about her work on American humanitarianism during and after World War I, arguing that humanitarian activities served multiple agendas. (Professor Irwin’s book Making the World Safe: The American Red Cross and a Nation’s Humanitarian Awakening was reviewed in Strategic Visions in Fall 2013). Michael Adas, the Abraham E. Voorhees Professor at Rutgers University, spoke about the legacy of U.S. military intervention in WWI both in its immediate effects on the course of the war, and the longer-term implications. Michael Neiberg, professor of history at the U.S. Army War College, concluded the day by speaking thoughtfully about American public perceptions of Germany and Germans during the war.

Professor Iriye’s comments on the centrality of World War I to the periodization and historiography of twentieth century global history served as a connecting thread through the day’s discussions. Why is war so important? What do historians miss when they focus so closely on wars? What this conference demonstrated is that historians today are asking new kinds of questions, situating the war in new spatial and temporal frames, and using the history of the war to tell important stories not only
about geopolitics and violence, but about global history and interdependence. The war was transformative in ways that a narrow focus on the war in the European Theater bracketed neatly between 1914 and 1918 simply misses. While the centennial commemorations of the war will no doubt continue through 2018, historical scholarship thinking about the war’s legacies for European empires, for American domestic and foreign policies, for international law and humanitarianism, and for the millions of people whose lives were touched and transformed by the Great War will continue well beyond that year.

Sergei Shenin on George W. Bush and U.S. Eurasian Policy

By Sergei Shenin (Ph.D., Saratov University)

Editor’s Note: In October 2013, CENFAD invited Sergei Shenin to present at a colloquium. Dr. Shenin gave a presentation on George W. Bush and his Eurasian ‘Enter Strategy.’ A video of Dr. Shenin’s presentation is available at http://www.temple.edu/cenfad/Events/index.html. Strategic Visions invited Dr. Shenin to follow up on his presentation by providing a note to our readers.

This letter is an attempt to formulate briefly some basic ideas of my talk in CENFAD in October of 2013. Initially, the strategic goals of the George W. Bush administration’s Eurasian policy and policy toward the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) had bipartisan support and built on the policies put in place by the Clinton administration. Nevertheless, radical changes in the global geopolitical context, most notably the “War on Terror,” dramatically transformed the Bush administration’s policy decision-making process and its approach to policy implementation in the region.

From early in the spring of 2001 a core group of conservative and neo-conservative politicians undertook most of the basic decisions on the administration’s U.S. Eurasian policy. They focused above all on what I’ll call an “Energy Strategy.”

The strategy’s main purpose was through military-political domination to strengthen and consolidate the position of the United States in the center of the Eurasian land mass, particularly in the Caspian region. In turn, the U.S. presence in the region would translate to a strengthened position in terms of energy policy and related economic issues. This group of policymakers sought to position the United States in the region in a way that would weaken the main regional competitor (Russia) and prevent the competition of other potential ones (including China). They sought to build an alternative energy infrastructure and to attract private investments.

By the end of 2003, the balance of power within the Bush administration had changed dramatically – with major implications for Eurasia. Several debates on key issues of the Eurasian policy forced the administration to shift its policy emphasis from military-political domination to promoting liberal and democratic reform in the region. The administration’s neoconservative core ceded the Eurasia policy initiative to a group of realists, headed by Secretary of State Colin Powell. I argue that there were at least three debates that heavily influenced the decision-making process with respect to the administration’s Eurasian policy.

The first debate took place during the spring and summer of 2001. It focused on the propriety of the Energy Strategy, which had been formulated by Vice President Dick Cheney’s task force. The main idea of the Energy Strategy was that the U.S. should establish oil alternatives to the Saudi Arabian resources. However, realist experts accused the administration of using energy problems merely as a pretext, and argued that the policy was actually aimed at the geopolitical isolation of Russia from the Caucasus and Central Asia through the creation of new oil and gas infrastructure (including the Trans-Caucasian, Trans-Afghan, and Trans-Caspian pipelines). Both realists and liberals opposed the construction of the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline and its role in isolating Russia. They also criticized the administration for underestimating the Saudi oil resources and overestimating the Eurasian (Russian and Caspian) resources. This debate did not resolve the controversies around the strategy or produce consensus among political groups; the respective bill was blocked in Congress. The administration continued to implement its Eurasian policy using the Silk Way Act (1999) and, after 9/11, using legislation related to the “War on Terror” that gave the administration leeway to build pipelines, establish military bases, sign security pacts with local rulers, and so on.

The second debate took place during the summer and autumn of 2003, and focused on roles for Central Asian countries to play in the administration’s Eurasian policy. Realists and liberals argued that the administration’s policy was overly focused on short-term military goals that contradicted long-term U.S. security priorities and stability in the region in general. This debate produced a consensus that liberal and democratic reforms had to be the highest priority of the U.S. in Central Asia. Otherwise the abuse of power by the local authoritarian regimes could radicalize the region, turning it into a source of fundamentalism and global instability. Therefore, local autocrats were considered the main obstacles for liberal and democratic reform, and their removal from power became the key issue of the policy. Administration policymakers thus welcomed the “Revolution of Roses” in Georgia in November 2003 as a good opportunity for democratization.

