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State of the Art

“All the Right People”: The Historiography of the American Foreign Policy Establishment

PRISCILLA ROBERTS

In a recent article, Max Holland suggested that the field of what some have termed “Establishment studies” has entered a period of relative decline. Rather ironically his article, appearing in an issue of *The Wilson Quarterly* focusing specifically upon “The Rise and Fall of the American Establishment,” is one of a number of works which seem to prove that study of the American foreign policy Establishment has never been more intense, and probably never so scholarly, inquiring, and wideranging.¹

The idea that for many years there has existed in the twentieth-century United States a body of individuals committed to what are often loosely termed “internationalist” policies, men drawn largely from the leading financial and business institutions, law firms, Ivy League universities, major philanthropic foundations, and communications media of the East Coast, who take a particular interest in and have had a substantial impact upon the direction of American foreign affairs, dates back at least to the early 1960s.²

Initially study of the Establishment was left largely to journalists, many of whom viewed the institution with some admiration. The first to write of it was the distinguished American journalist Richard Rovere, who in 1961 published an article, conceived as something of a spoof, which provoked considerable controversy and served as the *fons et origo* of American Establishment studies.

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¹ Max Holland, “Citizen McCloy,” *The Wilson Quarterly*, 15 (Autumn 1991), 23. This issue also included John B. Judis, “Twilight of the Gods”; and a piece on “Background Books: The Rise and Fall of the American Establishment.” I am greatly indebted to Holland and to Dr. Michael Lacey of the Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, DC, for providing me with copies of this issue.

² Much of the material upon earlier historiography on the American foreign policy Establishment is drawn from an article of mine which appeared some years ago, “The American ‘Eastern Establishment’ and Foreign Affairs: A Challenge for Historians,” *The Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations Newsletter*, 14, No. 4 (1983), 9–28, and 15, No. 1 (1984), 8–19. See also “Background Books,” 56–57.

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Rovere attempted to define the American Establishment's membership and institutional framework, and to describe its personnel's predominant characteristics. Like virtually all subsequent journalists to comment on the Establishment, he regarded its foreign policy attitudes as central to any understanding of this group's aims and purposes, stressing that members, while permitted much latitude in their attitudes on domestic issues, were expected to adhere rather strictly to a particular orthodoxy on international affairs. "The Establishment," he wrote, "has always favored foreign aid. It is, in fact, a matter on which Establishment discipline may be invoked."³ In the early 1980s the New York journalists Leonard and Mark Silk likewise devoted much attention to the Establishment's foreign policy outlook and activities, opining: "In the United States, if The THING [William Cobbett, the nineteenth-century English pamphleteer, coined this nomenclature to describe the British ruling elite] is to be located in its purest form, then the Council on Foreign Relations is the place."⁴ Consciously or not, the Silks were echoing the conclusion of Theodore H. White, who in 1965 selected as the Establishment's central institution that same Council, which he felt "emphasize[d its] brooding concern for America's larger position in the world."⁵ Shortly afterwards, the respected columnist Joseph Kraft pointed out that, historically, "the main function [of the Establishment]... was to drive isolationism from the field, to make internationalism not only respectable but beyond serious question." Kraft went so far as to suggest that by the mid-1960s the general acceptance which American foreign policymaking circles accorded these principles had actually destroyed the Establishment's *raison d'être* and rendered it obsolete.⁶

Several important academic works also made some use of the concept of a foreign policy Establishment, as various scholars argued, sometimes only tangentially, that for much of the twentieth century a small group of men have dominated American foreign policymaking. In the late 1960s Ernest R. May suggested that since well before 1900 only a small number of Americans, the "influentials," "opinion leaders," "foreign policy establishment," or "public specially interested in foreign policy," have shown any deep interest in foreign affairs. He characterized these as upper class, wealthy, educated, and internationally experienced so far as travel in and connections with Europe went. Prominent among this foreign policy public, May claimed, were leading lawyers, bankers, industrialists, politicians, clergymen, educators, and editors; and, he argued, at the turn of the century, "to an even greater extent than has been observed in recent times, New Yorkers dominated the national foreign policy

³ Richard H. Rovere, "The American Establishment," in idem, *The American Establishment and other reports, opinions and speculations* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962), 233-49, quotation from 238. See also Rovere's later reassessment, "Postscript: A 1978 Commentary," *Wilson Quarterly*, 2 (Summer 1978), 180-82.

⁴ Leonard Silk and Mark Silk, *The American Establishment* (New York: Basic Books, 1980), esp. chs. 6-8, quotation from 184.

⁵ Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President 1964* (New York: Atheneum, 1965), 65-69, quotation from 68.

⁶ Joseph Kraft, *Profiles in Power: A Washington Insight* (New York: New American Library, 1966), esp. 187-92, quotation from 188.

establishment.” May suggested that throughout the twentieth century men of this type may have exercised a disproportionate influence upon the conduct of United States foreign policy, offering the general American public a choice between alternative policy options only on occasions when members of the inner circle have disagreed among themselves.⁷ Some years later Bernard C. Cohen also contended that official American foreign policymakers normally rather ignore the opinions of the general American public, whom in practice they attempt to “educate” to endorse their own views. By contrast, Cohen pointed out, certain prominent “notables,” “private men of public standing with prior experience in foreign affairs” gained from either governmental or international business work, do enjoy ready access to official policymakers and can often influence foreign policy decisions. Indeed, many government officials tend to regard such men as elder statesmen and will consult them of their own volition.⁸

Concentrating on a slightly earlier period, Robert A. Divine drew attention to the existence from around 1920 onwards of a body of committed “internationalists” who, he contended, constituted an extremely homogeneous group. Predominantly “old-stock Protestant Americans” and well-to-do Anglophiles, the great majority of them came from the East Coast. They were primarily interested in Europe,

believed that the United States had inherited England’s role as arbiter of world affairs, [and] showed little sympathy for the plight of colonial peoples. ... Bankers, lawyers, editors, professors and ministers predominated; there were few salesmen or clerks and no workmen in their ranks. The business community was represented by men who dealt in the world markets. ... Small manufacturers, real-estate brokers and insurance executives were conspicuously absent.

The most prominent of the organizations through which these individuals expressed their foreign policy views were, in Divine’s opinion, the League of Nations Association, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, the Foreign Policy Association, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. During the Second World War, most of them supported American aid to the Allies and in many cases American intervention; they were also keen advocates of United States participation in some form of postwar international organization. Divine suggested that these “internationalists” were insulated from “the man on the street,” and showed a marked inability to comprehend prevailing American public sentiment on foreign policy issues.⁹

⁷ Ernest R. May, *American Imperialism: A Speculative Essay* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), esp. 17–94, 198–230. Quotation from idem, “American Imperialism: A Reinterpretation,” *Perspectives in American History*, 1 (1967), 187. May’s portrait of the influentials should be compared with those in Kenneth P. Adler and David Bobrow, “Interest and Influence in Foreign Affairs,” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 20 (1956), 89–101; and James N. Rosenau, *National Leadership and Foreign Policy: A Case Study in the Mobilization of Public Support* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

⁸ Bernard C. Cohen, *The Public’s Impact on Foreign Policy* (Boston: Little Brown, 1973), esp. 84–88, quotation from 84.

⁹ Robert A. Divine, *Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in America During World War II* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), esp. 6–28, quotations from 22–23. On the interwar internationalists, see also Selig Adler, *The Isolationist Impulse: Its Twentieth-*

While Divine did not employ the specific term foreign policy Establishment, other American and British historians utilized the concept. The British scholar H. G. Nicholas believed that “in the critically formative years of 1947 to 1949 both Britain and the U.S.A. were fortunate in being able to command the services of an exceptional group of leaders. ... Deeply patriotic, their vision nonetheless transcended parochial nationalism and served the interests of a wider community, sometimes of the North Atlantic, often of a yet wider world.” The Americans among these leaders, he wrote:

came to bear the label of “the East Coast establishment,” a label accurately descriptive not so much of their origins, which were far more diverse and scattered than it implied, but of a certain community of outlook. Many had served wartime apprenticeships in Washington or the armed services which had given them firsthand experience of alliance politics. Most shared the experience of having battled against parochialism and isolationism at home. Most – though not all – had been Atlantic Firsters.¹⁰

In *A Thousand Days*, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., also spoke of the New York financial and legal community – that arsenal of talent which had so long furnished a steady supply of always orthodox and often able people to Democratic as well as Republican administrations. The community was the heart of the American Establishment. Its household deities were Henry L. Stimson and Elihu Root; its present leaders [in 1960], Robert A. Lovett and John J. McCloy; its front organizations, the Rockefeller, Ford and Carnegie foundations and the Council on Foreign Relations; its organs, the *New York Times* and *Foreign Affairs*. Its politics were predominantly Republican; but it possessed what its admirers saw as a commitment to public service and its critics as an appetite for power which impelled its members to serve Presidents of whatever political faith.

