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NEW EVIDENCE FROM VIETNAM


On February 3, 1997, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) issued Resolution 25-QD/TW sanctioning the publication of a series containing documents relating to party policymaking. Entitled *Van kein Dang - Toan tap* (Party Documents - Complete Works) and published by the *Nha xuat ban Chinh tri quoc gia* (National Political Publishing House), the series has been released gradually since 1998, with new volumes made available every few months. It is organized (and was released) chronologically beginning with the period leading to 1930, the year of the founding of the Indochinese Communist Party, which was the forerunner to the wartime Vietnamese Workers’ Party (1951–1976) and the VCP (1976–present). Each volume is in Vietnamese (abridged English and French editions may be published in the future), typically encompasses one year, and includes dozens of documents on domestic and foreign affairs from the first/general secretary (the party head), prominent revolutionary leaders affiliated with the party, the Politburo, and the Central Committee.(1) Most valuable for researchers are the abundant instructions and resolutions issued by the Politburo and the Central Committee relating party concerns, detailing policies, and establishing guidelines for the implementation of those policies.

As of the end of 2003, the series extended to the year 1968. With new volumes being released every few months, it is only a matter of time before the series covers the entire period of the American military intervention in Indochina. While the record that is presented for the period 1954 to 1968 was subjected to a thorough review and editing process and is therefore partial, the documents contained therein offer fascinating insights into the party’s policymaking process and, more significant, its position on a wide range of important yet heretofore vaguely understood issues.

Recently, I scrutinized the volume for the year 1954 in hopes of acquiring a better understanding of the party’s position regarding implementation of the Geneva provisions and the prospects for achieving reunification through the nation-wide elections to be held in 1956. Directives and resolutions issued by the party in the immediate aftermath of the signing of the accords leave no doubt that Hanoi entered the post-Geneva era intent on avoiding further bloodshed and confident that implementation of the accords would bring about national reunification. Indeed, the leadership went to great lengths to make sure that the membership and other supporters did nothing to sabotage the accords, undermine their “spirit,” or otherwise provoke or justify non-compliance on the part of the Saigon regime and its French and
Among the more interesting pieces of evidence are:

1. A July 27 directive from First Secretary Truong Chinh instructing cadres to respect the letter and the spirit of the Geneva Accords and make no allowances for the resumption of hostilities. “Our nationalist struggle has entered a new era,” the secretary wrote, and has “become a political struggle to consolidate peace.” For the sake of prompt reunification, the Revolution must continue “according to a peaceful approach” (phuong phap hoa binh). For the time being, the most pressing task was “explaining the present situation” to the rest of the membership and the masses and impressing upon them the importance of avoiding violent action and resisting provocations by the enemy. “Our people must continue their protracted and arduous struggle by peaceful methods in order to consolidate peace and achieve reunification, total independence, and democracy throughout the nation.” Shortly thereafter, the first secretary elaborated on his previous instructions, stating that it was crucial for revolutionary forces to do nothing that could adversely influence the political situation in the South and thereby legitimate the desire of the Americans and their allies to sabotage the accords. He also urged all supporters of the Revolution to court elements within the Vietnamese communities that had traditionally supported Western interests—such as Catholics and those who had served in the colonial administration—and make them understand the policies of the party and the DRVN government.

2. An August 31 missive in which Truong Chinh instructed cadres to closely supervise the movement of southerners who chose to relocate to the North and of northerners who opted to return home after time spent fighting in the South. Under the terms of the Geneva Accords, all Vietnamese could move freely between the two zones and settle wherever they wished before May 19, 1955. Convinced that the movement of people would impact the general elections planned for 1956, the first secretary asked that those who chose to come to the North from the South be treated with utmost kindness. Positive experiences would most likely have a “very big influence” (anh huong rat lon) on the spirit of “southern compatriots” and increase the prospects for peaceful reunification under the party leadership in 1956.

3. A September 5 document expressing concern over the departure of northerners for the South. The party apparently believed the French and the Ngo Dinh Diem regime were enticing (du do) and pressuring (bat ep) northerners to move south as part of a strategy to influence the political situation there and “gather a few more votes for the upcoming elections.” Undermining those efforts by the enemy and limiting the number of people who chose to relocate to the South from the North was a “pressing struggle.” In order for it to succeed, cadres at all levels had to work closely with religious organizations, and particularly Catholic communities, as they were the most susceptible to enemy propaganda. Cadres had to publicize the policy of the party regarding the protection of religion and freedom of belief. Winning the “hearts and minds” of the sizeable Catholic communities at Bui Chu and Phat Diem was especially important. To that effect, Truong Chinh instructed local cadres to coopt patriotic Catholics and use them to propagate favorable information about the party and the North Vietnamese government. Such individuals could also be used to publicize and assist in the implementation of specific policies for those areas. Starting in September 1954, the party temporarily suspended the rent reduction and land redistribution (agrarian reform) campaigns; allowed the circulation of foreign currencies, including the southern currency, prohibited in the rest of North Vietnam; and ordered the return of property seized from Catholic authorities as well as the release of clergy members who had been placed under house arrest.
4. Correspondence from September 26 urging the membership to cultivate a healthy relationship with the members of the International Commission for Supervision and Control (ICSC), an organization created under the terms of the Geneva Accords to supervise their implementation and deter as well as document cease-fire violations. The document explained the nature and political dispositions of the member states (Poland, India, and Canada) and emphasized the importance of developing a cordial relationship with the commission membership. Should the Americans and their allies accuse Hanoi of violating the agreement or infringe upon its terms themselves, a good relationship with commission members could be helpful. Truong Chinh described the Poles as “our friends” and the Indians as “agreeable to peace in Indochina” but was less sanguine about the Canadians. “Canada is [ideologically] close to the United States,” he warned, and as a longtime friend and ally of the Americans, it was the ICSC member most likely to prove problematic for Hanoi. Accordingly, the party had to exercise caution in its dealings with the Canadians while striving to “develop good diplomatic relations” with them. The first secretary instructed cadres to make every effort to accommodate the Canadians and pay particular attention to their basic needs, including food preparation, accommodation, and access to information. Maintaining good relations with the commission members would “create favorable conditions for the struggle to consolidate peace and achieve our reunification.”(5)

5. A Politburo resolution issued in September offering the strongest and clearest articulation yet of the party’s position on the Geneva Accords. Entitled “New Situation, New Responsibilities, and New Policy,” this lengthy document sanctioned and reiterated directives issued by First Secretary Truong Chinh and the Central Committee between late July and early September 1954. Moreover, it listed pressing tasks to be accomplished and fundamental responsibilities to be fulfilled in order for peace to be sustained and reunification to be promptly achieved. This document governed the actions of the party until late 1956, at which point Hanoi abandoned hopes for a peaceful reunification of the nation and began effecting a major policy shift.(6)

The newly available documentary record reveals that despite some skepticism, Hanoi officials genuinely believed the accords were workable and clearly intended to implement them. However, they were concerned that their own supporters might endanger the accords by failing to abide by their terms, and they were aware of the threat represented by the machinations of France, the United States, and Saigon. While there was little Hanoi could do to change the mindset and disposition of its opponents, it could see to it that its own followers in the North and in the South did not become responsible for the collapse of the peace and the resumption of hostilities. With the eyes of the world on Indochina, the more that was done to respect the agreement, the greater the pressure on the other side to do the same.

In retrospect, it appears that the period immediately following the signing of the Geneva Accords may have been the most crucial in the broader context of the Vietnamese Revolution. After July 1954, Hanoi seemed to have seriously and genuinely believed that a resumption of hostilities was not a foregone conclusion and that the terms of the accords and their implementation would advance the interests of the Revolution and lead to its eventual triumph. By all indications the party leadership, fatigued by years of continuous warfare, opposed a prolongation of hostilities and endeavored to make the peace promised by the Geneva Accords work.

The volumes of this series will have a significant impact on our understanding of the period of the American military intervention in Indochina. With their release, Western scholars no longer have an excuse to ignore the policymaking process in Hanoi and the role that North
Vietnam played in the conflict.

NOTES

1. Certain volumes for the period before 1948 cover multiple years, including Vol. 1 (1924-1930), Vol. 6 (1936-1939), and Vol. 7 (1940-1945).


7. The Politburo issued the resolution at the conclusion of a meeting/conference held September 5–7, 1954. It is reproduced in “Nghi Quyet cua Bo chinh tri: Ve tinh hinh moi, nhiem vu moi va chinh sach moi cua Dang” in VKD: 1954, 283-315.
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“Spinning” the Casualties: Media Strategies During the Roosevelt Administration

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In the fall of 1944, questions concerning current and future American casualties and the duration of the war were generating a great deal of discussion within the Pentagon. Commencement of large-scale operations earlier that year in June, with the invasions of the Marianas in the Pacific and Normandy in France, had produced the long-expected “casualty surge.” This rapid increase in combat casualties turned out to be beyond what the U.S. Army anticipated and was so politically sensitive that the War Department changed how it reported Army losses not only through the civilian press, but to its own troops as well, principally through the Army publication Yank, which distributed up to 2.6 million copies weekly to soldiers and airmen starved for reading material.

This essay examines the casualty data the U.S. Army presented to its troops (plus any civilian willing to pay the price of a subscription); the methodologies it used to produce the inflation, then deflation, of cumulative casualty figures from June 1944 through the end of the war; and the Roosevelt administration’s effort to prepare the American public for steep increases in the draft during 1945. A secondary issue — but one of some significance in light of the recent controversy over the display of the Enola Gay — is that all this activity occurred within the public arena.

The claims of veterans that they remembered being told of massive casualty projections for the invasion of Japan were dismissed as a “largely fictitious, comforting story” by former National Air and Space Museum Director Martin Harwit and many in the academy when they defended the institution’s proposed Enola Gay exhibit script. However, Robert Newman, who was one of the few academics to defend veterans’ claims publicly, notes that while the xenophobia of some veterans groups can often distort judgment about foreign policies, in the Enola Gay context, “any account of this argument should acknowledge the basic accuracy of what veterans ‘knew.’” Indeed, servicemen had been regularly exposed to huge casualty figures in both Army and commercial newspapers since the middle of 1944, and the numbers moved from past tense to future tense early in 1945.