During the winter and spring of 2004 a third debate on the evolution of the U.S. Eurasian policy took place. It was about the relationship between the United States and Russia, including Washington’s attitude towards Russia’s growing resistance to American plans in the Caspian region. Both liberals and neoconservatives criticized President Bush for his unduly close personal relationship with President Putin. The administration argued that close ties with Russia were necessary to solve the administration’s short-term security goals in Afghanistan and Central Asia. But critics insisted that this “personal diplomacy” led to reduced pressure on the Kremlin, allowing it to abandon the democratic reform course altogether, and activating authoritarian and neo-imperial tendencies in Moscow’s internal and foreign policies. On the other hand, realist and conservative politicians argued that Bush’s attitude towards both Russia and President Putin was strategically sound, since it allowed the administration to secure U.S. interests in the region, including the development of oil resources and cooperative stability. They argued that Putin’s so-called authoritarianism and neo-imperial expansion were natural reactions to the United States’ broad involvement in region since the fall of the Soviet Union. The administration retained its “personal diplomacy” approach towards the Kremlin in general, with just occasional demonstrations showing symbolic willingness to punish Putin for his anti-democratic, pro-imperial behavior.

These debates slowly and inconsistently moved Bush’s first-term Eurasian policy ahead, shaped by the conflicts between Washington’s political elites. Some of the policy’s components, including the Energy Strategy, the construction of an alternative
energy infrastructure, the push of Russia out of the Caspian region, the establishment of U.S. military bases, and U.S. support of local autocrats through economic assistance, did not enjoy broad political support. After 9/11, a consensus emerged around the urgent need to implement liberal and democratic reforms in the Caspian republics in order to prevent their destabilization. The administration thus reframed its Eurasian strategy to focus on democracy-building and reforms. The so-called Color Revolutions, aimed at removing authoritarian rulers, turned out to be key components of the administration’s active “Enter Strategy” in the region from the beginning of Bush’s second term.

Dr. Sergei Shenin received his doctorate in History and is a professor of International Relations at Saratov University (Russia). He is the author of numerous books, including *America’s Helping Hand: Paving the Way to Globalization* (Eisenhower’s Aid Policy and Politics), and *The United States and the Third World: The Origins of Postwar Relations and the Point Four Program.*

**Emerging International Scholars’ Corner:**

**The Evolution of the U.S. Policy toward Turkey in the 1990s**

By Andrey Shenin (Ph.D. Student, Saratov State University)

Andrey Shenin is a Ph.D. Student at the Institute of History and International Relations at Saratov State University in Russia. He visited CENFAD in Fall 2013. Strategic Visions is proud to support the work of emerging international scholars.

During the 1990s, U.S. domestic political competition between Republicans and Democrats influenced U.S. foreign policy toward Turkey. Representatives of both parties supported fundamentally different policies regarding American-Turkish relations. Under President George H.W. Bush, the U.S. built on its Cold War-era strategic relationship with Turkey as a key partner in the region. For a brief period following Clinton’s election in 1992 the Democratic administration shifted its focus to human rights and democracy, distancing itself from a military relationship with Turkey. This essay argues that the Republican majority in Congress after 1994 exerted political pressure that transformed U.S. foreign policy, shifting the U.S. focus on democracy-building to its security interests in the region, making Turkey a key strategic U.S. ally once again.

During President George H.W. Bush’s administration at the beginning of the decade, Republican policymakers focused on using Turkey as a strategic outport for U.S. interests in the Middle East. Turkey, because of its geographic location, had played a key role containing Soviet expansion in Eurasia during the Cold War. After the fall of the “Iron Curtain” Turkey continued to block Moscow’s attempts to expand its international influence across the Black Sea. In addition, the U.S. lent support to Ankara to become a “big brother” for the Turkic states of the former USSR and to expel Iranian fundamentalists from Central Asia. Due to the efforts of Republican policymakers in the United States, Turkey became a key ally of the coalition during the First Gulf War. The Republican administration regularly emphasized the importance of Turkey for Washington’s geopolitical aims, and it received increasing amounts of financial aid. (1)

When President Bill Clinton was elected, his administration shifted U.S. foreign policy in general, including toward Turkey. Policymakers emphasized the democratization and market development of Turkey rather than strengthening its military potential. Consequently, the Democratic administration planned to integrate Turkey into the sphere of commercial interests of the Western community as soon as possible. The principal idea that the Clinton administration advocated was to first help Ankara with the development of Turkish civil society and human rights, and only after that begin close cooperation in military and political areas.

Clinton reduced the intensity of U.S.-Turkish relations and shifted U.S. focus to the increasing geopolitical influence of Russia in Central Asia. In this era, the U.S. media regularly published materials on Ankara’s inability to implement the tasks the Bush administration had entrusted to it, arguing that Turkish influence in Central Asia turned out to be weaker than expected. As the Democrats became the majority party in Congress by the end of 1992, a concern emerged in policymaking circles that Turkey had failed to become a regional leader. Much was made of Turkey’s failure to mediate the Nagorno-Karabakh war in Azerbaijan and its inability to settle the long-standing territorial conflict with Greece, for example. (2)

Under the new policy, Washington launched a campaign beginning in 1993, criticizing Turkey as a state with a deplorable human rights situation. The Democrat-controlled Congress decreased financial aid for Ankara by one quarter, amounting to $146.2 million in 1994 compared with more than $200 million in 1993. (3) The gap between the two states grew.