As a former aide to President John F. Kennedy, Schlesinger describe his boss’s efforts to reassure and work with this community, initially seriously disturbed by his own attacks upon French policies in Algeria and his father’s pre-World War II anti-interventionism.¹¹

II

On the whole, such studies took a relatively benign view of the Establishment and its influence. Critics of the Establishment’s role in foreign affairs existed, however, on both the left and right of the political spectrum. In fact, the extreme conservative Right had been the first to attack what they described as the “Eastern Establishment,” a term which seems to have originated in the internecine fights between the Republican party’s “internationalist” and

Century Reaction (New York: Free Press, 1957), 113–17, 119–28, 132–33, 138–39, 148–50, 177–96; idem, *The Uncertain Giant, 1921–1941: American Foreign Policy Between the Wars* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 23, 25–28, 33–42; Robert E. Osgood, *Ideals and Self-Interest in America’s Foreign Relations: The Great Transformation of the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1953), 322–23.

¹⁰ H. G. Nicholas, *The United States and Britain* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1975), 120–21.

¹¹ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 128–29, quotation from 128.

“isolationist” wings during and after World War II, encounters which culminated in the “big steal” of 1952, when General Dwight D. Eisenhower, championed by the internationalists, won the presidential nomination from Robert A. Taft, the isolationists’ white hope. Conservative Republicans of the Taft–Goldwater stamp claimed that from the mid-1930s until at least the early 1950s the “New York kingmakers,” liberal internationalist Republicans from the top financial, business, legal, and publishing circles of the East Coast, succeeded in foisting upon their party left- or liberal-leaning presidential candidates. Their motives, so those advancing this theory alleged, were to ensure continued administration support, whichever party won the election, for internationalist foreign policies such as intervention in World War II and postwar foreign aid.¹² Books such as *The Liberal Establishment*, *None Dare Call It Treason*, and more recently *The Establishment vs. the People*, echoed Senator Joseph McCarthy’s accusations that East Coast liberals, Republicans and Democrats alike, were guilty of elitism, prodigality, socialism, and short-sighted if not downright traitorous pro-Communism.¹³

From the mid-1950s onwards, the radical Left – reviving and updating traditional agrarian populist suspicions of East Coast bankers and businessmen – paradoxically echoed many of these changes, sharply criticizing both the Establishment’s social and economic power within the American polity and its foreign policy role. Even before the Vietnam War C. Wright Mills suggested that intimate links connect the highest industrial, political, and military decision-making circles of the United States; that both social and familial ties and common economic interests bind the rich throughout the nation; that their wealth is largely invested in the giant corporations; and that, since these corporations in large part control their country’s political and military institutions, the corporate rich therefore set United States political, social, and economic goals at home and abroad.¹⁴

¹² See, e.g., Nelson Sparks, *One Man – Wendell Willkie* (New York: Raynor Publishing Company, 1943); Phyllis Schlafly, *A Choice not an Echo* (Alton, IL: Pere Marquette Press, 1964). On the division within the Republican party between the “isolationists” and “internationalists,” a split which seems to coincide with that between those Republicans who opposed intervention before Pearl Harbor and favoured an “Asia First” policy after the war and those who were interventionists prior to Pearl Harbor and subsequently supported a “Europe First” policy, see Ronald J. Caridi, *The Korean War and American Politics: The Republican Party as a Case Study* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), esp. 19–20, 126–33.

¹³ M. Stanton Evans, *The Liberal Establishment* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1965); John A. Stormer, *None Dare Call It Treason* (Florissant, MO: Liberty Bell Press, 1964), esp. 200–27; Richard A. Viguerie, *The Establishment vs. the People: Is a New Populist Revolt on the Way?* (Chicago: Regnery Gateway Inc., 1983). Indeed, even today the Republican Right harbours grave reservations as to the conservative bona fides of the Trilateralist and Yale-educated Bonesman George Bush, who openly admits his preference for foreign over domestic issues and his fundamental admiration for the foreign policy Establishment’s achievements.

¹⁴ C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), esp. 274–75; also idem, “The Power Elite: Military, Economic, and Political,” in *Problems of Power in American Democracy*, ed. Arthur Kornhauser (Detroit: Wayne State

Throughout the 1950s, it was possible to regard such works as the efforts of a lunatic fringe, undeserving of serious consideration. American failure in the Vietnam War gave such criticisms of the Establishment's existence, aims, and achievements new credibility, and led many centrist Americans to regard it with a new scepticism and distrust; concurrently, many Americans also questioned the Establishment's foreign policy norms, especially the anti-Communist policy of containment. Two of the most penetrating works of these years by journalists, David Halberstam's *The Best and the Brightest*, and Godfrey Hodgson's *In Our Time*, reflected this newly critical outlook. Halberstam, a former supporter of containment and the Vietnam War whose views changed during several years reporting the war for the *New York Times*, wrote an impassioned, scathing, and bitter indictment of the Eastern Establishment and its foreign policy tradition. He placed much of the responsibility for American entanglement in Vietnam upon the misperceptions, false assumptions, and hubris of Establishment representatives within the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, advisers whom he argued had inherited a foreign policy tradition which led them to overestimate American invincibility and contemptuously ignore the American people's preferences.¹⁵ While understandably less bitter than his American counterpart, the British Hodgson concurred with him in largely blaming United States embroilment in Vietnam upon the Establishment and its foreign policy outlook. Hodgson also paid some attention to the Establishment's historical roots, tracing its influence upon official foreign policymaking back to at least World War II, when, he argued, there came together in government service "the internationally minded lawyers, bankers and executives of multinational corporations in New York, the government officials in Washington, and the academics, especially in Cambridge." At that time, he suggested, "The kernel of the bipartisan Establishment's *policy* [Hodgson's italics] was simple: to oppose isolationism," a drive which had, he argued, ultimately brought about American intervention in Vietnam.¹⁶

Richard J. Barnet's contemporary *Roots of War* likewise argued that there existed in the United States "a national security elite remarkable for its cohesiveness, consistency, and, above all, persistence. Nothing like it," he claimed, "existed before in the United States and, outside the area of foreign affairs, its equivalent cannot be found." He characterized this elite as a closely-knit aristocracy of talent, composed of men of great ability and high ideals, who inhabited a somewhat rarefied world which, though rich in high-level international contacts, failed to enhance their understanding of either their own country or ordinary people. To illustrate the manner in which such individuals dominated United States foreign affairs, Barnet pointed out that "between 1940

University Press, 1959), 145–72, 175–83; idem, "The Structure of Power in American Society," in *Power, Politics and People: The Collected Essays of C. Wright Mills*, ed. Irving Louis Horowitz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 23–38.

¹⁵ David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (New York: Random House, 1973).