The War Department, through the Office of War Information or its own Bureau of Public Relations, seldom released cumulative casualty data during the first year and a half after Pearl Harbor, preferring instead to present such information at the conclusion of individual campaigns or operations such as those at Guadalcanal or in North Africa, the Gilbert Islands, and Aleutians. A fairly comprehensive account of casualties through the third week of June 1943 was published in mid-July and listed four principal loss categories — killed, wounded, missing, and prisoners — and their totals by theater of operation. Army casualties from all these categories totaled 63,958. That number included 12,506
Philippine Scouts, who were among the nearly 32,000 personnel lost when the islands fell. Navy, Coast Guard and Marine casualties in these four categories increased the total number by nearly a third to 90,860.(4)

Not included in the tally were other categories that were even then draining the U.S. Army of manpower. “Nonbattle” losses among troops in the field were omitted, as were losses from administrative attrition such as separations from the service due to age or infirmity. Most apparent to commanders overseas were the destructive effects on unit combat strength of nonbattle losses from disease and, to a lesser degree, the psychiatric breakdowns popularly known as “battle fatigue.” For example, the destruction of Merrill’s Marauders in Burma by disease and fatigue is recounted in a number of works,(5) and in New Guinea, the 32d Infantry Division attained a rate of 5,358 cases of malaria, dengue, and fevers of undetermined origin per 1,000 troops from October 1942 to February 1943.(6)

Naturally, the war’s other belligerents also lost great numbers of men from “noncombat” factors. The Germans in particular were painfully aware of the debilitating effects of disease on the successful prosecution of combat operations. Disease among German forces in North Africa regularly sapped a stunning 40 to 50 percent of their front-line strength in 1942 and 1943.(7) What would Afrika Corps commander Erwin Rommel have been able to do with a force twice the size of the one he had? U.S. forces in that theater later found that approximately nine of every ten admissions to field hospitals were not the result of combat.(8)

Excluding soldiers who recovered enough to return to duty, the U.S. Army would ultimately discharge from the service some 50,520 men for nonbattle injuries in combat zones (such as loading accidents), 312,354 for combat-related psychiatric breakdowns, and 862,356 soldiers for diseases contracted during the war.(9) There was little public interest in these numbers after the close of hostilities, and the mounting losses they represented went essentially unreported during the war except for a seven-month period in 1944, when they were released somewhat obliquely.

There were two very good reasons for never releasing figures for sickness among deployed troops. First, unlike the periodic accountings by the Army Medical Corps of personnel discharged in the United States because of ailments like heart defects or mental disabilities, these numbers came principally from the overseas theaters and thus would provide the enemy with a much fuller picture of the U.S. Army’s effective fighting strength. Just prior to the invasion of France, totals for wounded troops were omitted as well, undoubtedly for the same reason.(10) Second, the American public was understandably focused on the cost of combat operations. There was no crying demand for collateral information — no squeaking wheel.

The exclusion of figures for both the sick and wounded, however, created other problems, not the least of which was that smaller, more selective loss figures were reported to the public at a point in the war when, many Americans already believed, to varying degrees, that the United States was making less of a contribution to the war effort than its allies. This was a very sensitive subject, often raised by the media and the government itself. Discussing what the Roosevelt administration did to manage this perception, and what effects it had on everything from congressional elections to global war-planning with Great Britain and the Soviet Union is beyond the scope of this article. We can, however, examine how it affected what the public was told about the U.S. Army’s “losses.”
The last-released U.S. Army casualty figures before the 1944 casualty surge were published at the beginning of June and totaled 156,676 from the categories killed, missing, prisoners, and wounded through April of that year. (11) The Army publication *Yank*, which was published by Brigadier General Frederick H. Osborn’s Special Services Division of the Army Service Forces and had a circulation of millions, contrasted this number with the nearly 670,000 men lost by the British Empire,(12) and had earlier editorialized on the Soviet loss of some six million troops in battles against the Nazis. Other Special Services products such as Frank Capra’s *The Battle of Britain* (1943) and his Oscar-nominated *The Battle of Russia* (1943) reinforced this contrast. Moreover, stories of the huge sacrifices made by the United States’ allies were not limited to mass-distribution military publications and films, but were common in civilian newspapers, radio, newsreels, and feature-length Hollywood films as well.

As noted, the cumulative figures for wounded through April 1944 were dropped from casualty totals released just before the invasions of France and the Marianas. This should have resulted in an even greater disparity between U.S. and Allied casualty figures. However, the Army now established a policy to disseminate virtually the entire administrative flux and flow of manpower not periodically, but on a monthly basis through public relations channels to the press and through its own organs to its troops. By adding the categories “honorable discharges” and “other separations” to the totals for April 1944, released in late June, published Army losses almost immediately jumped from 156,000 to 1,163,000 even before the casualty surge began to show up in the figures.(13) For those who did not look too closely at how the number was constructed, the clear implication was that most or all of these losses were combat-related.

This new accounting method produced figures that seemed to be much more in tune with the combat losses of the British and Soviets and ostensibly demonstrated to the public and to allies and enemies alike that America’s commitment to the war was unequivocal and its resources were enormous. These figures also implied that America was already pulling its share of the load against the Axis.

Releasing the artificially large monthly totals, which lumped together losses through purely administrative matters with battle and nonbattle deaths, prisoners, and missing while still withholding figures for the sick and wounded, would also prove useful for the Roosevelt administration because doing so inadvertently provided a way to soften the potential blow to America’s war resolve when the sudden upsurge of major ground operations beginning in the summer of 1944 caused real casualties to skyrocket.

Through this month-by-month release of figures combining administrative separations with selected combat-related categories, soldiers, airmen, and the public at large became conditioned to seeing steadily growing million-plus loss figures months before it became apparent that American troops were now experiencing the frightening attrition of manpower that had been commonplace among the other antagonists for several years. For example, in August 1944, after the standard seventy-five days it took to collect, collate, vet, and publish the data, the War Department released an inflated “total Army losses” figure of 1,234,000 for December 7, 1941, through May 1944.(14) As noted earlier, however, it was department policy not to indicate how many of these were casualties directly related to combat. By this time combat-related casualties numbered no less than 194,000 men, and that figure did not include the appalling losses to sickness in the disease-ridden overseas theaters.(15)

The June 1944 reporting period, which covered the first three weeks in Normandy and two from Saipan, was added to the total made public in
September and was handled in the same manner as the other recent releases. The 1944–45 casualty surge had begun that month and was clearly visible in the marked jump in the number of “total losses” reported. That figure, still minus the sick and wounded, suddenly spurted well beyond the roughly one-and-a-quarter million mark to 1,279,000 in the space of just one month.(16) If the War Department had not taken certain measures, such as putting an almost complete halt to administrative separations, the figure released for the August 1944 reporting period would have soared to approximately 1,407,000.

The total-losses formula had certainly produced much larger numbers that were seemingly more in sync with the casualties suffered by the United States’ principal allies, but the problem now had to be considered from a different perspective. At what point did the numbers become too big and start to become a hindrance to the war effort? The Army was set to release the August figures in November, and one can only speculate as to whether or not there was now, after only six months of using the uniform new system, an apprehension that the upcoming tally would constitute a psychological crossroads for the American people. It was clear that attrition alone could push “total Army losses” past the million-and-a-half mark in the December release.

The American public, already uneasy over the lengthening name-by-name casualty lists appearing in nearly every hometown newspaper, would be sure to notice such huge figures. The release of loss figures in the million-and-a-half range would not only provide a long string of zeros guaranteed to command the attention of news writers and pundits but would also coincide with fresh combat along Germany’s western frontier and in the Philippines. Additionally, the release of these loss figures and the intensified fighting would occur at precisely the time the Army was formulating both the following year’s steep increase in draft quotas for the planned invasion of the Japanese Home Islands and the “points system,” which would allow some soldiers to be released after a specified amount of time in combat combined with length of service.

Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt were already contending with the political fallout from their decision to withdraw 110,000 men from college under the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) and transfer them and others from the Army Air Forces to the Army Ground Forces (AGF).(18) Later, during the uproar over the transfer of Army Service Forces and even more Air Forces personnel to the AGF, largely to compensate for severe losses among the infantry, an exasperated General Marshall wrote: “I think I heard from the mothers of most of these men who were taken from the other branches, and from every father whose son I was forced to take out of college.”(19) The artificially high casualty listings would serve only to aggravate a worsening situation.

Of course, the War Department had put itself onto this path the previous summer by releasing total-loss figures that included the full range of the Army’s administrative separations. But the department could minimize or delay this fast-approaching public relations bombshell, which was likely to explode at the worst possible time, immediately before Selective Service inductions were scheduled to be nearly doubled in preparation for the 1945 and 1946 invasions of Japan, by returning to some form of narrowed criteria for publicly released casualty figures.

The War Department did not publish figures in October. In November 1944 it publicly experimented with various formulas that distinguished casualties from total losses. One listed a narrow range of specific combat-related casualty categories — a complete reversal of the policy of
presenting total losses. This format restarted the base-line numbers at a far lower level and resulted in a figure of 384,395 “Army battle casualties” through October 6, 1944. The category “wounded” (208,392 men) was displayed for the first time since April, but those incapacitated by disease were still not included. [CHART]

Once reinstated, however, the listing of wounded could not easily be dropped. When the monthly total-losses figure was released two weeks later, it glaringly excluded wounded in action from the total of 1,357,000 through August 31, 1944.(20) Although the respective figures represented end points five weeks apart, the number of wounded was a subject of intense interest to soldiers and civilians alike and all could do the math. Adding wounded to the equation pushed total Army losses to far beyond one-and-a-half million.

The casualty surge had rendered the policy of releasing total losses politically unacceptable only seven months after it had been initiated. Yet the battle casualties formula was not completely satisfactory either, particularly in how it was presented. The War Department’s January 1945 release of figures, which stopped short of Germany’s December counterattack in the Ardennes, used the same formula as the revamped November listing and displayed a cumulative Army casualty figure of 483,957. The department also stated that “some 55,000 enlisted men from the Air Forces and 25,000 men from the Service Forces are being transferred to the Ground Forces” by the end of January.(21)

When figures next appeared in the February 2, 1945 edition of Yank, it was apparent that total losses listings had finally been completely abandoned, but the narrowly constructed Army battle casualty listing, which incorporated the first week of the German counteroffensive, had nevertheless climbed to a whopping 556,352 through December 21, 1944. Moreover, instead of continuing to list the numbers in easy-to-read column form, they were now buried within a lengthy paragraph that included Navy casualties, limited comparative analyses for weeks in mid-December, estimates of German losses for the same period, and a warning that “the number of returned sick and wounded is now so large that the Medical Department can no longer make it a policy to send patients to hospitals nearest their home towns.” Further down the column was also a reminder that the United States still had not experienced the grievous human cost incurred by its stalwart British ally. Under the headline “British Losses” was a breakdown by country of the 1,043,554 casualties within the British Empire. It stated that “the United Kingdom suffered most heavily with 635,107 military casualties,” a figure far larger than the U.S. total to date.(22)

Manipulating the way casualties were reported, however, could only go so far to mask the fact that roughly 65,000 young American men were now being killed, wounded, injured, or declared missing in combat theaters each and every month during the casualty surge, and that figure did not include the sick and psychological casualties. Postwar tabulations for November, December and January put losses at 72,000, 88,000, and 79,000.(23)

The Roosevelt Administration and military chain of command tried to soften the blow that these losses represented. Their efforts ranged from the nonsensical to the well-considered and straightforward.