Some policymakers and commentators in the United States, generally from the Republican Party, accused the administration of ignoring crucial Turkish interests leading to a sharp rise in popularity of the Islamic movement on the eve of the elections for the Majlis. In a 1996 *New York Times* column, Thomas Friedman criticized the administration not only for its missteps, but for its lack of engagement with Ankara: “Turkey was taken for granted,” Friedman wrote, which could have important economic, political and security consequences for the region. (4)

The Republican Party took control of Congress in 1994 and increased its political clout in 1996. With Republicans occupying key positions in the foreign policy committees of Congress, they sought opportunities to exert pressure on the Clinton administration, particularly regarding U.S. relations with Turkey. As a result of this pressure and the shifting geopolitical circumstances, Clinton administration policy toward Turkey changed in three main ways: by strengthening the alliance of Turkey with Israel; by supporting NATO’s expansion to the East; and by constructing the strategic oil pipeline “Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan” (BTC). The administration’s interest in improving U.S.-Turkish relations was affirmed by the fact that the White House did not apply the “Iran-Libya Sanction Act” (ILSA) to Turkey after Ankara signed a gas deal with Tehran amounting to $23 billion. Clinton administration officials played down the gas deal, suggesting that it violated the spirit rather than the letter of the law, which banned any investment of $40 million or more in Iran’s energy sector. Turkey’s investment amounted to less than that amount, since Iran would be building part of the pipeline. (5)

The rapprochement between the United States and Turkey continued for the remainder of Clinton’s second term. During that time, Washington actively supported Turkey’s accession to the European Union and regularly praised Ankara for the development of its civil society in the country. The United States also saw a sharp rise in bilateral trade with Turkey. Turkey’s active participation in several American geopolitical maneuvers heartened Republican critics of the Clinton administration—including
Ankara’s cooperation on the BTC pipeline, to the detriment of Russian energy interests; its granting permission for American use of Incirlik Air Base; and the strengthening of the Turkish-Israeli strategic partnership, particularly in the area of military sales.

By the end of the 1990s, major political groups in the United States reached consensus on Turkey’s role in American foreign relations. Washington identified Turkey as a key ally in the Middle East, and the Turkish government, in turn, received a growing amount of military and financial aid from the United States. The improved relations did not solve all problems between the allies after 2000, seeing as Ankara remained intransigent in regard to the second Bush administration’s policy toward Iraq—refusing to stage forces in Turkey prior to the invasion. However, the strong U.S.-Turkish relationship that emerged in the second half of the 1990s provided important assistance for U.S. counter-terrorism operations after the 9/11 attacks.


Book Reviews:


By Matt Fay (MA, Temple University)

“There is no alternative to grand strategy,” concludes Hal Brands in his new book, What Good is Grand Strategy?: Power and Purpose in American Statecraft from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush. For Brands, a historian by training and currently an assistant professor at Duke University’s Sanford School of Public Policy, arguments that the world is simply too complex for coherent planning are a form of “strategic nihilism” that will damage the exercise of American foreign policy.

“Where grand strategy has been flawed or neglected,” he argues, “statecraft has been ineffective or even counterproductive.”

Drawing on the work of strategic thinkers such as Edward Mead Earle and Basil Liddell Hart, Brands’ definition of strategy boils down to matching appropriate means to desired ends at a reasonable cost. He describes grand strategy as an “intellectual architecture”—neither a single part of foreign policy, nor its entirety—that links short-term actions to medium- and long-term goals, provides coherency through “ruthless prioritization,” and is just as important in times of peace as it is during war. The majority of the book is dedicated to examining how four presidential administrations followed these precepts and to deriving lessons out of their successes and failures.

Beginning in the aftermath of World War II, Brands deftly distills the origins of containment and praises the Truman administration for providing a middle ground in choosing neither conflict nor appeasement in confronting the Soviet Union. He provides a mixed, though ultimately negative, assessment of grand strategy under Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger. While the duo had clear goals and laudable successes, they centralized policymaking and relied on secrecy to such a degree that they alienated the bureaucracy meant to implement it. Ronald Reagan receives commendation for coming into office with a plan to regain American strength and for his willingness to adjust his plans as events demanded, but Brands does not shy away from criticizing him for needlessly exacerbating tensions with Moscow.

George W. Bush’s “War on Terror” comes in for the only entirely negative assessment due to its unrealistic goals and inattention to costs. Though Brands is likely correct in his judgment of the administration, it is somewhat disconcerting that he saves his harshest evaluation for his most recent case. While odds are the historiography on Bush’s grand strategy will concur with Brands, it raises the question of whether there is a rosy tint to Brands’ view of his earlier cases, such as his positive assessment of Truman’s grand strategy.

To his credit, Brands punctures the myth that the Truman era was a “golden age” for grand strategy and demonstrates the complexity of this period. However, he concludes that the administration’s strategy ultimately “put American power to essential long-term purposes, and it provided the intellectual rudder that allowed Truman to navigate the dangerous shoals of the early Cold War.” Truman’s policies were mainly improvisational, though. No one attempted to develop objectives regarding the Soviet Union until 1948. Even then, connecting means to those ends remained elusive as the president simultaneously instituted budget caps and the administration added defense commitments in Europe and Asia. Following the Soviet atomic test and the outbreak of war on the Korean Peninsula, the administration haphazardly increased defense spending from a planned $14.4 billion in fiscal year 1950 to approximately $60 billion in 1952. Brands is right to note the administration’s successes, but if cost is a significant aspect of grand strategy then the fact that it was left to Truman’s successor to rectify this imbalance is a significant failing on the administration’s part.

From his cases, Brands develops “suggestions” future administrations can utilize in confronting challenges ranging from terrorism to the rise of China. Some of these suggestions, such as the need to begin with first principles, to invest in planning, to see grand strategy as a process rather than a fixed plan, and to emphasize “how” as well as “what,” are not necessarily tied to any particular case. Others, such as embracing the messiness of democracy in crafting grand strategy and the need to avoid alienating the bureaucracy, come directly out of the failures of Nixon and Kissinger. Moreover, it easy to see how recommendations about the need to conserve national power and maintain realistic expectations flow from the author’s negative assessment of the Bush administration.

Despite several blind spots, What Good is Grand Strategy is a book anyone interested in that question should grapple with before seeking to provide an answer. Certainly more of a
But missed signals, miscommunications, and diplomatic bungling meeting would hopefully pave the way to formal negotiations.

counterpart, Do Phat Quang, in Warsaw on December 6. This less, he grudgingly approved Lewandowski’s efforts and cleared Johnson was skeptical that negotiation would bear fruit. Nevertheless, he maintained that Operation Marigold could have ended the war in 1966 or 1967.