¹⁶ Godfrey Hodgson, *In Our Time: America from World War II to Nixon* (London: Macmillan, 1977), esp. 111–33, quotations from 118 and 115. See also idem, "The Establishment," *Foreign Policy*, 9 (1972–73), 3–40.

and 1967...all the first- and second-level posts in a huge national security bureaucracy were held by fewer than four hundred individuals who rotate[d] through a variety of key posts.” The great majority of them were drawn from the leading corporate and financial institutions of New York and, to a lesser extent, Boston and Detroit. Besides holding public office, Barnet contended, as private citizens many of these individuals had the entrée to the highest circles of any administration and gave government officials much informal advice. Like Halberstam and Hodgson, he argued that upon these men’s shoulders rested much of the responsibility for American involvement in the Vietnam War.¹⁷

Another perceptive though somewhat neglected study of the early 1970s, John C. Donovan’s *The Cold Warriors*, was even more outspoken in tracing the roots of Vietnam back to the beginning of the Cold War, and firmly ascribing these developments to the virtual domination of the American national security apparatus since 1940 by “a small, closely knit group of civilian militants,” a “policy elite” of “in-and-outers” who “move easily and gracefully from private positions of power and influence to the command posts of the new militarism and then on again to prestigious offices in the higher circles of the established order.” Upon this group, moreover, he placed most of the responsibility for both the beginning of the Cold War, pointing to the manner in which leading members excluded dissenters, and also the inflated anti-Communist rhetoric designed to win support for Cold War policies, which would ultimately trap its initiators in hardline containment policies. In addition, Donovan pointed out the major weaknesses of this elite’s determination to depoliticize foreign policy by relying upon the tactic of bipartisanship, thereby often short-circuiting any serious discussion of alternatives to its chosen approach.¹⁸

Though clearly critical of many aspects of the Establishment, the works of Halberstam, Hodgson, Barnet and Donovan differ from those of the Radical Revisionist school of historiography, to which the intensification of the Vietnam War and American disillusionment therewith gave a gigantic boost. Heirs to Charles Beard and Mills, the Radical Revisionists tended to bring a far more monolithic approach to the study of American foreign relations, ascribing all developments solely to the rational pursuit of American economic interests. Their works stressed the influence within the American government of what some among them termed the “governing class” or “new mandarins”, whom they explicitly or implicitly regarded as representatives of American capitalism, intent on pursuing policies deliberately designed to further and maximize the interests of the American business system and the corporate institutions with which they

¹⁷ Richard J. Barnet, *Roots of War: The Men and Institutions Behind U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Atheneum, 1973), 48–75, 179–82, quotations from 48. Several other historians and social scientists have also commented from a rather more radical standpoint upon the extent to which a relatively small group of men from the great business institutions have dominated American foreign policymaking since World War II. See Mills, *The Power Elite*, esp. 274–75; G. William Domhoff, *Who Rules America?* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1967), 97–107; Gabriel Kolko, *The Roots of American Foreign Policy: An Analysis of Power and Purpose* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 16–26.

¹⁸ John C. Donovan, *The Cold Warriors: A Policy-Making Elite* (New York: D. C. Heath, 1974), quotations from 21.

were connected. Focusing upon the foreign policy role of the American financial and business elite and others whom they regarded as its ancillary agents, these studies fiercely criticized the diplomatic influence and activities of such people as immoral and undemocratic. This interpretation of United States foreign affairs was projected backwards at least to the beginning of the twentieth century, and in some cases even before the founding of the American Republic.¹⁹

III

By the late 1970s, therefore, the image of the foreign policy Establishment was at best decidedly shopsoiled; the dominance of its dogma of Atlanticism and anti-Soviet, anti-Communist containment had been shattered by Vietnam, but no single school of thought could attain sufficient strength to replace it; and, while Establishment figures still held foreign policy posts, increasingly they had to struggle for primacy with Georgians, Californians, and right-wing ideologues. As the memory of Vietnam receded into the distance, the most interesting period to date in Establishment studies began. It was to be characterized by a reappraisal of the virtues and weaknesses of the Establishment itself; by the appearance of many well-researched works on the financial and economic diplomacy of the interwar and postwar years, works which focused on the role of some of those often regarded as central Establishment figures; by a new emphasis upon the transnational diplomatic and economic role of elites during these periods, and the interplay of domestic and international factors in the making of diplomacy; by the appearance of thorough biographical studies of major players in the Establishment; and by a developing interest in the role of psychological and social considerations as causative factors in the evolution of individuals' and groups' positions on foreign policy issues.

The transformed climate of Establishment studies owed much to the fact that the whole configuration of international affairs had altered and is indeed still changing dramatically. The great Establishment figures themselves – W. Averell Harriman, McCloy, Lovett, Dean Acheson, George Ball, and Paul Nitze – are either dead or virtually retired. Moreover, for the past three or four years commentators have regularly proclaimed the demise of the Cold War, as Mikhail Gorbachev's policies in Russia brought the Soviet Empire's dissolution and the eclipse of the Soviet Communist Party. Plagued by deficits in international trade and payments, which have given rise to demands for protectionist policies, and

¹⁹ See, e.g., William Appleman Williams, *The Contours of American History* (Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Co., 1961); idem, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, 2nd revised and enlarged ed. (New York: Dell, 1972); Noam Chomsky, *American Power and the New Mandarins* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1964); G. William Domhoff, *Who Rules America?*; idem, *The Bohemian Grove and Other Retreats: A Study in Class Cohesiveness* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975); idem, *The Powers That Be: Process of Ruling Class Domination in America* (New York: Random House, 1979); Christopher Lasch, "The Foreign Policy Elite and the War in Vietnam," in idem, *The World of Nations: Reflections on American History, Politics and Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), 232–49; Lloyd C. Gardner, *A Covenant with Power: America and World Order from Wilson to Reagan* (London: Macmillan, 1984); Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War, 1945–1980*, 4th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980).

by massive budgetary imbalances, the United States economy, though still far stronger than any other, does not dominate the world as it did in the immediate postwar years. Thanks in part to Soviet weakness, but also because of these economic difficulties, American defense spending has already seen massive cuts, with more almost certain to come. Paul Kennedy's surprise bestseller, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, said little that Nixon and Kissinger had not already enunciated two decades before, but it clearly hit a raw nerve in the American public consciousness that, despite the Reagan administration's uncompromising nationalist rhetoric, the United States was effectively less powerful both militarily and economically than thirty or forty years earlier. Kennedy's work also prompted a debate among academics as to whether the United States was actually a power in decline, a debate in which the sophistication and moderation of Kennedy's assertions as to the nature and degree of America's international stature were sometimes lost.²⁰

In this changed atmosphere, the period when the American Establishment supposedly dominated the making of foreign policy began to acquire the retrospective lustre of a Periclean Golden Age, a time of achievement when disinterested and able public servants brought about victory in the Second World War and revived the economies of Western Europe. Moreover, the perceived prevailing anarchy characterizing the squabbling careerists of the United States foreign policy bureaucracy during the Carter and Reagan administrations brought a new appreciation of the merits of the old foreign policy Establishment, whose members swiftly came to appear models of selfless integrity. In the early 1980s, for example, Henry A. Kissinger lamented the Vietnam War's demoralization of what he described as “the American foreign policy Establishment... [t]he leadership group in America that had won the battle against isolationism in the 1940s and sustained a responsible American involvement in the world throughout the postwar period.” According to Kissinger, the Vietnam War persuaded this group “that the postwar American role of global leadership was itself deeply flawed,” so that “they lost their self-assurance and sense of direction.” The Establishment then “abandoned its preeminent task, which is to contribute balanced judgment, long-term perspective, and thoughtful analysis to the public discussion of our international responsibility.” In Kissinger's opinion, to this abdication could be traced many of the weaknesses, inconsistencies, and failures of American foreign policy during the 1970s.²¹

Such sentiments were shared by others in the foreign policy bureaucracy, some of whom undoubtedly regarded Kissinger himself as a regrettable exemplar of the defects embodied in contemporary American policymakers. In *Our Own Worst*

²⁰ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988). Two of Kennedy's strongest critics are Henry R. Nau, *The Myth of America's Decline: Leading the World Economy in the 1990s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); and Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990). See also Kennedy's review of several such works, “Fin-de-Siècle America,” *New York Review of Books*, 28 June 1990, 31–40.

²¹ Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little Brown, 1982), 86–87.

Enemy, three respected American policy analysts and former officials fondly recalled that vanished era, from approximately 1945 to 1965, when “the foreign policy center was owned by the Establishment, a relatively homogeneous group of bankers, lawyers, and Foreign Service officers, largely from the north-eastern part of the United States, largely pragmatic and centrist in beliefs” (18). The Establishment, they suggested, was fragmented internally by the Vietnam War, which destroyed both its foreign policy consensus and its public credibility. During the 1960s, they argued:

[P]ower pass[ed] almost imperceptibly from the old Eastern Establishment to a new Professional Elite, from bankers and lawyers who would take time off to help manage the affairs of government to full-time foreign policy experts, from an essentially homogeneous group of centrists and pragmatists to those with views that tended toward (and sometimes were at) the ideological extremes of American political thought, and from an essentially bipartisan or nonpartisan approach to a highly political one. ... This transformation in the 1960s and 1970s thus helped to unhook the United States from the mooring of more than two decades of policy. From about 1970 on, our foreign policy tumbled first in one direction and then in another as views polarized within the country and as groups within the new Professional Elite contended for power. The anchor provided by the old Establishment was gone, for good and all. (91)