European Theater commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower sent out a directive to use the term “reinforcement” for individual soldiers sent to units at the front instead of “replacement,”(24) which had a cannon-fodder ring to it. This order went essentially unnoticed and unenforced at lower command levels since a young rifleman sent forward from what was now called a reinforcement depot was nevertheless understood...
by all concerned to be a replacement for another soldier killed, sick, missing, or wounded.

General Marshall, however, took a very different tack. In a public address on December 9, 1944 at New York’s Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, shortly before Germany’s Ardennes counteroffensive and the announcement of increased Selective Service inductions, he stated that:

"we are daily confronted with the bitter human cost of this great struggle. We do not have the destroyed homes of England or daily casualties among our peaceful civil population as they do; but because of our expanding battlefront our military casualties are steadily increasing. . . . The great battles now in progress must be kept going, every front must be kept blazing until we break the Nazi control of the German Army and people. . . . [It is] far better to accept heavy casualties for a brief period than the much greater total which inevitably accumulates from the daily attrition of prolonged periods of inactivity on the battlefield."(25)

Passions ran high during the winter of 1944–45, and in a March 5 letter Marshall assured Congressman William E. Hess that “I, and others in responsible places in the War Department, are keenly sensitive to the daily casualties we are suffering.”(26) The next day, he wrote to General Eisenhower in Europe that there was “a terrific drive on against the use of 18-year-old men in combat which has been fulminated by a speech by Senator [Robert A.] Taft on the floor of the Senate.”(27) Although casualty information was made available to members of Congress by Marshall and Stimson in numerous closed sessions at both the Pentagon and on Capital Hill,(28) the Roosevelt administration felt that continued publication of the cumulative totals was inflammatory, and during its intense negotiations with Congress over the sensitive manpower issue the Army abruptly went from running monthly listings to running no listings at all.

The last U.S. casualty figures ever displayed in Yank were in its March 9, 1945 edition. The final published casualty figures through February 7 totaled 782,180, including 693,342 for the Army alone, and were displayed next to a tongue-in-cheek cartoon depicting a lone pup tent flanked by a campfire and swaying palm trees under a starry sky. From inside the tent in this idyllic scene comes a voice: “So I says to the captain, ‘Where are all these guys to send overseas?’ ”(29)

What was this cartoonist getting at? A soldier certainly wouldn’t know, if Yank was his sole source of information. The last time that publication had run anything on the draft was nearly a year before, when it printed comments from Selective Service Director Brigadier General Lewis B. Hershey and informed readers about the War Department’s announcement that the Army had reached its planned strength of 7,700,000.(30) Beyond the pages of Yank, however, the Roosevelt administration and commanders of both the Navy and Army were putting the publication’s future readers — young men who had yet to enter the armed services — as well as the rest of America on notice that the war was far from over and that additional sacrifices were necessary.

Months before public demand peaked in May 1945 for what was essentially a partial demobilization in the middle of the war through the “points system,” the Roosevelt administration and the Army struggled with how to juggle America’s dwindling reserves of eligible manpower. Secretary of War Henry Stimson continually pressed for better legislation to support manpower needs and stressed to Congress that “Selective Service calls are now confined almost entirely to combat replacements.”(31) Fortunately, a short-term personnel crisis caused by unexpected and extensive troop losses during Germany’s December counterattack in the Ardennes was solved, although less by the arrival
in Europe of Army replacements already in the pipeline than by the draconian culling of excess support personnel in the European Theater’s rear areas.

With the invasion of Japan less than a year away, Stimson hoped there might be some benefit to be derived from Hitler’s last throw of the dice. He believed the Battle of the Bulge would help soften congressional resistance to a variety of manpower proposals to tighten draft deferments on such groups as agricultural workers. He also wished to expand the categories of those to be inducted, although one proposal in particular made no headway: the Senate, with Harry S. Truman as its presiding officer, balked at a House bill to draft women nurses. On January 4, 1945, Stimson was pleased to write in his diary about “[t]he general excitement in Congress over the German attacks making it possible for us to get legislation which would give us more individuals from the draft.”

A telegram sent the day before from Selective Service Director Hershey to the state Selective Service directors got to the heart of the matter. Although Congress and the public were understandably focused on the Ardennes fighting, this January 3 message tied proposed or directed changes in various draft deferments to the long-term needs of the coming one-front fight against Japan rather than to a passing crisis precipitated by the German counteroffensive. In his message he quoted a letter from the director of the Office of War Mobilization, Truman’s future secretary of state, Jimmy Byrnes: “The Secretaries of War and Navy have advised me jointly that the calls from the Army and Navy to be met in the coming year will exhaust the eligibles in the 18 through 25 age group at an early date. The Army and Navy believe it is essential to the effective prosecution of the war to induct more men in this age group.”

The following week, on January 11, Secretary Stimson held a press conference to announce that the Army’s monthly Selective Service call-up, which had already been increased from 60,000 to 80,000 in January, was to be raised again in March to 100,000 per month. The total draft calls actually climbed to over 140,000 when the Navy and Marine calls were added. One week later, President Roosevelt, Army Chief of Staff Marshall, and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Ernest J. King sent letters outlining the military’s critical manpower needs to House Military Affairs Committee Chairman Andrew J. May. Those letters were released to the New York Times on January 17, 1945. The public was informed in front-page articles that “the Army must provide 600,000 replacements for overseas theaters before June 30, and, together with the Navy, will require a total of 900,000 inductions by June 30.”

In the winter and spring of 1945 the administration had thus moved from discussing official published cumulative casualty numbers in the past tense to discussing them in the future tense. Interestingly, briefings and motivational addresses held by the Army at such diverse locations as the U.S. First Army Headquarters in Weimar, Germany, B-29 training bases in the southwestern United States, and the Pentagon all utilized a uniform figure for expected casualties that was somewhat lower than the ones released to the New York Times — just 500,000. Frank McNaughton, an early Truman biographer who had worked on Truman’s Senate Investigating Committee, also noted that interservice politics of the day led to the Navy leaking casualty figures that were somewhat larger. Those figures showed up in some very public places.

Kyle Palmer, the Los Angeles Times’ long-time political editor, had traded in his editorial desk for a position as the paper’s war correspondent in the Pacific. Attached to the headquarters of Central Pacific Commander Admiral Chester A. Nimitz, he covered the first aircraft carrier
strikes against Japan and the costly U.S. invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa, then made a brief return to Los Angeles for a medical checkup. Before he shipped out again, Palmer hammered away at the need for additional manpower in both articles and appearances before civic groups. “It will take plenty of murderous combat before our soldiers, sailors and marines polish off the fanatical enemy,” he declared.(40) Under the headline “Palmer Warns No Easy Way Open to Beat Japs,” the Los Angeles Times quoted one of his speeches: “We are yet to meet the major portion of the ground forces of the Jap empire. They have 5,000,000 or 6,000,000 under arms and it will cost 500,000 to 750,000, perhaps 1,000,000 lives of American boys to end this war.”(41)

At this point it is worthwhile to mention again that veterans of World War II have been roundly dismissed when they claim to “remember” being told that the invasion of Japan might result in a half-million or even a million casualties. Although these men failed to take detailed notes for the benefit of future historians on where they had seen the numbers, they had in fact been regularly exposed to huge casualty figures in Army and commercial newspapers since the middle of 1944, as the imperatives of both politics and maintaining morale led the War Department to first inflate, then deflate, numbers of casualties through statistical manipulation.(42)

By early 1945, similar figures for the upcoming fighting in Japan were beginning to appear in daily newspapers, and although the Army stopped running casualty figures in Yank, the paper nevertheless quoted a series of unnamed “War Department strategists” and “military experts” who warned veteran troops and new draftees alike of prolonged fighting ahead. They repeatedly estimated a year and a half to two years as the minimum time it would take to “get it over unless there is a sudden collapse.”(43) This was not good news. Many years later an old soldier named Paul Fussell would need few words to sum up his feelings over the “sudden collapse,” which came unexpectedly in August 1945: “Thank God for the atom bomb.”(44)

1. Even before the advent of the casualty surge the U.S. Army struggled to keep combat units up to strength, and Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson was convinced that there was insufficient Army manpower available for the American field armies that would conduct the final drive into Nazi Germany. Events during the Germans’ Ardennes counteroffensive of December 1945 would prove him right. See Henry L. Stimson diary entries of May 10 and 16, 1944, in Larry I. Bland and Sharon Ritenour Stevens, eds., The Papers of George C. Marshall, 4 vols.to date, (Baltimore, 1996-), 4: “Aggressive and Determined Leadership,” June 1, 1943–December 31, 1944, 450-51 [hereafter Marshall Papers]. Also see Marshall’s “Memorandum for the President – Subject: Strength of the Army,” ibid., 556–60.
5. A useful synthesis of these works is found in The Medical Department: Medical Service in the War Against Japan by Mary Ellen Condon-Rall and Albert E. Cowdry, (Washington, DC, 1998), 302–11.
6. Ibid., 130-41.
7. Colonel Ronald F. Bellamy and Colonel Craig H. Liewellyn (Ret.), “Preventable Casualties: Rommel’s Flaw, Slim’s Edge,” Army, May
1990, 52–56.
8. Dr. Michael E. DeBakey (Colonel, ret.) and Captain Gilbert W. Beebe (ret.), *Battle Casualties: Incidence, Mortality and Logistic Considerations* (Springfield, IL, 1952), 14; see also 31.
10. The Allied deception campaign aimed at Nazi Germany, Operation Bodyguard — and specifically its component Fortitude South — was geared to creating the impression that the Allies had considerably larger forces massing in England than they in fact did. While it is true that the Allies were leading the German intelligence agencies around by the nose at this point in the war, they had to presume that the Abwehr and other agencies had some very smart number crunchers within their ranks. A detailed analysis of the casualty figures in conjunction with demographic information, shipping data, etc. might have severely complicated the invasion of France if it led the Germans to reassess the manpower actually available to the United States. See Anthony Cave Brown, *Bodyguard of Lies*, 2 vols. (New York, 1975), 1: 511; 2: 532-33, 549, 559-60, 691-92; Charles G. Cruickshank, *Deception in World War II* (New York, 1979), 87-88, 177-185. For a useful summary of deception operations during this period see Major James R. Koch, “Operation Fortitude; The Backbone of Deception,” *Military Review* 72 (March 1992), 66-77.
17. The finely tuned “points system” was structured in such a way that public demand for a return of troops after V-E Day might be satisfied but the Army would still retain a sizable core of veterans for the upcoming series of campaigns in Japan, which were expected to last at least through 1946.
20. “Army Casualties,” *Yank* 3 (November 17, 1944), 17; and “Army Losses,” ibid., (December 1, 1944), 17.
21. “Army Casualties” and “Transfers to AGF [Army Ground Forces],” *Yank* 3 (January 12, 1945), 17.
22. “Casualties,” *Yank* 3 (February 2, 1945), 17.
23. Army Battle Casualties, 6. This information was made available soon after the war, but other data, such as the loss by at least 7,000 families of two or more sons serving in the U.S. Army, was never released, even within the numerous comprehensive Army Medical Department analyses produced over the following twenty years. Apparently such data did not fit the criteria of the published works. The information on multiple deaths per family was outlined in a 1947 War Department memo to a member of President Truman’s White House staff. The memo was discovered in 1998 at the Harry S. Truman Library in Independence, Missouri. See D.M. Giangreco and Kathryn Moore, *Dear Harry . . . Truman's Mailroom, 1945-1953: The Truman Administration Through Correspondence with ‘Everyday Americans,’* (Mechanicsburg, PA, 1999), 100-102.
24. Robert R. Palmer, Bell I. Wiley, and William R. Keast, The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops, in United States Army in World War II (Washington, 1948), 230-31. Prior to publication, Dr. Arthur G. Volz wrote from Bammental, Ger.: “I clearly remember [the] introduction of the British term ‘reinforcement’ for ‘replacement’. I think it was a useless exercise — calling a dog a canine doesn’t change him one iota. People in the replacement stream in the ETO were well aware of what faced them. When I crossed the Channel with a replacement package in early September 1944 one of the lieutenants in another package aboard the ship was returning to the Continent for the second time, following his third wound. He didn’t have any illusions.”