Historians of the Vietnam War long considered Marigold a non-event. The talks were to begin in December of 1966, and involved personnel from Poland and Italy as well as the United States, the Republic of (South) Vietnam (RVN) and the Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam (DRV). For years, the conventional wisdom held that the Poles did not have clearance to open direct talks with Hanoi, and that even if they did Hanoi was not willing to engage in talks. Using a wealth of recently declassified documents from fifteen different nations, as well as interviews with and the personal papers of the key figures involved, Hersberg, an associate professor at George Washington University, argues that Lyndon Johnson authorized the Poles to open direct talks, and also that Hanoi was willing to negotiate as early as 1966. Hersberg concludes that Marigold was a real opportunity to end the Vietnam War.

Although promising, Marigold was ultimately short-lived. In November 1966, Lewandowski learned from DRV Prime Minister Pham Van Dong that Hanoi was interested in participating in peace talks in response to some informal negotiating points that American diplomat Henry Cabot Lodge disseminated several weeks earlier. Lodge’s points included the implied support for opening direct talks with Hanoi, and that even if they did Hanoi was not willing to engage in talks. Using a wealth of recently declassified documents from fifteen different nations, as well as interviews with and the personal papers of the key figures involved, Hersberg, an associate professor at George Washington University, argues that Lyndon Johnson authorized the Poles to open direct talks, and also that Hanoi was willing to negotiate as early as 1966. Hersberg concludes that Marigold was a real opportunity to end the Vietnam War.

The Vietnam War claimed 58,000 American and several million Vietnamese lives. The negotiations that secured American withdrawal in 1973 dragged on for years, and frequently stalled. As Polish diplomat Janusz Lewandowski learned of the peace accords, he reflected on his participation in a series of failed peace talks codenamed Operation Marigold seven years prior. Speaking with historian James Hersberg many years later, Lewandowski noted that he still believed Marigold could have ended the war in 1966 or 1967.

Hersberg’s work is a stunning piece of scholarship. Rigorously documented and meticulously detailed, Marigold goes beyond the American-centric viewpoint that characterizes much Vietnam War-related scholarship. Hersberg shows how diplomats from many different nations operated during the Cold War. In particular, he examines the complex and often-acrimonious relationship between Moscow, Beijing, and Hanoi, remarking that “for Americans who lived through the war, the fresh evidence of intracommunist mistrust, and even enmity, bears little resemblance to the simplistic Cold War rhetoric … implying a coordinated Communist menace” (xvii). At over 900 pages, the book’s length can at times seem overwhelming. Thankfully, Hersberg is a skilled writer. Marigold begins with the evocative line “On a cold night in the Cold War, in the depths of a Warsaw winter, a phone rings after midnight” (p.1) and the narrative remains crisp and engaging thereafter. Further, the emphasis on detail helps the reader understand the importance of contingency in international diplomacy. Indeed, the author maintains that the peace talks might have taken place if not for a host of small mistakes and contingent variables. Hersberg’s work is especially valuable for Vietnam War scholars because many studies of the war during the Johnson Administration focus only on Johnson’s decision to escalate the war in 1964 and 1965 or the 1968 Tet Offensive, leaving the period in between understudied. But this period brimmed with important and interesting events. By investigating Operation Marigold in such detail, Hersberg helps us understand the war’s course during the Johnson Administration in greater detail. As such, Marigold is a must-read for historians of U.S. diplomatic history.


By Silke Zoller (Ph.D. Student, Temple University)

Lien-Hang Nguyen has written the first comprehensive English-language book on the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam)’s effort to win the American War, or “War for Peace.” Hanoi’s War focuses on the strategies which each combatant country employed to achieve their aims and end the war. However, Nguyen’s overwhelming concern lies with the North Vietnamese leadership in Hanoi.

Nguyen’s work makes two additions to the history of the Vietnam War. Her primary contribution lies in analyzing the North Vietnamese leadership and its strategy. She claims that Le Duan, General Secretary of the North Vietnamese Communist
Party, and his second-in-command, Le Duc Tho, created the North Vietnamese grand strategy throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Nguyen thus deflates the conventional portrayal of Ho Chi Minh. To wage a war that would unify Vietnam, Le Duan and Le Duc Tho created a severe national security state that repressed opposition in North Vietnam and marginalized South Vietnamese communists in order to maintain full direction of the war. They utilized the Sino-Soviet split to manipulate both nations, receiving maximum amounts of aid from both. Unlike more moderate figures like Ho Chi Minh or Vo Nguyen Giap, Le Duan and Tho relied on a military strategy of Grand Offensive and Grand Uprising, which mandated large-scale attacks in rural regions to distract enemy combatants, while revolutionaries could create insurgent uprisings in urban areas. This radical strategy failed three times, in 1964, 1968, and 1972. Each time, the United States responded to North Vietnamese actions with heightened military engagement in the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam). Though peace negotiations began after the 1968 Tet Offensive neither the North Vietnamese nor the American or South Vietnamese leadership pursued them seriously. Each side believed that it could achieve its aims more efficiently on the battlefield.