Among the major weaknesses which Gelb, Destler and Lake believed had increasingly characterized American foreign policymaking since the mid-1960s were the growing politicization of foreign affairs by presidents, Congress, and ambitious “foreign policy professionals.” The archetypal figures of the old Establishment were men such as Lovett and McCloy, individuals with successful careers in banking or law, who entered government service sporadically in times of emergency and generally refused as many official positions as they accepted. The new breed of foreign policy professionals were, by contrast, exemplified by men such as Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski, academics who won reputations as experts in the arcane field of international relations, ambitious, feuding ideologues who clawed and scrambled for access to influential policymaking circles in government through such institutions as the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission. Consequently, by the late 1960s factionalism and ideological polarization had become endemic within the official American foreign policy apparatus, resulting, they contended, in a “systemic breakdown” (11) in the making of American foreign policy. This disarray in American policymaking was a new development, its effects the more deleterious because the United States no longer enjoyed “the cushion of military and economic preponderance that [it] had in the 1950s and 1960s” (15).²²

Another recent volume redolent of nostalgic appreciation of the virtues of the Establishment is *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made*, a study by two *Time* journalists which concentrates upon the Establishment during the period when its influence was at its height, “those few years after the Second World War when a small band of able and selfless men controlled foreign policy relatively immune from the politicians,” and in consequence American policies

²² I. M. Destler, Leslie H. Gelb and Anthony Lake, *Our Own Worst Enemy: The Unmaking of American Foreign Policy*, revised and updated ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984).

did not “erratically swing between extremes” (722). The book won a warm to rapturous reception as reviewers, academics, journalists, and policymakers, among them John Kenneth Galbraith, Kissinger, and George Ball, enthusiastically acclaimed its subjects’ integrity, dedication, and selflessness.²³ Isaacson and Thomas adopted a biographical approach, concentrating on the foreign policy views and activities of two bankers, Harriman and Lovett; two lawyers, Acheson and McCloy; and two Foreign Service officials, Charles E. Bohlen and George E. Kennan. *The Wise Men* was a major contribution to what its authors designated “Establishment studies,” a massive, well-researched, and immensely readable tome whose overall assessment of the Establishment’s policies and achievements was decidedly mellower than was usual in the 1960s and early 1970s. Like others, Isaacson and Thomas tended to blame American involvement in Vietnam and the earlier Korean War upon the proclivity of such Establishment representatives as Acheson to use globalist anti-Soviet and anti-Communist rhetoric to win support for such limited objectives as Western Europe’s economic revival. Such reservations notwithstanding, on the whole their view of the Establishment was positive, even complimentary. Their “six friends,” they believed, deserved the credit for saving the United States from relapsing into isolation after World War II, and for persuading Americans to revive Western Europe’s economies, establish the military alliance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and prevent Soviet domination of the entire European continent. These were the Establishment’s greatest achievements, at a time when, they suggested, although post-World War II Soviet expansionism was inevitable, there was a very real possibility that the United States would abandon Europe to its fate. Despite major omissions and flawed methodology, Isaacson and Thomas have produced the most ambitious work to date on the Establishment, one which does attempt to cover the whole sweep of its policies.²⁴

This volume was only one of many pertaining to the Establishment to appear recently.²⁵ As the archives are opened, Establishment members figure promi-

²³ See comments by Galbraith, Kissinger, and Ball on the dustjacket of the book’s hardcover edition; Ronald Steel, “Cohort of the American Century,” *New York Times Book Review*, 2 Nov. 1986, 3, 40; David S. Broder, “NATO: What Comes After America’s ‘Wise Men’?,” *International Herald Tribune*, 27–28 May 1989, 11. Some academic reviewers were far less appreciative of the subjects’ supposed merits; see, e.g., Douglas Little, “Crackpot Realists and Other Heroes: The Rise and Fall of the Postwar American Diplomatic Elite,” *Diplomatic History*, 13 (1989), 99–111.

²⁴ Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986).

²⁵ Recent years have seen the publication of biographical studies of Dean Rusk and such lesser-known but by no means insignificant Establishment men as Grenville Clark and Lewis W. Douglas, while works on McCloy, Acheson, and Harriman are in the pipeline. Most of these volumes made some reference to their subjects’ status within the Establishment, though without sustained analysis of the concept. The flood of memoirs and autobiographies also continues unabated; while Acheson and Harriman had their say many years ago, only in the past two or three years did Nitze and Rusk take the plunge. Nitze’s arms control efforts have been the subject of a separate major study, and two volumes by J. Garry Clifford concentrated upon Clark’s efforts to revitalize American defenses before each world war. Thomas J. Schoenebaum, *Waging Peace and*

nently in the pages of the ever increasing flood of monographs, far too numerous even to list here, on multifarious aspects of post-World War II diplomatic history. Where attention from scholars and publishers is concerned, never has the Establishment been better served. Moreover, while many such works may have only a tangential claim to be enlisted under the ambiguous rubric of Establishment studies, increasingly journalists, historians, and political scientists are consciously trying to use, define, and clarify the concept of the foreign policy Establishment. Recent works which fall into this category include new studies of the Council on Foreign Relations, and of Stimson, McCloy, and Ball.

If there be one institution which above all others the radical Right and radical Left unite in loving to hate, it must be the Council on Foreign Relations; rarely can an abstruse and erudite think tank have provoked such dedicated and vitriolic abuse.²⁶ Robert D. Schulzinger's *The Wise Men of Foreign Affairs* consciously tried to present a more balanced picture of the Council on Foreign Relations' activities and influence, and to assess the Council's activities and impact. The book gave a thorough if rather pedestrian survey of the Council's study groups, meetings, and publications, from its origins in 1920 to the present day, furnishing much interesting information on the Council's relationships with the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, the Committee on the Present Danger, and the American government. If this study had a theme, it was that of Council members' distrust of the democratic process in foreign policy, their belief that the management of foreign affairs should be left to a corps of apolitical "serene and well-informed experts" (30, 33, 109–10). Schulzinger concluded: "The Council is not nor has it been the primary planning apparatus of American foreign policy, as some of its critics have charged and some of its founders hoped. It has been, however, the reflector of the attitudes of powerful individuals." He thought it likely "that the Council will continue to be the repository of conventional, respectable opinion on foreign affairs" (253). Missing from this somewhat episodic work was any real attempt to explore many of the most interesting questions connected with the Council; in particular, a systematic analysis of its

War: Dean Rusk in the Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson Years (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988); Gerald T. Dunne, *Grenville Clark: Public Citizen* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1986); Robert Paul Browder and Thomas C. Smith, *Independent: A Biography of Lewis W. Douglas* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986); Paul H. Nitze, with Ann M. Smith and Steven L. Rearden, *From Hiroshima to Glasnost: At the Centre of Decision – A Memoir* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1989); Dean Rusk, *As I Saw It* (New York: Viking, 1991); Strobe Talbott, *The Master of the Game: Paul Nitze and the Nuclear Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988); John Garry Clifford, *The Citizen Soldiers: The Plattsburg Training Camp Movement, 1913–1920* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1972); idem and Samuel R. Spencer, Jr., *The First Peacetime Draft* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986).

²⁶ The radical leftwing view of the Council on Foreign Relations is given at length in Lawrence H. Shoup and William Minter, *Imperial Brain Trust: The Council on Foreign Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977); cf. Holly Sklar, ed., *Trilateralism: The Trilateral Commission and Elite Planning for World Government* (Boston: Shankman, 1980). A representative example of works arguing the rightwing view is Dan Smoot, *The Invisible Government* (Dallas: Dan Smoot Report, 1962).

membership, and a much more substantial discussion of its antecedents, origins, purpose and influence and its relationship to the foreign policy elite or Establishment would have added valuable breadth. Such reservations notwithstanding, this was undoubtedly by far the best study of the Council to date.²⁷