27. Marshall Papers 5, 77. See also text to note 23.

28. For example, see Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, Seventy-Ninth Congress, First Session, on the Military Establishment Appropriations Bill for 1946, conducted 25 May 1945, (Washington, DC, 1945), 1-18. Marshall and Stimson testified separately before Congress. Both went off the record when they discussed this highly charged manpower question. Only many years later did references to what was discussed surface in other congressional testimony. In addition to his off-the-record testimony before the House Appropriations Committee in which he discussed, among other matters, the "inadvisability of war of attrition," Marshall testified before the House Military Affairs Committee and discussed "the terrific losses which we would sustain when we invaded Japan." See the transcript of Charles E. Bohlen's testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on March 2, 1953, in Charles E. Bohlen, Witness to History: 1929-1969 (New York, 1973), 317.


33. Diary entry, January 4, 1945, Diaries of Henry Lewis Stimson (microfilm edition reel 9), Henry Lewis Stimson Papers, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT, from microfilm at Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, Independence, MO.

34. Selective Service and Victory, 112.


36. Selective Service and Victory, 595.

37. New York Times, Jan. 18, 1945, "Roosevelt Urges Work-Or-Fight Bill to Back Offensives," p. 1; "Letters on the Pressing Manpower Problem," p. 13. [Note: the titles of the two New York Times articles were not added to the footnote until the deadline for publication had passed and are not included in the published article.]


40. “Palmer Warns Nips Set for Murderous Combat,” Los Angeles Times, May 8, 1945, sect. 2, p. 1. This article was published alongside
“New Casualty List Released,” which named 78 dead, missing and wounded from the Los Angeles area.
42. How did this much casualty data, readily available in the public record, escape becoming part of the debate during the Enola Gay affair or the earlier controversy over “atomic diplomacy”? Harwit displays a pronounced aversion to military historians (Exhibit Denied, 53) that is shared by many others in the academy. In addition, logistical/manpower analysis is complex and uninviting, (see Giangreco, “Letters to the Editor,” Journal of American History 84 [June 1997], 322-23). However, while these may be part of the answer to the question of why obvious military sources for what servicemen were learning about their own destinies were not consulted, other questions persist. For example, anyone studying the diary of Henry Stimson will note that he was not one to affix newspaper clippings to his typescript pages. Hence, the inclusion of a single newspaper clipping within Stimson’s heavily cited diary— the January 18, 1945, page-one New York Times article announcing that 900,000 replacements needed to be drafted within the next six months —should have attracted a great deal of attention. Inexplicably, no one has mentioned it.
The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1986 to support the training of American diplomats and promote understanding of U.S. foreign policy. In pursuit of the latter goal, and of particular interest to members of SHAFR, the association records and transcribes oral histories of former foreign affairs practitioners, facilitates publication of books on diplomacy, and produces exhibits.

**Oral Histories**

Historians will soon have a new research tool at their disposal. The ADST is working with the Library of Congress to make its Foreign Affairs Oral History Program’s collection of transcripts available free over the internet at the library’s American Memory website (www.loc.gov). The collection, which includes some fourteen hundred individual oral histories, will be on line by the end of 2004, and new interviews will be added as they are completed. The ADST has already issued a CD-ROM, *Frontline Diplomacy*, which contains the first nine hundred transcripts; it can be purchased from the ADST and is also available at a number of university libraries. The full collection, in the form of transcripts on paper, has been deposited at the Lauinger Library of Georgetown University and is open to the public.

The Library of Congress website will give researchers from around the world immediate access to the transcripts. Both the CD and the website have excellent search engines to facilitate exploration of the collection by keyword.

The following are examples of subjects that can be pursued through the ADST’s oral history collection.

**Franco-American Problems**

Oral history interviews have exposed aspects of the conduct of American diplomacy that are not available through official records. One theme that can be traced through several decades is the continuing "problem with the French." It is hardly news that American and French diplomats have frequently been at odds over various issues. A case in point was the conflict between the French and newly arrived American diplomats in postcolonial Africa. French authorities in the former colonies suspected that the Americans were trying to supplant them, and accounts of such suspicions are related in the transcripts.
"My closest collaborator on the European side was the Belgian ambassador. The Belgian ambassador always thought that the French were up to something. And so he would be always sharing information with me about the latest perfidy that the French were up to. There's no question that on economic issues and a lot of other issues that the French and the Americans, and the French and everybody else, were really in an adversarial sort of relationship. And it was at a time when the Senegalese were anxious to break away from their sort of complete dependence on the French economically. And so the French were always very concerned about what the Americans might be up to, or anybody else."

**Arab-Israeli Conflict**

The transcripts recount more than a half-century of efforts by American diplomats to bring peace between the Arab and Israeli peoples. Despite the skill and sacrifices of our Foreign Service officers and political appointees, the situation is worse than ever. Men and women Arabists speak frankly about their reasons for pursuing this particular area of concentration and answer the common charge that they are anti-Israel. The political pressures on Department of State personnel regarding support for Israel are spelled out in detail by those who have experienced them.

"The Israeli Foreign Ministry and the intelligence service keep a dossier on every substantive officer in the embassy. Pretty soon you're put in one of the categories that they classify in: friend of Israel, or not friend of Israel. And not friend of Israel means that you're not actively supporting them on everything that they consider to be important. I was asked many times when I was in Israel, “Well, whose side are you on?” (as the chief economic officer out there). I said, “I'm on the side of the United States of America. That's where my allegiances are. I'm neither pro-Israeli, nor anti-Israeli. I'm pro-American.” That is interpreted as being anti-Israeli. Everything you send back to Washington, no matter how classified, has a very strong chance of finding its way into the Israelis’ hands. If you write it, you'll be identified to the Israelis as the author of the piece. And if they don't like it, they go after you, and frequently are successful in having you out of there."
--Samuel F. Hart (economic counselor, Tel Aviv, 1977-1980)

**1990 Gulf War**

There are interesting perspectives on the 1990 Gulf War in interviews with the principal officers in Baghdad, Amman, Tel Aviv, Riyadh, Dhahran, and the Gulf States, as well as senior officers in Washington dealing with the Middle East. During the war the major problems for American diplomats were keeping the Saudis firmly committed to the alliance and keeping American technicians from leaving the oil fields. Meanwhile embassy personnel in Tel Aviv worked to keep the Israelis out of the battle.

The Oral History Program will eventually contain accounts for Gulf War II. The association has already interviewed several people involved in recent negotiations in Baghdad and Kabul, along with two Foreign Service officers who resigned over U.S. Iraq policy in 2003. In this context it should be noted that the collection is designed to reflect a variety of views of past and current foreign policy and is not merely a forum for dissent.
"Many things are possible as long as they're not in the public eye. Despite the fact that Saudi society has become even more conservative . . . the chaplain corps was more heavily represented in this war than in any previous one. But they were not identified as chaplains; they were called morale officers. Nevertheless, they ministered to the troops, on a sectarian or nondenominational basis, very effectively -- Catholic, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and I believe there may have been a Buddhist or two.
The other problem, of course, was the continuing tension over the role of female troops, which, of course, is largely logistical. That is, the women tend to be very heavily represented in the logistical functions--truck drivers, loadmasters, and this sort of thing. Essentially, the Saudis agreed to turn a blind eye to this, and when problems occurred were quite good about intervening with those who objected to this to ensure that a problem did not develop."--Chas F. Freeman Jr. (ambassador, Saudi Arabia, 1989-1992)

The Soviet Union and Berlin

There is a major archive of the experiences of officers who dealt with the Soviet Union from World War II to its dissolution, and the collection continues with the successor states. The art of the Kremlin watcher is explained by some of those who practiced it over the years, from 1945 to 1992. Officers who were stationed in Washington and Berlin document their management of the long Berlin crisis.

"This is the period, incidentally, when Kremlinology got its start. When people learned to figure out what was going on in Russia from these abstract signs that you got, bird droppings, so to speak, and one thing and another. I remember years later, Walter Stoeessel, on his first assignment to Moscow, had to cover the cultural world. And he got onto it. At that point I was back in Washington reading some of these materials. I was struck by the extent to which Walter had caught on to this technique. He could tell you about a performance of “Swan Lake” at the Bolshoi and draw from it the correct political conclusions about what was going on inside the Kremlin. To people who don't know the technique, it seems extremely weird, but it's a perfectly valid thing that worked for a while. It went beyond just looking to see who was on Lenin's Tomb on the First of May or November 7."
--JamesMcCagar (vice consul, Moscow, 1942)

Vietnam

The work of nation building has been the stock-in-trade of the Foreign Service since the end of World War II, although that part of its mission is seldom recognized. Those who served in South Vietnam, as well as Laos and Cambodia, recount their attempts to help shape those nations. Embassy personnel tell war stories. The duty officer in the embassy building recalls being under attack during the Tet Offensive. Another officer describes how, during the collapse of South Vietnam, he had to evacuate a consulate general, with all of its Vietnamese staff and their families, by river. Relations between senior military officers and the young officers attached to the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support program who reported on developments in the Vietnamese countryside were sometimes tense. Senior military officers did not want bad news relayed to the ambassador.
"We were trying to make things as plain as possible to Ellsworth Bunker -- what the situation was. He was getting a very limited point of view from the military and perhaps to a certain extent from the Agency. The Agency was trying to be honest in many ways but unfortunately they were under pressure from their powers-that-be back in Washington. I forget who was Agency Director at the time. George Jacobson, the mission coordinator and a retired Army colonel, and I would bring in some people to talk with the ambassador. We gave them false names for the ambassador's calendar or maybe didn't even put them on the calendar. Some of these were military officers like John Paul Vann who would come in under an assumed name because General Westmoreland would have hit the roof if he knew that Vann was talking privately with the ambassador. And the ambassador was appreciative of that. George [Jacobson] brought in his military contacts, and I brought in some of our provincial people. I think it helped to leaven the situation for the ambassador. We were all beginning to become very pessimistic as to how things were going to come out." --Gilbert H. Sheinbaum (political officer, South Vietnam 1964-1968)

**China and Taiwan**

The collection has broad coverage of diplomatic service in China from the 1920s to the present. Nancy Tucker of Georgetown University has assembled some of these oral history accounts into a book entitled *China Confidential*, which has been translated into Chinese. China watchers in Hong Kong recount their efforts to make sense of the erratic policies of Mao Tse-tung over the decades. Several people who accompanied Kissinger on his trip to China describe what they saw and heard, and embassy personnel stationed in Taiwan describe the distress that arose from the changing American relationship with the evolving democracy on that island. Liaison staff recount problems dealing with the Peoples’ Republic in the early years after offices were opened in the PRC.