Nguyen’s second contribution is her analysis of diplomacy as a battlefield of the war. Because no side was able to achieve its full aims in combat, diplomatic maneuvering eventually became the crucial site which decided the fate of the war. Nguyen uses the Vietnam War to discuss how smaller nations achieved more diplomatic influence in the changing global structure of the 1960s and 1970s by pressuring and threatening the Cold War superpowers. However, she does not identify a sufficient set of smaller nations. Nguyen claims that the Sino-Soviet split was crucial for North Vietnam. Le Duan and Tho utilized this split efficiently to manipulate Chinese and Soviet leaders, thus maximizing their war-fighting capabilities. However, this split also brought disadvantages, as the leadership of smaller nations carried out debates mirroring the Sino-Soviet conflict over revolutionary impulse versus stabilization. Leaning toward an aggressive, Chinese revolutionary policy, Le Duan and Le Duc Tho continuously had to suppress dissenters in their Politburo who favored a more moderate ‘Soviet’ approach of negotiating, such as Ho Chi Minh. Though the North Vietnamese were efficient at manipulating the Soviets, Chinese, and world opinion in their favor, Nixon and Henry Kissinger eventually offset this though their tripartite détente, which undercut Le Duan and Tho’s Soviet and Chinese support.

Nguyen’s work is exceptional in her use of sources. Nguyen saw a large number of previously classified high-level Vietnamese language sources. She also conducted interviews with several prominent North Vietnamese officials. At the same time, she consulted a large number of available, but rarely consulted South Vietnamese documents in Ho Chi Minh City. Recent declassifications from the Richard Nixon Presidential Materials Project round out her source base. However, Nguyen overstates the novelty of her sources.

Nguyen did work hard to reach archives, and she made her findings available to an English-language scholarly audience. Nguyen’s other connected novelty is that she introduces concepts found in Vietnamese historiography into its American counterpart. Nguyen changes the traditional American understanding of the North Vietnamese leadership as a harmonious collective by describing harsh internal debates, power struggles, and the unilateral authority of Le Duan. Ho Chi Minh was less significant than previously thought. Nguyen also describes the Sino-Soviet split and détente from a North Vietnamese point of view, in detail, for the first time.

Though her sources and connection of historiographies are new, Nguyen’s methods are not. She uses a top-down approach and focuses on major North Vietnamese figures, as well as on American and South Vietnamese leaders. Le Duan is the main actor throughout the book. This approach restricts Nguyen. She is able to describe the strategies which these prominent men pursued, but also ignores actors that might be important. Nguyen does not describe critical groups in Vietnam during the war, such as the population or military of North Vietnam, or South Vietnamese insurgents. Her source base may not permit such a description. However, Nguyen also weakens her thesis that smaller states were actors capable of manipulating superpowers. Besides North Vietnam, no other small states figure prominently, and most of the diplomatic interaction is between the three superpowers.

Nguyen’s thesis that smaller nations were more capable of manipulating superpowers in the 1960s and 1970s is also questionable. She shows how the superpowers dominated the international scene. The Sino-Soviet split prevented a unified communist front, and opened a diplomatic path for Nixon. Though the North Vietnamese received large amounts of popular support and Soviet and Chinese aid, they were finally pushed into a corner by détente. The concept that client states manipulated their patron is also not novel in Cold War historiography.

Nguyen’s narrative ends with the Paris Peace Agreement of 1973, which is a rather abrupt cutoff considering that her focus lies on North Vietnam, not on the United States. Nevertheless, her work provides a major historiographic intervention for the Vietnam War. She complicates the prevailing understanding of the North Vietnamese leadership, and shows how the small state of North Vietnam carried out diplomatic warfare with the superpower United States.


By Stephen Bentel (Ph.D. Student, Temple University)

Southern African politics constantly evolved from the end of the Second World War until the end of Apartheid rule in South Africa in 1994. Decolonization and black African nationalism provided opportunities for both Cold War hegemons to seek the upper hand in the region. Sue Onslow’s edited volume Cold War in Southern Africa: White Power, Black Liberation provides detailed accounts that demonstrate the critical position that Southern Africa held within the Cold War and how Cold War ideology shaped internal and regional racial politics for Southern Africa. The volume does not attempt to present the definitive history of the period, but instead focuses on the theme of black nationalism in a case study model.

Onslow, a leading oral historian who teaches at the London School of Economics, opens the volume, providing a well-balanced general history of racial politics and intervention in the Cold War. This overview firmly roots the volume and allows the other essays to branch out from it. The chapter that follows by John Daniel, the academic coordinator at the School for International Training in Durban, South Africa, provides a similar overview that focuses solely on South Africa. This chapter positions
South Africa as a villain with regards to African nationalism in the region. Throughout the volume, authors show how South Africa’s Afrikaner political elite manipulated the great powers and international organizations to extend minority rule within their state, and when convenient for them, Southern Africa.

A particularly strong essay in the volume is Andy DeRoche’s “Non-Alignment on the Racial Frontier: Zambia and the USA, 1964-1968.” DeRoche, who teaches at Front Range Community College in Boulder Colorado, uses previously untapped sources from the Zambian archives to describe how personal interactions between Kenneth Kuanda, Lyndon Johnson, and U.S. and Zambian diplomats greatly affected Zambia’s decisions on a variety of fronts, including their “no” vote on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and the construction of a Chinese railroad from Lusaka. DeRoche also draws a brilliant parallel between Zambia’s nonalignment with the Cold War superpowers and the United States’ nonalignment in the struggle for racial equality in Southern Africa.

Edited volumes can be difficult to compile (and to review). One essay, “The USA and Apartheid South Africa’s Nuclear Aspirations 1949-1980” by Anna-Mart van Wyk, an associate professor at Monash University South Africa, is well-researched but does not necessarily fit with the theme of the volume. Van Wyk deals with the strategic value that the United States placed in South Africa and whether or not the United States assisted with or had knowledge of the development of nuclear weapons in apartheid South Africa. While this essay represents a valuable contribution to the literature, it falls mostly outside of the book’s focus on racial politics.