Other scholars have been more enterprising in attempting to tackle such issues. As mentioned above, in the 1970s the British journalist Godfrey Hodgson produced an important article on the American Establishment, and also made substantial use of the concept in his history of the postwar United States. He has now written a major biography of Stimson, a man often perceived as the Establishment's key figure the mentor of Lovett, McCloy, Harvey Bundy and his sons William P. and McGeorge Bundy. Hodgson's earlier work on the Establishment was decidedly critical in its approach. Consonant with the new appreciation of the Establishment's merits, however, his latest book is admiring, even affectionate, towards its subject. Hodgson is not blind to Stimson's flaws: his implicit racism, his poor judgment of politicians and generals in both Nicaragua and later, as Secretary of State, in Europe in the early 1930s; the ultimate failures of his Nicaraguan and Philippine policies. Even so, to Hodgson Stimson is the most prescient of statesmen, “the American Churchill” whose “finest hour” was his lonely battle, throughout most of the 1930s and 1940, to alert Americans to the dangers posed by the rise of Hitler and persuade the country to rearm in preparation; and whose final achievement was the assumption by the United States of the role of world leader. “[H]e was one of the great guardians of the Republic, one of those to whom Plato said the fullest honor should be given because he preserved us from our enemies” (390). Among his accomplishments was the attraction of disciples, men awed by his conspicuous integrity and determined to deserve the chance to work for him. It was the group of such epigones, Lovett, Harvey Bundy, and McCloy, gathered around him in the War Department in the 1940s, who would form the core of the foreign policy Establishment, and play a major role in the formulation of postwar strategy and the creation of the national security bureaucracy that became the institutional framework of the United States' new world role. “[T]he grand strategy of the Truman administration, left almost untouched under Eisenhower and reinforced under Kennedy, *was* the Establishment's policy” (385). Its members believed that it was “the destiny of the United States to succeed Britain as the military and economic guarantor and moral leader of the world” (386). They “[took] on the burdens of world power with a show of reluctance that concealed a certain avidity,” and “found it highly satisfying” (387). In doing so, they were fulfilling aspirations for which Stimson had been one of the chief spokesmen.²⁸

One of Stimson's most prominent followers was John J. McCloy, later to become American High Commissioner in Germany. McCloy typified a certain kind of self-made man not uncommon in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century United States who, while undoubtedly ambitious for the material rewards

²⁷ Robert D. Schulzinger, *The Wise Men of Foreign Affairs: The History of the Council on Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

²⁸ Godfrey Hodgson, *The Colonel: The Life and Wars of Henry Stimson 1867–1950* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990). I am greatly indebted to Mr. Hodgson for giving me a copy of this book when it proved impossible to obtain one in England.

of success, ultimately wished to accomplish more than mere moneymaking, and found the opportunity to do so in public service. Already the subject of major articles by Alan Brinkley and Max Holland, he is now the focus of a major study by Thomas A. Schwartz concentrating upon his years in Germany, but also discussing his Establishment role at some length.²⁹ It is probably fair to describe McCloy as the inheritor, not the formulator, of a foreign policy tradition which he himself traced back to Root, Stimson's partner, surrogate father, and predecessor in both the State and War departments, whose portrait hung in the Secretary of War's office. All three authors adopt a relatively even-handed attitude towards both McCloy and the Establishment. For Schwartz, "McCloy represented the best and worst of the values and beliefs of a generation of American foreign policy leaders," sharing "the historical experience, ideological perspective, and strong sense of American mission that characterized these men" (x), but also "tend[ing] to take the moderate and centrist approach to questions, both when it was right and when it was desperately wrong" (8). Brinkley, too, while admitting that the "establishment tradition" of which McCloy was one of "the last representatives" suffered from "ideological rigidity, the too easy assumption that corporate interests and public interests are identical, [and] the too frequent willingness to use dubious means to achieve righteous ends," also suggested that "at its best...it brought a stability and continuity to American policy that present leaders might envy. It has placed decision-making in the hands of men who trusted one another, worked comfortably together, and believed that there was such a thing as a true national interest" (46).³⁰

If there was one central Establishment achievement, it was perhaps the economic and military reintegration of Germany into Western Europe after World War II, an effort which followed the prescriptions worked out in Stimson's War Department in 1944, in opposition to the Morgenthau Plan which envisaged the "pastoralization" of Germany. Schwartz's study is not simply an account of McCloy's role in this enterprise but an excellently researched account of the evolution of American and Allied policy towards Germany in these crucial years. As American High Commissioner McCloy was the consummate diplomat, on occasion exerting pressure on both Allies and Germans to make concessions on various key economic and military issues. To a large degree he acted as

²⁹ Holland, "Citizen McCloy"; Alan Brinkley, "Minister Without Portfolio," *Harper's* (February 1983), 32–46; Thomas Alan Schwartz, *America's Germany: John J. McCloy and the Federal Republic of Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991).

³⁰ Reviewing Hodgson's biography of Stimson, Brinkley likewise commented: "Stimson's bequest [to the next generation of the foreign policy elite] included a certitude about the righteousness of American ideals and their suitability for other nations; a conviction that diplomacy must be insulated from popular and legislative whims (and hence from democracy); and a social and cultural elitism – born of his own rarefied station – that survived in foreign policy circles long after it had been repudiated by the rest of American society. But Stimson also brought to public life a personal integrity, a lack of self-interest and of hypocrisy, and a commitment to the ideal of public service that compensated for many of the shortcomings of his social and political vision." Brinkley, "The Good Old Days," *The New York Review of Books*, 17 Jan. 1991, 30.

midwife not simply to the creation of NATO and Germany’s military rehabilitation in Europe, but also at the birth of the European Economic Community, the brainchild of his old friend and associate Jean Monnet. Schwartz demonstrates that, though Europe’s economic integration was not a project of American origin, once proposed it did win enthusiastic support from American officials, who saw the European Coal and Steel Community as a means of tying France and Germany so closely together as to make future conflict impossible, and whose support for it helped to break Franco-German deadlocks on details.

If Germany was a shining Establishment success story, Vietnam was undoubtedly its greatest failure, and the genesis of that war looms high in any assessment of the Establishment’s accomplishments. While most Establishment figures seem, however reluctantly, to have acquiesced in the growing United States involvement in that country, regarding it as a test of American credibility and resolve, there were exceptions.³¹ Within the Johnson administration, by far the most prominent dissenter was George Ball, the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, who from 1964 to 1966 privately though unavailingly opposed the escalation of the American commitment to Vietnam. David L. Dileo’s new study of Ball’s dissent is an illuminating exploration of the motivation of a man who, he argues, since the death of McCloy “is... widely understood to be the senior paragon” in the foreign policy Establishment. Dileo contends that, as a midwesterner who retained some of that region’s “decidedly progressive and liberal sensibility” (8), a graduate of Northwestern University rather than one of the more prestigious Ivy League institutions, Ball was already somewhat atypical among the Establishment, and predisposed to buck its consensus. A deeply convinced Atlanticist, who had supported American intervention in World War II, the Marshall Plan, and the creation of NATO, he felt that the United States’ real interests lay in Europe, with which he had a strong sense of American cultural kinship. An old-fashioned free-trade liberal and fervent believer in economic integration, “he believed that the United States would gain little ground in achieving the transcendent goals of an improved international trading structure and a more soberly defined balance of forces among the industrial powers by waging an ambiguous political war in Indochina” (211). Moreover, though by no means a military expert, he suspected the war was probably unwinnable, and in any case he considered American involvement there immoral and contrary to basic American ideals. Dileo’s volume is an unsentimental and realistic portrait of Ball, which stresses the fact that, while idealistic considerations may have played a part, as with his friend Walter Lippmann the fundamental reason for Ball’s dissent from the commitment of American troops to Vietnam was that he believed it a blunder rather than a crime, a criminal diversion of attention from the infinitely more important Atlantic alliance.³²

³¹ The Anglophile Lewis Douglas, McCloy’s brother-in-law and a former Ambassador to Great Britain, by then retired and living in Arizona, was one; the journalist Walter Lippmann, whose writings on foreign affairs from World War I onwards encapsulated much Establishment dogma, another. Browder and Smith, 396–99; Ronald Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* (Boston: Little Brown, 1980), 577–84.

³² David L. Dileo, *George Ball, Vietnam, and the Rethinking of Containment* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 211.