"What we benefited from was a sort of first-hand, visual kind of feel, and having for the first time working level contacts with Chinese counterparts, which in Hong Kong you don't have. However, our lives were very circumscribed; the lives of all diplomats were circumscribed -- though technically we were not diplomats. We couldn't travel very much; Chinese officials were very withdrawn and circumspect about what they talked about. I was there from 1973 to 1975. I think the reporting we did was a contribution, but in many ways the reporting from Hong Kong was better. They had more people, they had files and they were getting bits and pieces of information from different parts of China -- people who left China, travelers, provincial radio broadcasts. So there were a number of things that they in Hong Kong saw in better perspective than we did sitting in the Liaison Office. I think what we did was a contribution but it didn't supplant the China watchers in Hong Kong."

--Herbert E. Horowitz, (economic counselor, Beijing, 1973-1975)

**Jonestown, Guyana**

American diplomats have been observers of many horrific events--wars, disasters, pogroms and plagues--but once in a while they find themselves unwilling participants in such events. One of the most terrible of these was the mass suicide of over nine hundred American citizens in the People’s Temple cult in Guyana. Congressman Leo Ryan of California flew to Jonestown to check on complaints that some cult members were being held there against their will. He found that to be the case and along with the embassy’s deputy chief of mission and
a group of newsmen went to the small airport near the temple to leave the area.

"[Members of the cult were on a] cart that was being towed by the tractor. They had various guns--shotguns, 22s, 306 and various other things, but no automatic weapons. And they began firing. The congressman was obviously a target. He and I ran around the front nose of the aircraft. The tractor which had the cart from which people were firing at us was between the airplane and the bush on the one side of the airstrip so those people who were closer to the bush could run off into the bush, while those of us at the airplane and in front of it didn't have much of a place to go. We decided to independently run across the tarmac to the protection of some houses and trees on the other side. About at that stage the NBC television tape ends with the murder of the cameraman. It was all filmed from the time the firing began. He was obviously a target. I got to the other side of the airplane and decided that there was just no way that I could possibly make it across another seventy-five yards of open territory and decided that I would play dead. As I was about to artistically fall to the ground, and indeed I must have almost been on the ground, somebody shot me. [In Indiana where I am from you only shoot birds on the fly you don't shoot them on the ground.] Somebody got me with a 22 long. As I later learned I wasn't badly hurt. It had entered my left thigh and lodged up near the spine--it is still there, it is more dangerous to take it out than leave it alone.

Anyway, I was on the ground there. Staccato firing continued for what seemed like a long time, but probably couldn't have been more than a couple of minutes. I had thought that the reason I didn't want to run across the tarmac or try to go any further was because I thought we were in a cross-fire between the big truck that was parked on the other side of the tarmac from the tractor. I had thought that we were being fired on from that truck. Later only one other person thought we had been fired on from that truck, so I don't know whether we were or not. Anyway, I was convinced we were and that I would never make it past that truck.

I lay on the ground and the firing stopped. I was trying to pretend that I was dead. I couldn't decide whether I would be more convincing playing dead with my eyes open or closed. Finally I decided that I at least would like to see those bastards. I heard feet on the loose stones of the dirt on the tarmac and a shotgun went off. More steps and the shotgun went off again. Ryan had obviously been hit more than once. I had seen those five or six feet from me curled around the wheel of the airplane landing gear apparently for protection. The shotgun continued for five shots including right next to me--Ryan. I was waiting for the next shot which never came. To this day I do not know why. I suspect that it was a five shot shotgun and the last one was used on Ryan.

The steps went away and I lay on the ground until finally I heard the vehicles drive away. There was no conversation, no shouts that I recall."--Richard A. Dwyer (deputy chief of mission, Guyana, 1978)

Pakistan and Bangladesh

In diplomacy, conflicts and tensions are not restricted to relations between countries. At times strong feelings develop within an embassy staff or between posts in a country. The classic example of such conflict is the ongoing tension between the U.S. consulate general in Jerusalem, which reports on developments in the West Bank and Gaza, and the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv. Another instance arose during the war
between East and West Pakistan, which resulted in the birth of Bangladesh in 1971.

"The March 23, 1971 invasion came just three and a half months before I left. The Pakistani Army was very brutal when it moved in. It made a large number of arrests and shot many students. The consul general--Archer Blood--in Dacca sent in a "protest" telegram--Dacca 231. This was an LOU [LIMITED OFFICIAL USE] or OUO [OFFICIAL USE ONLY] message signed by every member of the staff of the consulate general. Essentially, this message said that the U. S. has no major strategic interest in South Asia. Therefore, our national values should prevail--our concern for human rights and democratic freedoms. It urged U. S. condemnation of the Pakistani military crackdown and called for support of self-determination in East Pakistan.

When the message came in, I happened to be with Ambassador Farland. The message was sent to the Department of State in Washington, with a copy to the Embassy in Islamabad. Farland shrugged his shoulders and said, "Hmmm." Sid Sober [Deputy Chief of Mission, Islamabad], however, took a very different view. He was very upset. The next day a cable came back from the Department, reclassifying the Dacca cable from OUO or LOU to NODIS [No Distribution Outside the Department of State], which was the highest restriction. Arch Blood had classified the cable somewhat disingenuously. At the very end of the cable he said that he had not signed the cable, because he did not think that it would be appropriate for a consul general, but he added that he had the highest respect for the members of the staff, whose views he shared. In fact, the cable was distributed in about eighty-five or ninety copies and was sent all over Washington, which I assume was Arch's intention.

There followed a period of very, very bitter and bad feelings between our people assigned to East Pakistan, who were evacuated later, and our embassy people in West Pakistan. There were also tensions within the embassy. The Dacca staff felt that we were backing the Pakistani government in Islamabad in its repressive activities in East Pakistan, which wasn't really the case. The embassy didn't share those views, but understood that the Dacca staff would be much more agitated since some of its Pakistani friends had been arrested and killed. The crackdown happened very fast. It was made worse by the fact that when the consulate general staff in Dacca had to be evacuated, originally the intention was that our people would fly from Dacca to Bangkok on an American aircraft which the U.S. government would charter. At the last moment the Pakistani Foreign Ministry said that they didn't want the consulate general to be evacuated via Bangkok. They wanted them to fly out by way of Karachi on a Pakistani aircraft. We didn't argue with the Foreign Ministry; our concern was to get our people out of Dacca.

We weren't thinking about whether they flew on an American carrier or a Pakistani plane to Karachi. We really didn't consider that. However, our people in Dacca were furious. The Americans in East Pakistan were furious that they had to fly to Karachi, which was quite far [around fourteen hundred miles in the direct line]. They later said that, on the way to Dacca, the Pakistani airliner had ferried Pakistani troops that had come to butcher their friends. It was as if they were Jews leaving Eastern Europe on a train returning from the "gas chambers." When the people from the consulate general in Dacca arrived in Karachi, they were greeted by Sid Sober. There was a lot of tension and a bad scene ensued. The Dacca staff was very unhappy with the way they had been evacuated. They felt that the embassy had let them down and that we should have fought with the Pakistani government."

--Dennis Kux (political officer, Islamabad, 1969-1971)
Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus

Similar disagreements sometimes exist between American embassies in countries where feelings run high. Greece, Cyprus and Turkey are good examples. These disputes are not common, but they do exist. Sometimes these posts work well together and sometimes not, depending on the personalities in charge. The oral history transcripts bring diverse outlooks to life.

Disagreements between Foreign Service posts are not the only example of how policy and personalities play a role in the development of American foreign policy. Sometimes there are conflicts between the Department of State and another branch of the government, most often the Pentagon, and those are fought in the corridors of Washington.

"Kathimerini is the primary [newspaper in Greece] and the other Vima. Both were papers of very influential persons. We tried to influence them; but they were way above us. They were going to write it as they saw it and it was their view. Eleni Vlashos was particularly sound and represented the center right. Our problems were with individual newsmen who kept pestering us for details. The English-language paper, the Athens News, was very difficult. In one period back in 1963 they were getting inside interviews about Greece with the Pentagon back here in Washington, with top generals, American generals who didn't know when to shut up about our nuclear capacity in Greece. They were a bane in our side; we attempted to get the Pentagon to shut down those generals because it was causing a lot of trouble, but no success."
--Herbert Daniel Brewster (political counselor, Athens, 1961-1965)

Spanish Base Negotiations

Disagreements between the Departments of State and Defense often came about because of base negotiations. Several American bases were located in Spain before Spain joined NATO, and maintaining those bases was a diplomatic problem.

"I think, when our military had to examine what the Spaniards were demanding, they had to make the decision of which was more important--Torrejon or Moron. You could have Rota and Zaragoza, but you couldn't have Torrejon. Zaragoza was the only all weather bombing range we had in Europe. It was essential.

At that time we had not told the Spanish that we were prepared to go from Torrejon. Obviously blood, sweat and tears were being produced in Washington over getting the Pentagon to agree that's what they would probably have to do. I wasn't really involved in that. It was all done in Washington.

I was very fond of Bob McCloskey [the special base negotiator]. It never struck me as if he had a great grip on all of this, but I may be wrong on all of that. Obviously here in Washington when it came to the business of dealing with the Pentagon, it wasn't just Bob McCloskey who got involved. There was the Deputy Secretary, the Assistant Secretary of EUR, Political Military Bureau, etc. So it was then the weight of the
institution that was being brought to bear on the whole Pentagon. I don't doubt that they had quite a time to get the Pentagon to agree to this. But I always found these negotiations frustrating because again to try to get our government organized into action with somebody making a decision about something could be awfully painful.

We had not yet gotten to the point of telling the Spanish we were getting out of Torrejon, and when the time actually came to do it, I don't know what would have happened—whether we would have done so or not. If the Spanish had said that there would be no facilities agreement of any sort unless you do “this,” that was the price we were apparently prepared to pay. But in the final analysis at that time we did not have to make that agonizing decision. Indeed, it is the price we are prepared to pay today but in different circumstances because Spain is part of NATO. The Italians rallied around and gave us additional facilities and now you have the whole changed situation in Europe anyway.

But I think one of the most difficult things of all is that negotiations with foreign governments are difficult enough, but negotiations within one's own government are sometimes hopeless."