Overall this book’s strengths are the excellent use of government documents throughout, some of which were only recently declassified. Nancy Mitchell, an associate professor at North Carolina State University, conducted impressive interviews with the most significant policymakers of her period, including former President Jimmy Carter for her essay, “Terrorists or Freedom Fighters? Jimmy Carter and Rhodesia.” Another strength is in the balance of space within the text given to each Southern African state. Zambia, Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Namibia all receive at least one essay dealing with their specific situations. American, Soviet, Cuban, and British voices are heard as well. Onslow adds further validity to the cross-borders context of the project by including work by scholars from a variety of countries in Europe, Africa, and North America. Onslow acknowledges that there are voices that go largely unrepresented in her chapters, but for the scale of the project it is not unreasonable for her to have largely left out Yugoslavia, Portugal, and the German Democratic Republic.

Voices that are conspiciously missing, however, are of people outside the national power structures. Although gathering source materials written by members of the African National Congress (ANC), Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), South West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO), and other groups is surely more difficult than obtaining archived government memos, these voices deserve a place in the global history of black liberation movements. At the same time that minority voices are perhaps underrepresented, women’s voices are also notably absent. In fact “women” and “gender” are not even indexed terms and the only related entry, “Women for Rhodesia,” is mentioned just once. A chapter pertaining to women’s roles in African nationalist movements could perhaps have replaced the chapter about South Africa’s nuclear aspirations.

Overall the essays in this book contribute many compelling arguments and shed important light on Southern Africa as a key region of contest during the Cold War. In addition to emphasizing Southern Africa’s importance to the Cold War, Onslow and the other authors present clear cases for the Cold War’s impact on internal policy making in Southern Africa especially with respect to race.

CENFAD News & Updates

CENFAD Associates

We are pleased to introduce several new CENFAD-associated experts. CENFAD Associates are formal friends of CENFAD, experts in their fields, and members of the CENFAD community.

Kate Epstein is currently an assistant professor of history at Rutgers University-Camden. She received her BA summa cum laude with distinction in history from Yale University in 2004, her MPhil in international relations from the University of Cambridge in 2005, and her PhD in history from Ohio State University in 2011. Her first book, Torpedo: Inventing the Military-Industrial Complex in the United States and Great Britain, was published by Harvard University Press in 2014. She recently received a Franklin Grant from the American Philosophical Society to support research on her next book, a history of national security and intellectual property in the United States since the Civil War. She teaches courses in military, diplomatic, and U.S. history.

Marc Gallicchio (Temple University B.A. ’75, Ph.D.’86) is delighted to be a CENFAD associate and to be involved with Temple University again. Marc taught at Temple University Japan and Northeast Missouri State University (Truman State) before joining the faculty at Villanova University in 1989. He is the author of The Cold War Begins in Asia: American East Asian Policy and the Fall of the Japanese Empire (1988); The African American Encounter with Japan and China: Black Internationalism in Asia, 1895-1945 (2000) which won the Robert H. Ferrell book prize from the Society for Historians of American Foreign relations; and The Scramble for Asia: U.S. Military Power in the Aftermath of the Pacific War (2008). He is currently writing about the politics of unconditional surrender at the end of the World War II and exploring the persistence of conspiracy theories about the use of the atomic bombs against Japan. He has published a preliminary version of his findings as “Truman, Unconditional Surrender and a New Deal for Japan,” in James I. Matray, ed., Northeast Asia and the Legacy of Harry S. Truman (2012).

Ronald J. Granieri is a Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia, where he is the Director of the Center for the Study of America and the West, and a contract historian for the United States Department of Defense, where he is working on a study of American defense policy during the tenure of Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. At the FPRI, Ron is also the host of a monthly discussion program on international affairs, “Geopolitics with Granieri.” He is the author of The Ambivalent Alliance: Konrad Adenauer, the CDU/CSU, and the West, 1949-1966 (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2003) as well as a number of articles on European Histo-
Amy C. Offner is an assistant professor of history at the University of Pennsylvania. Her current book project, Sorting out the Mixed Economy, explores Cold War anti-poverty programs in the US and Colombia in order to understand three problems in the history of political economy: the transition from midcentury to neoliberal capitalism, the circulation of political-economic ideas and practices between the US and Latin America, and the rise of economists as policymakers and public intellectuals. During the last year, she received an inaugural course development grant from Penn’s Social Science and Policy Forum to design a new undergraduate class, “Thinking about Capitalism,” as well as research grants from Penn and the LBJ Library.

Sherman Prize for Undergraduate Scholarship

CENFAD is pleased to announce the winner of the 2014 Edwin H. Sherman Prize for Undergraduate Scholarship in Force and Diplomacy. We had a particularly competitive field this year with many worthy submissions. The winner is Alison Strongwater (Cornell University) for her paper, "Modern Mercenaries: Threat or Savior?" The committee also chose to recognize Pamela Hoss (University College London) with an Honorable Mention for her paper, "French fears over power shifts: the October War, the catalyst for the deterioration of Franco-American relations in 1973?" You can read both papers on CENFAD's website (http://www.temple.edu/cenfad/SAandJROTC/index.html). With such talented undergraduate students producing excellent work, the future is bright!

Temple Graduate Student Updates

Tyler Bamford presented part of his research on American attacks in Great Britain during World War II at the annual Society for Military History (SMH) conference in Kansas City, Missouri. He was fortunate enough to receive a CLA travel grant from Temple University as well as a Russell F. Weigley Graduate Student Travel Grant from the SMH to support his trip.