IV

The new scholarly emphasis on the role of the American foreign policy elite in the shaping of American diplomacy, and the readiness to give serious consideration to the possibility that this elite has a distinct foreign policy tradition, provide the opportunity for some extremely stimulating work. American Establishmentarians' overseas ties certainly deserve more extensive and systematic study than has been the case to date. It has often been claimed, not without some justification, that too many American diplomatic historians tend to study their country's conduct of foreign affairs in isolation, blithely regardless of the potential interactions or influence of developments elsewhere.³³ If there was an outward push from the Establishment, can there, one wonders, have been a pull from other countries?³⁴ It is encouraging, therefore, that Schulzinger, Hodgson, Schwartz, and Dileo all specifically draw attention to the manner in which their subjects belonged to a transnational, Atlanticist elite, bound, at least in part, by common economic interests, which, most suggest, came into being during World War I or the interwar period.³⁵ Charles Maier has suggested that the first half of this century saw the creation of "a new transnational political elite" or "international political class," who formed a larger "Atlantic culture." Moreover, Maier has drawn attention to some of the similarities between the two

³³ See, e.g., Sally Marks, "The World According to Washington," *Diplomatic History*, 11 (1987), 265–82; Christopher Thorne, "After the Europeans: American Designs for the Remaking of Southeast Asia," *ibid.*, 12 (1988), 201–08; *idem*, "Diplomatic History: Some Further Reflections," *ibid.*, 14 (1990), 602–05; Robert J. McMahon, "The Study of American Foreign Relations: National History or International History?," *ibid.*, 554–64; Michael H. Hunt, "Internationalizing U.S. Diplomatic History," *ibid.*, 15 (1991), 1–12.

³⁴ Bradford Perkins, D. Cameron Watt, and Michael Fry have all drawn attention to the manner in which certain British statesman and politicians, notably the liberal imperialists who had once surrounded Lord Milner and later congregated at Cliveden, and others who included Lord Salisbury, Joseph Chamberlain, Sir Edward Grey, and Arthur Balfour, encouraged the United States to take a greater role in world affairs, and hoped for an Anglo-American alliance. According to Lord Bullock, in the post-World War II years the "worst" fear of Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, was of "a settlement between the USA and the USSR which Britain would be left to accept and the consequent withdrawal of American interest from Europe and the Mediterranean." Bradford Perkins, *The Great Rapprochement: Britain and the United States, 1898–1914* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 51–53, 65–67, 84–86; D. C. Watt, *Succeeding John Bull: America in Britain's Place 1900–1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 24–163; *idem*, *Personalities and Policies: Studies in the Formulation of British Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century* (London: Longmans, 1965), 19–52; Michael G. Fry, *Illusions of Security: North Atlantic Diplomacy 1918–22* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1972); Priscilla Roberts, "The American 'Eastern Establishment' and World War I: The Emergence of a Foreign Policy Tradition" (Ph.D. diss., Cambridge University, 1981), 223–29, 385–89, 406–15, 501–09; Alan Bullock, *Ernest Bevin: Foreign Secretary* (New York: Norton, 1983), 239.

³⁵ Schulzinger, *Wise Men of Foreign Affairs*, 3–6; Hodgson, 172–75; Schwartz, 6–7, 302–03; Dileo, 24–28.

postwar eras, and the solutions which were proposed to deal with Europe's political and economic problems.³⁶ Studies of the Marshall Plan and American recovery policy after World War II by Michael Hogan, Anthony Carew, William Burr, and Melvyn Leffler discuss at some length the role of cooperative American and European elites in European recovery; Hogan also traces the antecedents of such cooperation and the Marshall Plan itself back to at least the interwar period, while Lloyd E. Ambrosius suggests that immediately after World War I prominent Republicans advanced schemes for the guarantee of French security which anticipated the original design of NATO.³⁷

By now numerous excellent works dealing with American economic diplomacy between the wars have appeared, illuminating the extent to which Americans, many of whom can plausibly be considered members of the Establishment, were in fact involved in Europe's interwar economic recovery, and supported United States participation in European naval disarmament negotiations and cooperation with the League of Nations.³⁸ Several of these studies employ the concept of

³⁶ Charles Maier, “The Making of ‘Pax Americana,’” unpublished paper presented at a Diplomatic History Workshop, Harvard University, October 1988, cited in Schwartz, 392 n. 13; cf. idem, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany, and Italy in the Decade after World War I* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); idem, “The Two Postwar Eras and the Conditions for Stability in Twentieth Century Western Europe,” *American Historical Review*, 86 (1981), 327–52.

³⁷ Michael J. Hogan, *The Marshall Plan: America, Britain, and the Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1947–1952* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); also idem, “Revival and Reform: America's Twentieth-Century Search for a New Economic Order Abroad,” *Diplomatic History*, 8 (1984), 287–310; Anthony Carew, *Labour under the Marshall Plan: The politics of productivity and the marketing of management science* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987); William Burr, “Marshall Planners and the Politics of Empire: The United States and French Financial Policy, 1948,” *Diplomatic History*, 15 (1991), 495–522; Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); Lloyd E. Ambrosius, “Wilson, the Republicans, and French Security after World War I,” *Journal of American History*, 59 (1972), 341–52.

³⁸ See Peter H. Buckingham, *International Normalcy: The Open Door Peace with the Former Central Powers, 1921–29* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1983); Warren I. Cohen, *Empire Without Tears: America's Foreign Relations, 1921–1933* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987); Frank C. Costigliola, *Awkward Dominion: American Political, Economic, and Cultural Relations with Europe, 1919–1933* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984); Michael J. Hogan, *Informal Entente: The Private Structure of Cooperation in Anglo-American Diplomacy, 1918–1928* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1977); Bruce Kent, *The Spoils of War: The Politics, Economics, and Diplomacy of Reparations, 1918–1932* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); Melvyn P. Leffler, *The Elusive Quest: America's Pursuit of European Stability and French Security, 1919–1933* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979); Walter A. McDougall, *France's Rhineland Diplomacy, 1914–1924: The Last Bid for a Balance of Power in Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); William C. McNeil, *American Money and the Weimar Republic: Economics and Politics on the Eve of the Great Depression* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986); Stephen A. Schuker, *The End of French Predominance in Europe: The Financial Crisis of 1924 and the Adoption of the Dawes Plan* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1976); Dan P. Silverman, *Reconstructing Europe after the Great War*

“corporatism,” essentially an attempt to trace some connection between the domestic organization of the American polity, particularly the growing power of the economic interests concentrated in the corporations and the emergence in every sphere of large bureaucracies and a mass society, and the international expansiveness of the United States.³⁹

The close ties between many Establishment figures and the great United States and international corporations, either directly as executives or indirectly as international lawyers, have led some to ascribe their foreign policy outlook directly to their determination to promote the best interests of their own companies or American business in general.⁴⁰ The most ambitious attempt to date to extend this approach to American international relations is Kees van der Pijl’s stimulating study, *The Making of an Atlantic Ruling Class*. Van der Pijl regards the period from American intervention in 1917 to the oil crisis of 1974–75 as “an era of American hegemony and Atlantic integration,” whose “dominant feature... was the supranational framework in which bourgeois class rule was organized and legitimized: Atlantic, European, or various combinations of the two.” Conflicts between state monopolists and liberal internationalists were, he argues, resolved by resort to the strategy of corporate liberalism, a “synthesis between the original laissez-faire liberalism of the liberal-internationalist fraction... and the state intervention elicited by the requirements of large-scale industry and organized labour” (xiv). Van der Pijl’s excellently researched study

(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982); Robert Hardin Van Meter, Jr., “The United States and European Recovery, 1918–1923: A Study of Public Policy and Private Finance” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1971); Joan Hoff Wilson, *American Business and Foreign Policy, 1920–1933* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1971). The literature on the 1920s is reviewed more fully in Jon Jacobson, “Is There a New International History of the 1920s?,” *American Historical Review*, **88** (1983), 617–45; and Brian McKercher, “Reaching for the Brass Ring: The Recent Historiography of Interwar America Foreign Relations,” *Diplomatic History*, **15** (1991), 565–98.

³⁹ The literature on corporatism, and the studies which attempt to explore the concept or which employ it in their analysis of United States domestic and diplomatic history, is extensive and growing. For discussions, see Thomas J. McCormick, “Drift or Mastery? A Corporatist Synthesis for American Diplomatic History,” *Reviews in American History*, **10** (December 1982), 318–30; John L. Gaddis, “The Corporatist Synthesis: A Skeptical View,” *Diplomatic History*, **10** (1986), 357–62; Michael J. Hogan, “Corporatism: A Positive Appraisal,” *ibid.*, **10** (1986), 363–72; *idem*, “Corporatism,” *Journal of American History*, **77** (1990), 153–60.