--Wells Stabler (ambassador, Madrid, 1975-1978)

**Personalities of American Diplomats**

For scholars whose interests lie in the workings of diplomacy on the personal level, the collection has many accounts of how American diplomats viewed each other and rated each other’s effectiveness.

"Tom Enders [Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs, Ambassador to Canada and Spain], he’s a dominant personality. He’s six feet seven or so. He has the Harvard, Yale, Groton, monied, New England, pedigreed type of background that Foreign Service people at that time were rumored to need. He was married to an Italian countess, Qaetana. He had money; he had position; he had brilliance; he had physical presence; and he had an enormous amount of arrogance. And those things, by and large, stand you in good stead in the Foreign Service.

Charlie Bray (Ambassador to Senegal, Director of the Foreign Service Institute) was of a different cut. Charlie Bray had a nice touch. Not that he wasn't smart, and to some degree, I wouldn't say that anybody in the group I've talked about is arrogance-free, but Charlie's arrogance was not so palpable and he camouflaged it pretty well. Charlie achieved his ends by persuasion, by humor, by other things which were total anathema. . . . I mean, they were just something Tom Enders would never consider. Tom Enders was dominant. Charlie was much more the other kind of person. I think Charlie went to Princeton, I'm not sure; so he certainly wasn't from the outback, but a different style.

What values did they have? The values of the people, I would say, were mixed. When we sat around and talked about why did you join the Foreign Service, you probably got about as many different answers then as you would today. One person said, "It was the best job I could get." Somebody else talked in romantic terms about, you know, travel and all that stuff. There were a few who talked about looking for a career that would afford excitement and perhaps a chance, once in a while, to do good, who were in the Foreign Service essentially because they thought a life of public service, in the best sense of the word, was something they had found rewarding. There were some who saw it as a
way station, maybe, to something else they wanted to do . . . 

I'm an overseas person. You know, people expect, particularly at the senior level, Foreign Service officers to have two different sets of skills, which in some cases are really mutually exclusive. On the one hand, when you're overseas, you're expected to behave toward the host government, the host country, the host people, as a diplomat, in which you are an interpreter, you are a compromise seeker, you are an honest broker, you are a message carrier. You're a lot of things that involve essentially being warm and fuzzy, keeping your intellectual ethics and integrity and your interpretive and analytical skills going all the time, but being of a personality type that you might call “B.”

In Washington, the successful bureaucratic infighter, the successful person who gets things done around Washington, is an entirely different type. You're expected to be an infighter, a nut cutter, a fast maneuverer, a sleight-of-hand artist, and all this stuff, particularly if you're in the State Department, because we frequently come to the battle poorly armed in terms of domestic constituencies and resources, et cetera, if it's a policy battle over, say, trade policy, or something like this. So, in order to get things done in Washington, you're really expected to have, if you're a successful bureaucratic operator, a totally different set of skills.

--Samuel Hart (ambassador, Ecuador, 1982-1985)

The Foreign Service and Social Change

As the collection grew, more time was spent in interviews on the background of American diplomats, career and non-career. Political appointees are now questioned about their work outside diplomacy, in politics, business, the media or academia. Foreign Service officers describe what they did before entering the service. After the 1950s relatively few came from what might be called the social elite, although they did well in school. Their schools were not confined to the Ivy League or the top schools on the West Coast. During the Cold War few of the men and women who reached senior rank in the Foreign Service had parents who graduated from college. This has changed, as a new generation has come to the fore and college degrees have become commonplace.

For those interested in gender studies or in minority representation, the collection has numerous accounts of the problems the Foreign Service had in coming to terms with changes in American society.

"Frances [Wilson, Executive Director of the Economic Bureau] had invited me to her office. We were all terrified of Frances, but she congratulated me on my engagement [to Peter Constable, another young FSO, later Ambassador to Zaire], and I was touched. My goodness, how nice. And then she said, "When do you plan to resign Miss Greer?" And I said, "I don't plan to resign." Now, I have to tell you, I was quaking inside. But I had heard about this "requirement", that female Foreign Service officers had to resign when they got married, no matter who they married, foreigner, American, Foreign Service officer, it didn't matter. You had to resign. She looked at me quite severely, I mean you did not say no to Frances Wilson. And no women had ever done this, in the history of the Foreign Service. I said, "You can't force me to resign. If you want me out of the Foreign Service, you have to fire me." Wow! She said, "Miss Greer, you are required to resign." And I said, "Show me the regulation. Show me the law. Where is it?" Well, there wasn't one. This came as a shock. I was quite prepared for her to pull out a book, and show me some regulation, and at that point I would fight it as far as I could. There was none. There was no regulation. It was
custom, plain old custom, buttressed by two practical limitations. One, you did not have to grant maternity leave to women in those days. So you had in effect to choose between family and work. And second, there was a restriction on the books about family members working together at the same post. So, again, you would have to choose, and if your spouse was sent to Mexico City, you couldn't go there, and the department would not lift a finger to help you out. They would probably just send you off to Burma. And in those days transportation was difficult. So this was not something you would do lightly. But we were in Washington, and I said, this makes no sense. I am not going to be a different person after I am married. Nothing is going to change. And I am going to continue to do this job. Well, she had a fit. "I'll have to go check on this." "Fine, you go check on this." I was very calm externally, but thinking, "Elinor, what have you done." I think even Peter was a little nervous about this. But we wanted the second income, and I liked what I was doing. And it just didn't make sense.

Maybe other oral histories will illuminate this. Allegedly the issue was taken to the secretary, then John Foster Dulles. Personally, I don't believe this, but it obviously went up fairly high. And the answer came back. "Well, okay, you don't have to resign. But you have to submit a letter of resignation without a date." So I did that. I suppose I could have refused to submit the letter. But one of the things about negotiating is you've got to recognize the deal. When you've got it, take it. We got married. We took a short honeymoon and I went back to work. And then, of course, we started our family right away, and there was no such thing as maternity leave, so at that point I did resign.

Now, just an interesting footnote. The following year, or later that year, another young woman joined the Foreign Service, Melissa Foelsch [Wells, ambassador to Mozambique]. She married but was not asked to resign. Years later, when I got to know her better, we were trading stories and she said, "You know, they never asked me to resign and that was amazing." She chose a different path, which was to have a child and do it on a combination of annual leave and a little bit of sick leave, and come right back to work. I wouldn't have had the physical stamina to do that. And then she and her husband, then a Foreign Service officer, took separate assignments. They eventually got divorced but they got back together again. But she never left the service, ever. It was interesting.

[When the Foreign Service changed its attitude towards married women, Elinor Constable returned to her career.]

--Elinor Constable (ambassador, Kenya, 1986)

The Historical Record

For the diplomatic historian, the paper record is going to be sparser and sparser as e-mail and the telephone have become the major means of communication between the State Department and its posts abroad and as travel between Washington and various hot spots becomes faster and easier. While oral history will not give the full or even the most accurate story, it does enable the historian to get inside the diplomatic process and to understand what these public servants do and have done.

"[During the October War of 1973] you worked continuously. You had people calling you from everywhere. In a fast moving situation, the telegrams only tell part of the story. And you can’t record telephones. That’s why if people say, “Well, what are you hiding?” Well, you’re not hiding anything, it’s just that you frankly are more concerned about doing your job and doing it right than the historical record.”

--Nicholas Veliotes (Deputy Chief of Mission, Tel Aviv, 1973-1975)
Volunteers Needed to Interview Foreign Affairs Specialists

The oral history program is constrained by a lack of travel funds and can use help in interviewing retired diplomats and others concerned with American foreign affairs who live beyond the Washington, DC area. Members of SHAFR would make ideal oral history interviewers. We can send interviewing guidelines and are available on the internet for consultation in preparing for an interview. This is an excellent opportunity for those who write about the diplomatic process to interact with those who have experienced it. Please contact stukenhedy@erols.com.

Book Program

In 1996, the ADST and DACOR (Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Retired) created the Diplomats and Diplomacy Book Series to increase public knowledge and appreciation of the involvement of American diplomats in the events of world history. By 2004 the series included twenty-two volumes published by a variety of university and other scholarly presses. Currently, six manuscripts are under review by publishers, and eight others are under consideration for the series. Margery Boichel Thompson, the ADST’s publishing director, coordinates the book series, acquires manuscripts, has them reviewed, advises authors, and negotiates with publishers. The association’s online book and CD-ROM store is at www.adst.org. All books published through 2002 are described and reviewed there. Most series books are by or about American diplomats. Many seek to demystify diplomacy by telling the story of those who have conducted our foreign relations. Two series books -- Herman J. Cohen’s *Intervening in Africa* (Macmillan/St. Martin’s 2000) and John Boykin’s biography of Philip Habib, *Cursed is the Peacemaker* (Applegate Press, 2002) -- won the American Academy of Diplomacy’s Douglas Dillon Award for Distinguished Writing on American Diplomacy. Books by Dennis Kux on U.S.–Pakistan relations and Robert Hopkins Miller on diplomacy in the Vietnam War received special citations from the academy. Among series bestsellers are Jane Loeffler’s *Architecture of Diplomacy* (Princeton Architectural Press, 1998) and Ulrich Straus’s *The Anguish of Surrender: Japanese P.O.W.s in World War II* (University of Washington Press, 2004).
December 2004 Newsletter

Phone Rage: LBJ, Averell Harriman, and G. Mennen Williams

Thomas J. Noer

Lyndon B. Johnson was not the first president to express his frustration with the in-fighting and bureaucratic politics of the State Department or to get upset about comments made by a foreign policy advisor or the press, nor would he be the last. But in two phone conversations on April 4, 1964, Johnson took on one of his own appointees, the press, and the entire State Department all at once and vented his rage against them in his typical bombastic, earthy style.

What provoked Johnson’s tirade were comments made by veteran diplomat Averell Harriman, whom he had just appointed ambassador at large with major responsibility for overseeing the United States’ African policy. Many in Washington saw the appointment of the cagey Harriman as a public demotion of Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs G. Mennen “Soapy” Williams. That was the interpretation that appeared in the newspapers immediately after Harriman’s comments, and it infuriated the president.