Earl J. “E. J.” Catagnus, Jr., ABD and an assistant professor of history at Valley Forge Military College, appeared three times in recent months on MSNBC’s Melissa Harris-Perry show to discuss national security issues within their historical contexts. When E.J. is not teaching or illuminating the media, he devotes his time to his dissertation, “Getting Rid of the Line: Toward an American Infantry Way of Battle, 1941-1945,” which he is writing under the direction of Gregory J. W. Urwin. On April 5, 2014, E.J. presented a paper based on his dissertation research at the 81st Annual Meeting of the Society for Military History in Kansas City – “Managing Battlefield Images: The Effects of Imagination on American Infantry Development, 1918-1941.”

Matt Fay presents his paper, "Losing 'Ramona': Major General Leslie R. Groves and the Politics of Postwar Atomic Intelligence," at the conference, "Spy Chiefs: Intelligence Leaders in History, Culture and International Relations" on May 7. The conference is hosted by the University of Warwick and will take place at the Palazzo Pesaro Papafava in Venice, Italy. After the conference Matt will have five days to explore Florence and Rome before traveling to the village of Allumiere for the Nuclear Proliferation International History Project's "Nuclear Boot Camp," a workshop on nuclear proliferation put together by the Woodrow Wilson Center and the University of Roma Tre. A note from Matt: “In less pleasant news, I will unfortunately be leaving Temple University after this semester. However, I am happy to say that after switching from the PhD to the Master's program, on April 29th, I defended my thesis "The Only Completely Safe Course': Intelligence, Atomic Monopoly, and the Making of American Strategy, 1945-1950." I want to take this opportunity to thank both my professors and my classmates for their support and friendship over these past two years, and for making this the most challenging and rewarding intellectual experience of my life.” We will miss you, Matt!

Carly Goodman continued to make progress on her dissertation while finishing out her year as the Davis Fellow for CENFAD. She presented papers at several conferences this semester, including the AHA, the Greater New York Area Africa Historians Workshop, and the Barnes Conference where her paper won second prize in World History. On deck are presentations at SHAFR this summer in Lexington, Kentucky, and in the fall at the American Studies Association and the American Society for Legal History. Then she’s going to work on kicking this conference addiction. She received a grant to research at the Moakley Archive in Boston this summer, as well as a Richard A. Baker Graduate Student Research Travel Grant from the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress to research in the papers of Rep. Bruce Morrison in Connecticut, and next year will be a CHAT Graduate Associate Fellow.

Sarah Robey was selected to participate in the Wilson Center's Nuclear Proliferation International History Project (NPIHP) 2014 Nuclear Boot Camp in Allumiere, Italy. She will be there May 13-23, along with Matt Fay. Only 16 people were selected - Temple will be representing real hard here. She also recently received a Friends of the Princeton University Library Research Grant to do two weeks of research in the Library’s Public Policy Papers.

Tim Sayle is nearing the completion of his dissertation on NATO thanks to a dissertation completion grant from Temple’s Graduate School. He recently won an award from the Government of Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) to prepare position papers on arms control and present them in a debate at DFATD. He is also preparing a book chapter on Lester Pearson and a paper for the SHAFR conference. Next year, Tim will be a postdoctoral fellow at Southern Methodist University’s Center for Presidential History where he will lead a portion of the Collective Memory Project. SMU is home of the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum.

Silke Zoller presented her work at the 19th Annual James A. Barnes Conference, and attended the Temple/Tübingen Transatlantic Graduate Forum at Temple University this spring. She is looking forward to presenting her work at SHAFR this June.
Temple Faculty Updates

Beth Bailey organized a session on "Confronting Social Change: Gender, Sexuality, and the U.S. Military" for the Organization of American Historians 2014 meeting. Her chapter on the U.S. All-Volunteer Force was published in Fighting for a Living (edited by Eric-Jan Zurcher and published by the University of Amsterdam Press), which examines the military as labor history in the world since 1500 A.D. And she is very happy to report that she received an National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship to work on her current book project: "The U.S. Army and the Problem of Race, 1965--1985," and will be on leave from Temple in 2014-15.

Richard Immerman has spent a busy spring commuting between Philadelphia and Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where he holds the Francis W. DeSerio Chair in Strategic Intelligence at the Army War College. He is teaching an elective on Intelligence and U.S. Foreign Policy. Immerman has also spoken about intelligence-related topics at Ohio State, Duke, and Louisiana Tech Universities, Gettysburg College, the Army Heritage and Education Center, and Dickinson College’s Clarke Forum for Contemporary Issues. His book, The Hidden Hand: A Brief History of the CIA, came out in April. In addition, Immerman continues to chair of the Historical Advisory Committee to the State Department and SHAFR’s Historical Documentation Committee. He co-authored with Thomas Davis Fellow Carly Goodman and Kenneth Osgood, another SHAFR member, a report on the challenges facing the National Archives and Records Administration in the April issue of the American Historical Association’s Perspectives. Finally, he very much enjoys co-editing with Beth Bailey Understanding the U.S. Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, based on presentations at CENFAD’s conference last fall.

Jay Lockenour is finishing an incredibly rewarding year as Distinguished Visiting Professor at the United States Air Force Academy and looking forward to his return to Temple, where he will begin a term as department chair. He is nearly finished with his manuscript on Erich Ludendorff, which means it may see the light of day in time for the centenary of Ludendorff’s promotion to First Quartermaster General (a rank he invented for himself) in 1916. During his time in Colorado, Dr. Lockenour presented his work on Ludendorff to the Rocky Mountain Military Affairs Society (www.rmmas.org – look them up if you are in the area) and to the Society for Military History conference in Kansas City in April. And he hiked the soles off a pair of Merrell boots.