⁴⁰ Many of the studies cited in the two previous notes, and also the works by the Radical Revisionists cited earlier in this essay, regard Establishment figures as essentially concerned with safeguarding and promoting the American capitalist system. The close connections which many such men have with big business interests has not unnaturally led a number of scholars to adopt this interpretation. Dileo, for example, while not following this approach, gives an excellent description of Ball’s ties to various multinational corporations, and of his belief that, as he wrote in a 1967 *Fortune* article, there are “few things more hopeful for the future than the growing determination of American business to regard national boundaries as no longer fixing the horizons of their corporate activity.” Dileo, 23–27, 208–10, quotation from 209.

contains a wealth of information on Atlanticist tendencies in both the United States and Europe from the late nineteenth century until the 1970s; whatever the specific merits of his approach, it is undoubtedly the most comprehensive work to date on the entire Atlanticist phenomenon. Since most Establishment figures were above all else Atlanticists, no student of the Establishment should ignore van der Pijl’s study.⁴¹

V

The recent scholarly concentration on interwar economic diplomacy, and the emphasis in Establishment studies on the Cold War and thereafter, has perhaps obscured the fact that central to the policy elite’s world view has been the obligation to give military assistance to Great Britain in the event of a major European war. It has long been known that in the late 1940s leading Establishment figures such as Acheson, Lovett and Nitze were intimately concerned in the genesis and drafting of NSC-68, the influential planning paper which envisaged the devotion of up to 20 per cent of the American Gross National Product to military spending.⁴² Again, in late 1950 Establishment men, among them Tracy S. Voorhees, a former Under Secretary of the Army, Robert P. Patterson, and Will Clayton, with backing from Lovett, Acheson, and McCloy, formed the Committee on the Present Danger, a pressure group whose purpose was to lobby for massive increases in American defense spending. Throughout the 1950s the CPD would continue to press this cause, playing a major role in the Gaither Report of the late 1950s, which pressed for renewed surges in defense spending to counteract the Soviet development of Sputnik.⁴³ This deep Establishment interest in and involvement with American defense policies was nothing novel, but can be traced back to the turn of the century, when as Secretary of War Elihu Root, Stimson’s mentor, undertook a major reorganization of the army and laid down the lines of American policy in the new colonial possessions. From the beginning the American army was the repository of such colonial policies as the United States possessed, and intimate links existed between the War and Navy Departments and supporters of American expansionism.

The corporate liberal approach tends to regard the actors involved as rational economic beings, who followed courses and adopted strategies carefully designed to maximize their own – usually capitalist – interests. Yet Leffler, one of the foremost advocates of the corporatist paradigm for dealing with American diplomacy during the 1920s, recently confessed that he “did not see how the corporatist model could explain” many “matters central to the study of international diplomacy in the post-World War II era,” among which he includes “threat perception, arms expenditures, military assistance, force deployments,

⁴¹ Kees van der Pijl, *The Making of an Atlantic Ruling Class* (London: Verso, 1984).

⁴² Isaacson and Thomas, *Wise Men*, 480–504; Donovan, *Cold Warriors*, 86–103; Samuel F. Wells, “Sounding the Tocsin: NSC-68 and the Soviet Threat,” *International Security*, 3 (1968), 116–58; Jerry W. Sanders, *Peddlers of Crisis: The Committee on the Present Danger and the Politics of Containment* (Boston: South End Press, 1983), 23–50.

⁴³ Sanders, 51–129.

nuclear strategy, military alliances, political commitments to other nations, and relationships with client states in the Third World.” Instead, he preferred to adopt what he termed “the national security approach.”⁴⁴ In an impressive new synthesis of Cold War scholarship, he emphasizes the pre-eminent role of national security and strategic concerns in the thinking of American policymakers, and their determination immediately after World War II “to perpetuate their nation’s preponderant position in the international system.” Leffler draws attention to the extent to which even before 1945 both military officers and “their civilian superiors” in the War and Navy Departments, among them Stimson, McCloy, James V. Forrestal, William H. Draper, Patterson, Howard C. Petersen, and Kenneth W. Royall, together with “proconsuls abroad,” envisaged and supported postwar United States military expansion. During the late 1940s American officials, while believing that the Soviet Union was too economically weak to pose a major threat to Western Europe, also feared the latter area’s postwar devastation might lead to the political, social, and economic collapse of Western Europe, so that ultimately the Eurasian land mass would be lost to the United States. Should another war occur this would in turn, they believed, deny these economically productive areas to the United States, while greatly enhancing the prospective enemy’s warmaking potential. Though they “did not seek a rift with the Kremlin,” American military and civilian planners, “uncertain of Soviet motives and apprehensive about the formation of closed blocs, ...sought to establish a postwar order that comported with America’s values, fostered its interests, and safeguarded its security” (55). Ultimately, these aims led them to support economic aid to Western Europe, in the form of the Marshall Plan, the rehabilitation of Germany and revival of Japan, the retention of the American nuclear monopoly for as long as possible, and an enhancement of existing United States overseas bases. Increasingly, these aims demanded higher defense budgets, a process which would lead to drafting of NSC-68 and the American assumption of “commitments of a magnitude that no one had heretofore dared to contemplate” (311).⁴⁵

NATO and the Marshall Plan were, as Truman put it, “two halves of the same walnut,” and the antecedents of each can be traced back thirty years or more. As we have seen, historians have drawn attention to some of the similarities in American international economic policies after each world war, and also to the continuities among those Americans and Europeans supporting these measures. Comparable continuities can be traced in Establishment thinking on war, peace, and strategy, areas which, perhaps because authors such as Hodgson, Wise and Thomas fundamentally sympathized strongly with their subjects’ outlook, even wideranging recent works on the Establishment rather neglected. Yet here, indeed, one finds some of the most interesting work to date bearing upon the roots of the Establishment’s foreign policy tradition. A fascinating work by

⁴⁴ Melvyn P. Leffler, “National Security”, *Journal of American History*, 77 (1990), 143–52, quotations from 149.

⁴⁵ Idem, *Preponderance of Power*; idem, “The American Conception of National Security and the Beginnings of the Cold War, 1945–48,” *American Historical Review*, 89 (1984), 346–81. See also Leffler’s “Reply” to the “Comments” by John Lewis Gaddis and Bruce Kuniholm, all in *ibid.*, 382–400.

Deborah Welch Larsen, *Origins of Containment*, uses various psychological studies to analyze the gradual development of the Cold War ideology of four leading Cold War policymakers, Truman, James F. Byrnes, Acheson, and Harriman. Her illuminating account of the evolution of Harriman's and Acheson's thinking strongly suggests that some Establishmentarians entered the Cold War with a well-developed set of international principles; Acheson, at least, came to foreign affairs equipped with “an almost instinctive urge to preserve the balance of power,” a drive which played a large part in his rapid espousal of containment.⁴⁶

A significant strand in Establishment thought would seem to be a fascination with war for its own sake and for the supposed domestic social benefits which it might bring in its train. In the late 1950s Samuel P. Huntington drew attention to the existence at the turn of the century of what he termed a “neo-Hamiltonian” school of American military thinkers, mostly civilians, who adhered to “a peculiar amalgam of liberal-conservative values.” According to Huntington, the neo-Hamiltonians exhibited beliefs “closer to those of aristocratic romanticism than ... those of military professionalism,” and had a great regard for “violence and force.” Committed expansionists, they believed that their nation needed a sizeable army and navy, and supported national expansionism at least in part because they thought that, in the words of one, “the American nation needs the tonic of a serious moral adventure.” In many ways this group, who included a number of prototypical Establishment figures, rejected the commercial values of a business society, which they feared had contaminated the American national character with softness, cowardice, and materialism; they hoped to restore more heroic values. Most also subscribed to the strategic theories popularized by the naval thinker Alfred Thayer Mahan, that American national security, specifically the Monroe Doctrine, had always depended upon Great Britain's implicit endorsement and naval protection, and that the United States therefore had a vital interest in the maintenance of a favourable European balance of power.⁴⁷

Many of those values and even those individuals upon whom Huntington focused were much in evidence in the World War I preparedness movement, at least three book-length studies of which now exist. All emphasize the extent to which supporters of American intervention came from the East Coast, upper class, patrician elite, and all argue that preparedness supporters were motivated in part by domestic considerations. Michael Pearlman and John Finnegan suggest that many preparedness supporters were impelled by motives other than simple fear of German attacks upon the United States; indeed, Pearlman contends that they never believed Great Britain was in danger of defeat. Rather, preparedness

⁴⁶ Deborah Welch Larsen, *Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), quotation from 353.