During his six terms as governor of Michigan (1948-1960), the flamboyant Williams had been the most outspoken advocate of racial equality in the Democratic party and had been a frequent critic of Johnson’s civil rights record. At the 1960 Democratic Convention he announced he would support any vice-presidential nominee “with the exception of Lyndon B. Johnson.” When Kennedy selected the majority leader as his running mate, Williams was outraged and tried to organize liberals for a floor fight. Unable to persuade any other delegate to join him, he vowed to vote against Johnson even if his was the only voice of dissent. Convention Chairman Sam Rayburn knew of Williams’s plans to speak publicly against the nomination and moved to have Johnson selected by acclamation, avoiding a roll call vote. When Rayburn called for a voice vote, Williams seized the microphone in the Michigan delegation and shouted “NO!” Rayburn ignored him and proclaimed the nomination unanimous. Williams was the only delegate to vote against Johnson.(1)

Based on his actions in Los Angeles in 1960, many in Washington assumed Williams would be one of the first of the New Frontiersmen to be pushed out of office, but to the surprise of many in the government and the press, Johnson retained the Michigan liberal. Ten days after he took office, the president phoned Williams and assured him that he would be “as welcome and as effective in the White House as you had been with Kennedy.” He dismissed Williams’s hostility to his nomination in 1960, claiming it would not jeopardize their relationship: “We’ve pulled down the curtain on Los Angeles that night. We’re a team.” He also encouraged Williams to suggest new civil rights initiatives, noting that he had “operated in Michigan so long,” he was “bound to know some things . . . that will be good in Mississippi,” and urged him to “get ideas on our Negro community,” since he “had more experience than any of us” on racial issues.(2)
Despite his reassurances, within five months of taking office Johnson had become disenchanted with the direction of American policy toward Africa and appointed Harriman to oversee Williams and the African Bureau. At the press conference announcing his appointment, Harriman made it clear that he was in charge of Africa and Williams would report directly to him rather than to Secretary of State Dean Rusk. He told reporters that Johnson wanted “a seventh-floor man” in control, not “a sixth-floor person” (the African Bureau was on the sixth floor of the State Department). The press immediately concluded that Williams had been demoted and attributed his reduced role to lingering friction over his public opposition to Johnson’s selection as vice-president.(3)

Johnson was outraged by both Harriman’s comments and the press reaction and took the opportunity to express his scorn for his new appointee, the press, and the entire State Department. He immediately phoned Press Secretary George Reedy and read him newspaper accounts of Harriman’s comments. He argued that Harriman had been “totally irresponsible” by trying to humiliate Williams and told Reedy that Williams “works hard and has my complete confidence. He and his wife have been as diligent and responsive as any two people in the government. I’m very fond of both of them.” Johnson then ordered Reedy to tell the press that Harriman’s appointment was not a reflection on Williams and had nothing to do with the 1960 convention. Reedy promised to “blow hell out of the story.”(4)

After finishing with Reedy, Johnson was still seething and immediately phoned Rusk. “Dean have you seen all this stuff Averell’s been spewing out about Mennen Williams?” Rusk responded that Harriman had “just got tangled up” and public relations officials in the department were working to counter the press coverage, but Johnson was not appeased and launched a tirade against Harriman and the State Department. He ordered Rusk to tell Harriman to call reporters and explain that there had been no demotion of Williams and to apologize personally to the head of the African Bureau. “Be God damn sure to make him walk the carpet or apologize or resign. I just think this is awful!” He told Rusk “if Harriman can’t get it straightened out, I can because I’ll have [a press conference] and I’ll damn sure make it clear. Tell him those fellows that sit around in their armchairs and mouth over in the State Department on background how Goddamned important they are ought to get out. I’m not pleased with Harriman’s griping around here all through this thing. Every since I took over he’s been mouthing about something and now he’s promoting himself.”(5) He added that he was “no intimate of Williams as you know, but I think it’s cruel and unfair and I don’t play that way. And I think you ought to tell Harriman that. If you don’t want to tell him, I will.” He then read Rusk a United Press story on Harriman’s comments that suggested some people in the State Department were happy to see Williams’s authority diminished. “All these damned officials over there talking instead of doing something,” he fumed. He then hung up on his secretary of state.(6)

The White House immediately tried to reassure the press that the Harriman appointment was not a demotion of Williams and had no relation to his actions in Los Angeles in 1960. Williams called Reedy to ask for a meeting with Johnson to talk about “the Harriman thing.” National Security Council staffers suggested the president personally announce Williams’s forthcoming trip to Africa to “please Soapy” and end “the gossip” about his reduced role. The White House quickly issued a press release praising Williams, confirming Johnson’s confidence in his ability, and hailing his upcoming trip to Africa.(7)

Despite Johnson’s public relations efforts, the damage had been done. The Harriman appointment began a gradual erosion of Williams’s
direct influence on diplomacy and foiled his attempts to make Africa a major priority in U.S. foreign policy. Although Williams would remain in office for two more years before resigning to run for the Senate from Michigan, he never regained the access to the president or the power to shape policy that he had enjoyed under Kennedy.

Notes:


2. White House Telephone Conversation, Lyndon Johnson and G. Mennen Williams, December 2, 1964, K6312.01, LBJL.

3. Telephone conversation, Lyndon Johnson and George Reedy, April 4, 1964, WH6404.05, LBJL.

4. Ibid. Williams’ wife, Nancy, had a close rapport with Lady Bird Johnson, as they both had daughters and met often to discuss wedding plans. Nancy Williams would later invite Mrs. Johnson to visit her summer home on Mackinac Island, and the Williams were frequent guests at dinners and receptions at the Johnson White House. See W. S. Woodfill to Nancy Williams, June 18, 1964, box 104, G. Mennen Williams papers, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan; Lady Bird Johnson to Nancy Williams, March 3, 1966, Social Files, box 2115 and Social Event Cards, LBJL.

5. Telephone conversation, Lyndon Johnson and Dean Rusk, April 4, 1964, WH6404.05, LBJL.

6. Ibid.
When history professors talk about student writing, we too often focus on shortfalls in understanding, lapses in logic, and humorous malapropisms. I myself have quoted to colleagues student papers that mention "Custard's Last Stand" or the "Dullest" U.S. foreign policy under President Eisenhower. More seriously, I have sometimes been profoundly disappointed by my students’ papers. On one occasion an otherwise good student proved ignorant of the facts and oblivious to the historical ironies involved when he wrote, in an analysis of Ho Chi Minh's 1945 "Declaration of Independence" for Vietnam, that naturally the United States supported the Vietnamese against the French in their quest for independence.

Too rarely, however, do we discuss or highlight the more sophisticated work of our students, and too rarely do we discuss what constitutes successful undergraduate work in U.S. foreign relations. Indeed, the editor of this newsletter for historians of American foreign relations has recently lamented the absence of submissions on issues of teaching in our field.(1) This essay seeks to contribute to a dialogue about teaching foreign relations by suggesting that a worthwhile culminating writing project is to have students analyze a historical issue or source in order to evaluate one or more historiographical perspectives. Perhaps especially in U.S. foreign relations, following and testing a few major themes that historians of various schools of thought have developed will be of great value to our students, who should be encouraged to see how particular "facts" fit into larger perspectives and why these larger perspectives matter. I hope that the sample student papers I include here, which were written in class for a final exam, can provide models both of how to design such assignments and of successful student work in which we as teachers can take pride.

I also want to draw attention here to a recent work in U.S. foreign relations that I believe is perfectly suited for classroom teaching: Nick Cullather's *Secret History: The CIA's Classified Account of its Operations in Guatemala, 1952-1954*, which was published by Stanford University Press in 1999. Both Cullather's subject matter and the highly unusual publication format of his book force students to consider interpretive issues in U.S. foreign relations, the availability of evidence from which historians can draw, and the relationship between past and present in U.S. foreign relations.

Every two years I teach a one-semester undergraduate survey course on U.S. foreign relations at Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania, a mid-sized regional state college, with a class capped at twenty-five students, most of whom are history majors. For the development of overviews of U.S. foreign policy that serve as themes for the course, I rely mainly on the essays included in the opening chapters of each

Williams argues, in this excerpt from his path-breaking and controversial 1959 book, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, that the U.S. goal of spreading liberalism and capitalism around the world--making the rest of the world more like us--has often had negative consequences for peoples abroad, resulting in their becoming enmeshed in an open-door American imperialism. Perkins, in an excerpt from his 1993 survey of early U.S. foreign relations that my students have found difficult, analyzes the origins and implications of an exceptionalist view among Americans--what he calls here "the unique American prism"--on the conduct of the nation's foreign policy. He seeks to explain U.S. conduct more than to celebrate or criticize it. Hunt, in an excerpt covering one major theme of his book, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (1987), places racist attitudes in American society at center stage in the formation of U.S. policy abroad as at home, thus adopting a critical stance, as does Williams, but one that is based on more self-evidently malevolent motives.

The narrative textbook for the course, Walter LaFeber's *The American Age: U.S. Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad, 1750 to the Present* (2nd edition, 1994), follows to an extent the intellectual path forged by Williams, LaFeber's mentor. But LaFeber develops in his text four overarching themes that students can be encouraged to analyze as the course unfolds: territorial and commercial expansion; the "steady centralization of power at home, especially in the executive branch of government after 1890"; "isolationism," by which LaFeber means what most of us would refer to as unilateralism; and American efforts abroad, especially after 1914, to preserve the international status quo. I might add here that in the past I wished that LaFeber would not use "isolationism" as a synonym for "unilateralism," but with George W. Bush’s doctrine of "preemptive war" the convergences between isolationism and unilateralism are more readily apparent.

These perspectives are challenging for my students, most of whom grew up in the very conservative region of south-central Pennsylvania. Therefore in the first week of class I also include an overview essay written from a perspective with which they are much more familiar and comfortable. Samuel Flagg Bemis's 1961 presidential address before the American Historical Association argues that the United States has played a decidedly benevolent role in spreading democracy and liberty throughout the world. Bemis's speech has the virtues of serving as a clear counterpoint to Williams, Hunt, and LaFeber and of providing a concrete example of the type of exceptionalist thinking about foreign policy that Perkins analyses. In its impassioned call to mix "history" and "current politics," the speech reflects Bemis’s belief that the history of the United States and its foreign policy wholeheartedly support the U.S. Cold War policies of his time. I suppose that Merrill and Paterson do not include Bemis's call to arms in their collection because his oh-so-dated perspective has little influence on professional historians today. However, as a means of engaging undergraduates in thought and debate about fundamental assumptions about U.S. foreign policy and about the connections between historical scholarship and current U.S. policy, the speech is quite helpful. Moreover, Williams and Bemis were writing at more or less the same time, and students can be encouraged to see how each view has stood the test of time. One may note here that while most professional historians are skeptical of the kind of exceptionalist rhetoric about history presented by so many politicians and media commentators during the mourning period for former President Ronald Reagan in June 2004--rhetoric that resurrected Bemis's perspective--undergraduates such as mine are very much influenced by it.
Throughout the course, I encourage students to use events, documents, and more specific case studies by these and other historians as opportunities to test the conflicting perspectives we had discussed. The better students come to enjoy the spark of recognition when they see how a war speech by a president, an article from a newspaper abroad, or a debate in the Senate can be used as evidence to support one or more of these perspectives. Students are performing more sophisticated intellectual work when they have to place events and opinions in a broader theoretical or historiographical framework.