Bryant Simon is working on a book about cheap food and the internal globalization of the United States. At the same time, he is trying to extend the global reach of Temple’s History Department. Along with CENFAD colleagues, he has been building the program’s Global United States Studies Initiative (GUSS). With partners in Japan, England, Germany, France, Ireland, Brazil, and Korea, this will provide Temple graduate and undergraduate students with the opportunity to study the U.S. outside the U.S. It will, simultaneously, bring scholars of the U.S. from other parts of the world to Temple. Over last year, Simon has lectured and taught in Seoul, Tokyo, Kyoto, Belfast, Prague, and Angers (France). He was awarded a Humboldt Research Award and is spending the spring and summer as a scholar-in-residence in Erfurt, Germany.

Benjamin Talton has been working on his book project dealing with the relationship between Ethiopia and the United States during the closing years of the Cold War, and completing his term as president of the Ghana Studies Association. He has a short essay based on some of his research, “‘Land to the Tiller’: Hunger and the End of Monarchy in Ethiopia,” that will be published in the edited volume Food in Zones of Conflict: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives in September 2014 by Berghahn Books. For the Ghana Studies Association, in May 2013 Professor Talton hosted the first of what he hopes will be a triennial conference held in Ghana. The conference received support from Temple University Office of International Affairs, the College of Liberal Arts, Wake Forest University, and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana, which was also the site for the conference. Scholars from nine countries presented their research over the course of the three-day event. In the classroom, Professor Talton is looking forward to teaching Cold War Africa during the fall 2014 semester.

Gregory J. W. Urwin completed his first year as president of the Society for Military History by overseeing that organization’s 81st annual meeting in Kansas City, April 2-6, 2014, which drew a robust 556 registrants. During the past year, Urwin has established vibrant partnerships for the SMH with New Books in Military History and the New Books Channel on the Internet; Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.; the History Club; and especially the National Endowment for the Humanities, which has just announced a major new initiative to increase funding for research on military history and veterans’ affairs (http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/federal-eye/wp/2014/04/18/neh-to-help-vets-with-humanities-program/). Urwin is currently negotiating with the Organization of American Historians, which is also seeking a closer relationship with the SMH. Urwin also represented the SMH at the annual meeting of the American Council of Learned Societies, May 8-10, in Philadelphia. Despite Urwin’s heavy service commitments, he continues to pursue his personal research agenda. His article, “‘I Have Wanted to Go See You for a Long Time’: Notes on the Friendship of Johann Ewald and John Graves Simcoe,” will be published later this year by The Hessians: Journal of the Johannes Schwalm Historical Association. He will spend a month this summer in England conducting additional research on his social history of the 1781 British invasions of Virginia. Finally, Urwin renewed his show business credentials by appearing in Gettysburg: Final Measure of Devotion, a new documentary written and directed by Robert Child and sponsored by the Gettysburg Anniversary Committee.

Friends & Alumni Updates

Michael Dolski, Temple Ph.D., and a historian with the U.S. Joint Prisoner of War – Missing in Action Accounting Command’s Central Identification Library, co-edited D-Day in History and Memory: The Normandy Landings in International Remembrance and Commemoration (along with Sam Edwards of Manchester Metropolitan University and John Buckley of the University of Wolverhampton), which was released earlier this year by University of North Texas Press. Michael also contributed this essay to the collection, “Portal of Liberation: D-Day Myth as American Self Affirmation.” This work is a by-product of Michael’s 2012 dissertation, “To Set Free a Suffering Humanity: D-Day in American Remembrance,” which he wrote under the direction of Gregory J. W. Urwin.

Dr. Kaeten Mistry who spoke at a CENFAD colloquium in September 2011 has just published a book The United States, Italy and the Origins of Cold War: Waging Political Warfare 1945–1950 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). The feedback he received from the CENFAD community at his presentation was vital in sharpening the final manuscript.

Phillip G. Pattee, Temple Ph.D. and an associate professor of strategy and military operations at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, published At War in Distant Waters: British Colonial Defense in the Great War with Naval Institute Press in late 2013. This is a revised version of Pattee’s 2010 dissertation, which he wrote under the direction of Gregory J. W. Urwin.

Kelly Shannon, Temple Ph.D., has been working as a tenure-track assistant professor of History and International Studies at the University of Alaska Anchorage since fall 2011, but she has accepted a position for this coming fall as a tenure-track assistant professor of History at Florida Atlantic University. She will start there in August. FAU is in the process of building a scholarly center for the study of human rights, and Dr. Shannon is excited to be able to participate. She is moving from the arctic climate of Alaska to the hot, sunny beaches of South Florida, and simply cannot wait!

Dr. Jason W. Smith, a recent Temple Ph.D., has seen in this school year a string of impressive successes. The U.S. Naval Academy's History Department just awarded Jason the Class of 1957 Postdoctoral Fellowship in U.S. Naval and Marine Corps History for the 2014-15 academic year. Jason will teach U.S. naval and Marine Corps history to plebes (freshmen in the Brigade of Midshipmen). A light teaching load will permit Jason to revise his dissertation, "Controlling the Great Common: Hydrography, the Marine Environment, and the Culture of Nautical Charts in the U.S. Navy, 1838-1903," for publication in book form. Jason published an article titled "Twixt the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Hydrography, Sea Power, and the Marine Environment, 1898-1901," in the April 2014 issue of The Journal of Military History. Jason has also drawn on his dissertation research to publish another article, “The Bound[less] Sea': Wilderness and the United States Exploring Expedition in the Fiji Islands," in the October 2013 issue of Environmental History. Finally, Mystic Seaport selected Jason as a "38th Voyager," permitting him to participate in the 38th voyage of the Charles W. Morgan, a recently refurbished American whaler that was built in 1841. In addition to deepening Jason's understanding of 19th-century ship handling and navigation, this opportunity will permit him to pursue a research project examining the placement of this ship in American memory and commemoration.