It is in the context of these course goals and procedures that I assign Cullather's brief and clearly written book on U.S. involvement in the 1954 coup in Guatemala, *Secret History*. The CIA commissioned the study, as Cullather explains in his introduction, while he was working as a historian for the agency in 1992-93, during the brief heyday of the agency's openness policy. He notes that he had free access to hitherto blocked files, and that the plan was that this book, as well as others commissioned by the CIA on other covert operations, would eventually be published, along with "a significant portion" of the documentation on which it was based. (5)

Instead, the openness initiative soon lapsed, and outside pressure on the agency was able to secure publication in 1997 only of an edited, or redacted, version, together with "less than 1 percent" of the documents. In the introduction to *Secret History*, Cullather highlights the critique of the openness policy offered by historian George Herring, who served on the CIA's Historical Review Board. In frustration Herring calls the openness policy "a brilliant public relations snow job." Cullather also acknowledges that his study, which was designed as "a training manual, a cautionary tale for future covert operators," was by no means intended to be a full study of the CIA's role in the Guatemalan coup or a complete investigation of the agency's sources. (*Secret History* contains only 123 pages of text, plus an introduction, an impassioned afterword by historian Piero Gleijeses, and a few brief appendices.) Indeed, Cullather informs readers that the most "sensational disclosure" in his study is contained in a document on CIA plans to assassinate Guatemalan officials, a subject on which he touches only briefly in his text. (6)

In Cullather’s book students have access to a well-researched and historiographically informed secondary source that includes a primary source. His introduction and many of his footnotes help students understand not only the work of the CIA in the 1950s, but also the twists and turns of its policies in the 1990s, when the agency was being pressured to open its files. More strikingly, we have a book commissioned by an agency of the U.S. government, and now published by a major university press, that has sections of text expunged-- bringing to mind stereotypes of censored newspapers in political dictatorships. The redactions often erase merely a name of a CIA operative or contact, but at some points (for example on pages 64 and 70-71) enough material was deemed out of bounds to make a smooth reading of the narrative impossible. Sections of the timeline, and even the bibliography accompanying the narrative, have also been whited out. The effect is to make the reader wonder what he knows or does not know, based on access to documents, and whose interests are served by this continued secrecy. One need not be a postmodern literary scholar to understand that significant silences in a narrative can be just as jarring to a reader as a narrative of horrific events told in a conventional fashion.

Three specific examples of censorship may be noted--out of numerous possibilities--that should generate interest or even spirited discussion in class. On page 117, toward the end of the study, Cullather discusses how dissatisfied U.S. officials were with the Guatemalan president,
Carlos Castillo Armas, and the new reactionary government they had installed. “In Guatemala, US officials learned a lesson they would relearn in Vietnam, Iran, [...] and other countries: intervention usually produces “allies” that are stubborn, aid-hungry, and corrupt.” The blanked-out passage leaps out at the reader: in which additional country or countries did the United States intervene, the identity of which is so sensitive that it cannot be made public even after forty years? Was it the Philippines, Indonesia, Brazil, Greece, Chile, Congo/Zaire? Was there yet another major coup in which CIA intervention has not yet been firmly established, and about which the agency is making a last-ditch effort to forestall public knowledge? The very act of listing the possibilities that might fill in this blank contributes to the identification of a pattern in U.S. foreign policy and in turn, I suggest, helps students think through some of the major perspectives on U.S. foreign policy.

Much the same can be said of the two sections of the "Study of Assassination" in Appendix C. The chilling plans in the first section, which include instructions on how to maintain what we today call "plausible deniability," are not themselves heavily censored, but in the second section there is a memo listing specific people in Guatemala who may have been targets of assassination by the CIA or its associates. At that point, under the heading "Biographic data," Cullather notes tersely that "five pages follow, redacted in full."(7) Do the people of Guatemala not have the right to know, forty-five years after the fact, which of their leaders or prominent citizens were on a CIA hit list? Do American historians have the right to know? The impression of openness that the CIA’s commissioning of Cullather’s study created evaporates when one sees this insistence on continued secrecy. One of my students in the fall 2002 semester commented, with regard to this passage, that political assassination was precisely the type of behavior that led the United States to commit itself to ending Communism in East Europe. I might add that very few people reading this section today could fail to draw connections with the headlines in 2004 about torture and mistreatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraiib, in Afghanistan, and elsewhere, and about memos from Bush administration officials that seemed to open the door to such mistreatment.

Finally, in one of the more Kafkaesque passages in the published version of Secret History, Cullather's evidently brief discussion of the CIA's efforts in the 1950s to censor or cover up any hint of its involvement in the coup in Guatemala has itself been censored (page 119). This censorship serves as a graphic reminder of a point that Cullather develops through his book, and to which his title alludes on several levels: that U.S. involvement in the coup was secret, that the sources on which this book was based were hitherto secret, and that there are still elements of this history that top officials of the CIA believe must remain secret.

Naturally, Cullather opposed the redactions, and he is sometimes able in this edition to circumvent them, at least in part, by adding a footnote quoting similar information from public sources. Analyzing these efforts can also lead to fruitful class discussions.

With regard to the standard issues involved in historical evaluations of U.S. participation in the overthrow of the government of Jacobo Arbenz Guzman in Guatemala, Cullather has found confirmation in the CIA materials of the perspectives offered previously in greatest detail by Richard Immerman and Piero Gleijeses.(8) Thus he argues that Arbenz was a democrat, not a Communist, and that there were no substantive ties between him and the Soviets in 1952, when the CIA began to work towards his removal. Indeed, Cullather asserts that Arbenz took inspiration for his policies in Guatemala from Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and that the land reforms he proposed, so alarming to U.S. policymakers in the early 1950s, were not that different from U.S. reforms in postwar Japan. The repressive measures that began to be
apparent under Arbenz in Guatemala after 1952, according to Cullather, were reactions to real subversion organized by the CIA and its associates. Cullather details the outright lies that U.S. officials offered to the United Nations and to the press before and during the coup and describes the pressure that the United States placed on its right-wing allies in central America to participate in the violent overthrow of the elected Guatemalan government. In no way, according to Cullather, did the CIA’s actions boost democracy or liberty in Guatemala. In fact, the reverse was true.

Cullather’s central contention is that the CIA, like other major players in both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, ignored the local political and social conditions in Guatemala and inaccurately interpreted events in that nation as an indication of Soviet expansionism. In addition, he argues that U.S. policymakers wanted control over conditions in Guatemala in order to enhance global stability. However, Cullather discounts the idea that U.S. involvement in the coup was mainly a result of pressure from the United Fruit Company, concerned about its immediate economic interests. He argues instead that national security considerations, inaccurate though they may have been, held sway. But he very fairly presents some of the evidence that analysts such as Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer have used to build the case for a determining role for United Fruit.(9) My students have used Cullather’s own account to argue intelligently on either side of the issue.

As noted above, Cullather’s original intent was to help the CIA learn from its mistakes in Guatemala. He emphasizes that the coup very nearly failed because the invasion from the U.S.–armed rebels based in Honduras and El Salvador did not go as planned and the CIA’s propaganda and psychological warfare campaign did not, as was expected, lead to the collapse of the Arbenz government. He found that after the coup the CIA was surprisingly uninterested in discerning why the Guatemalan army turned against Arbenz, thus insuring the coup’s success, and he suggests that the later failure of the CIA-led invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs resulted in part from the agency’s indifference to a serious analysis of what worked and what did not in Guatemala. After briefly surveying the crimes committed by Castillo Armas and his successor dictators, along with the civil wars that have engulfed Guatemala, Cullather pointedly concludes that the United States failed even to create stability in Guatemala and that the agency should therefore be wary of covert operations that might ultimately negate its goals. The picture one gets from Cullather of the CIA in the 1950s is of a sloppy organization, not committed at all to rigorous analysis or self-analysis, let alone to the spread of democracy.

Re-reading Secret History in the summer of 2004, I am struck more than ever by the relevance of Cullather’s brief narrative to current events. I am writing these words on a day when the lead headline in the New York Times reads: "Senators Assail C.I.A. Judgments on Iraq's Arms as Deeply Flawed -- Panel Unanimous -- 'Group Think' Backed Prewar Assumptions, Report Concludes."10 I look forward to seeing how my students make the connection between the CIA then and now when we read Cullather’s book in the fall 2004 semester.

In class I asked my students to describe Cullather’s key themes, point out the most significant passages in his book, and explain what they felt its implications were for current U.S. foreign policy. The last time I taught the course, in the fall of 2002, I also informed them that the final exam would include a question in which they had to analyze Secret History in light of overall course themes and use the book to evaluate some of the major historiographical perspectives we had discussed. This assignment requires students to think on several different levels, or
in other words, using educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom's famous "taxonomy of educational objectives," to exhibit a hierarchy of thinking skills. Students exhibit "comprehension" when they present the salient points of Cullather's book. They show the more difficult "synthesis" when they have to interpret Cullather's ideas in light of a different theory or framework. And they demonstrate the most sophisticated intellectual skill, "evaluation," when they can use one set of data to argue for or against a certain hypothesis. (11)

My students did not get the specific questions on Cullather in advance of the exam, but they were encouraged to refer directly to their copy of Cullather's book while they were writing. They were given two choices, as can be seen below: one in which they used Cullather's book to "test" LaFeber's four major themes, and one in which they imagined how Williams and Bemis would react to Cullather's book. (One of Bemis's earliest books, by the way, published in 1943, focused on the U.S. and Latin America. (12)) This was the third section of a two-hour exam; I recommended that they leave forty-five minutes to address their question. I was not expecting a full term paper. Some lapses in organization and writing were inevitable, and I have made slight changes here to correct minor spelling and grammar errors.

Readers may judge for themselves how successful these essays were, and whether they justify my enthusiasm for Cullather's book and for this focus on evaluating contrasting historiographical perspectives. I will note that the three essays reproduced here were among six or seven of equally good quality, in my view.

Teresa Sillman graduated from Shippensburg in 2003 with a B.A. in history. She was a member of Phi Alpha Theta, the national history honor society, and was enrolled in Army ROTC. Soon after graduation she was called to active duty. Bryan Gosnell is scheduled to graduate in December 2004, with a B.S. in History and social studies education. Beth Diehl, who is among the most outstanding students I have worked with at Shippensburg, was also a member of Phi Alpha Theta. She graduated in 2003 with a B.S. in History and social studies education, and is now teaching at a local high school.

Endnotes:


2. The sixth edition of this two-volume collection of documents and essays has just been published by Houghton Mifflin, with a copyright date of 2005. There are slight changes in the overview essays in this latest edition, and the excerpt by Michael Hunt discussed in this article is not included.

3. LaFeber's text is, in my view, the only good, comprehensive, reasonably up-to-date, one-volume survey text on the subject of any historiographical perspective.


6. Cullather, *Secret History*, xiv-xv. One may note that the openness policy became more closed under the administration of President Bill Clinton.


11. For in-depth discussion of Bloom's ideas, see *The Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals*, Benjamin Bloom, ed. (New York, 1956), or *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, Lorin Anderson and David Krathwohl, eds. (New York, 2001). For briefer discussion with particular relevance to teaching history, see any social studies education textbook, such as Alan Singer, *Social Studies for Secondary Schools: Teaching to Learn, Learning to Teach* (Mahwah, NJ, 1997).