⁴⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), 270–88, quotations from 270, 271, and 273; on Mahan, see also Robert Seager II, *Alfred Thayer Mahan: The Man and His Letters* (Annapolis, 1977); Philip A. Crowl, “Alfred Thayer Mahan: The Naval Historian,” in *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret with the collaboration of Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 444–77.

advocates were an elite who wished to use the movement to restore old ideals, social control, and a sense of community in a time of rapid social and economic change. According to Pearlman:

By 1915, ... [preparedness leaders] generally felt that a national military experience was the best and the politically most prudent way for America to counteract the divisive effects of its material growth. Since they reasoned that the ordeal might provide common goals eliciting a common sacrifice, they renewed the belief, often held by past elites, that war could resolve domestic problems by "morally crushing the Economic Man." Without endangering social stratification, a seemingly self-indulgent body politic would thereby be transformed into heroic patriots and selfless citizens. (6–7)

Preparedness supporters also saw war and universal military training as a means of imparting what they believed to be basic United States values, such as democracy, ethics, and idealism, to all young Americans, many of whom – particularly new immigrants – did not seem to share them.⁴⁸

For many of its devotees preparedness also met still other needs. Establishment figures have often demonstrated something of a pattern of dissatisfaction with a life entirely devoted to the making of money, and have turned to "public service" with a distinct sense of relief.⁴⁹ The army offered another potential avenue of escape; for rich men uneasy with their wealth but unwilling to renounce it, the Plattsburg military training camps which so many of them attended provided a Spartan experience where they could combat materialism through austerity. On an even more personal level many also felt that war would furnish a sense of purpose missing from their everyday lives, a chance to die in battle which some at least – particularly scions of well-established families – welcomed.⁵⁰ Clifford's study demonstrates the elite character of the World War

⁴⁸ Michael Pearlman, *To Make Democracy Safe for America: Patricians and Preparedness in the Progressive Era* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), quotation from 6; cf. Clifford, *Citizen Soldiers*; John Patrick Finnegan, *Against the Specter of a Dragon: The Campaign for American Military Preparedness, 1914–1917* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1974). The same themes are also brought out in John Whiteclay Chambers II, *To Raise an Army: The Draft Comes to Modern America* (New York: Free Press, 1987), esp. 87–101. Studies of American nativism and the Americanization movement have already demonstrated that many preparedness supporters used the movement as a means of "Americanizing" immigrants, instructing them in what their teachers believed were basic American values. John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860–1925*, 2nd ed. (New York: Atheneum, 1977), 242–49; David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 53–88.

⁴⁹ See, e.g., James Brown Scott, *Robert Bacon: Life and Letters* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1924), 155; Harold Nicolson, *Dwight Morrow* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1935), 66–67, 225–226; Philip C. Jessup, *Elibu Root*, 2 vols (New York, 1938), 1, 218; Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War* (New York: Harper, Dodd, Mead, 1948), 17.

⁵⁰ Pearlman, esp. 58–76; Nelson W. Aldrich, *Old Money: The Mythology of America's Upper Class* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), 169–82. On the turn-of-the-century cult of manliness and romanticized idealization of war in both Britain and the United States, see Michael C. C. Adams, *The Great Adventure: Male Desire and the Coming of World War I* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990); Roland N.

I Military Training Camps Association or Plattsburg movement, organized primarily by Grenville Clark, its “center” at the Harvard Club in New York.⁵¹ This pattern recurred in World War II, when Clark not only persuaded Franklin Roosevelt to bring the interventionist Stimson and Frank Knox into his cabinet, but revitalized the old Plattsburg movement to press for aid to the Allies and, once again, for the introduction of military training, an endeavour which quickly metamorphosed into the successful campaign to introduce selective service. After twenty-five years very little, it seemed, had changed.⁵²

Work to date on the Establishment suggests that one can perhaps extremely tentatively discern at least two strands of international thinking within the Establishment itself. On the one hand, there existed a group enamoured with military force and war for its own sake, disenchanted with materialism and business, romantics who longed for an overwhelming cause which would create a new sense of social unity and cohesion and give them a purpose in life.⁵³ On the other side, one can distinguish a body of rather more moderate pragmatists, ready to use force when necessary, but less enchanted with war for its own sake, regarding it instead as a final resort and necessary evil. Conceivably this group was far more sympathetic to the belief that economic fundamentals were at least as important as weapons, and might well have shared Eisenhower’s concern that an economy placed on a permanent war footing and dominated by the “military-industrial complex” would ultimately undermine basic American values and freedoms.⁵⁴ Clearly, there must have been a substantial overlap between the moderates and the hardliners; nonetheless, as a rough analytical tool the division may be conceptually helpful.

Stromberg, *Redemption by War: The Intellectuals and 1914* (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1982); Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989).

⁵¹ Clifford, 57, 68.

⁵² Clifford and Spencer, *First Peacetime Draft*. In his study of those Americans involved in the Century Group and Fight for Freedom who strongly supported American intervention prior to Pearl Harbor, Mark Lincoln Chadwin pointed out that the great majority of these individuals could plausibly be regarded as members of the Establishment. *The Warhawks: American Interventionists Before Pearl Harbor* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968), esp. 69–71.

⁵³ These might well be seen as the heirs of Theodore Roosevelt; it is also at least possible that they corresponded with those who had inherited money, rather than being self-made men, and so felt a corresponding need to prove themselves. It would include such figures as William J. Donovan and Allen W. Dulles, who took with such enthusiasm to clandestine operations overseas. Arguably and ironically the ultimate heirs of this tradition, intoxicated with force, eager for permanent military commitments, may well be such fervent anti-Communists as Colonel Oliver North.

⁵⁴ Robert Griffith, “Eisenhower and the Corporate Commonwealth,” *American Historical Review*, 87 (1982), 87–122. Here one would find such individuals as McCloy and David K. Bruce, who in 1951 hoped that the American commitment to the NATO alliance would not last longer than a decade; or Lovett, who by the 1950s had grave reservations as to the wisdom of some of the Central Intelligence Agency’s operations. Schwartz, *America’s Germany*, 218–19; Isaacson and Thomas, *Wise Men*, 574.

VI

Most existing scholarly studies on both economic diplomacy and national security assume that they are dealing with rational actors for whom foreign policy decisions were a matter of how best to maximize the national interest. It is clear that by 1914 the United States was such a great power that the policies which its leaders adopted could vitally affect the outcome of any European conflict.⁵⁵ In peace, the United States was the greatest reservoir of investment capital; in war, the source of vital supplies. No European power could afford to ignore the United States. Yet, however great that country's potential strength, it is less obvious that it was necessary for the United States to intervene in either world war or undertake the massive international commitments, military and economic, which have in one form or another been a constant since 1940.⁵⁶

Here, it seems, the role of the American foreign policy Establishment may have been decisive. One can trace the involvement of many of the same individuals in determined efforts to aid and join the Allied side in two successive world wars and their subsequent espousal of the Cold War containment doctrine. In all three cases, the enemy, be it Wilhelmine Germany, Hitler's Germany, or Soviet Russia, was depicted in Manichaeic terms and inflated rhetoric as the fountainhead of a global attempt to wipe out democracy, civilization, and freedom.⁵⁷ Works on the preparedness movement suggest that in practice on at least some occasions defense and foreign affairs became the means by which patricians hoped to allay their own social and status concerns, impose a certain set of values upon their own country, and in some cases also alleviate certain personal psychological anxieties. I would even go so far as to suggest that one reason why foreign policy debates in the United States arouse such passion, and why such organizations as the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission attract ferocious hostility may be that other groups in American society, not simply this particular

⁵⁵ Thus although private bankers, primarily the firm of J. P. Morgan & Company, organized the loans which enabled the Allies to buy vast quantities of essential war supplies in the United States and so survive until American intervention in April 1917, the Wilson administration's decision to sanction such financial transactions was just as important in enabling the Allied government to continue the war. It is equally arguable that these loans, organized by bankers in many ways at the heart of the Establishment, were responsible for the American war trade which, in its turn, brought about the successive diplomatic crises with Germany and ultimately entangled the United States in war with Germany. On these loans and their significance, see Kathleen Burk, *Britain, America and the Sineus of War 1914-1918* (Boston: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), 11-95; also John Milton Cooper, Jr., "The Command of Gold Reversed: American Loans to Britain, 1915-1917," *Pacific Historical Review*, 45 (1976), 209-30.

⁵⁶ In the 1950s Osgood pointed out that with almost no exceptions even those Americans most committed to American intervention before 1917 did not believe that Germany would win the war, and felt no real apprehensions that the United States itself was in danger. Osgood, *Ideals and Self-Interest*, chs. 6-12 passim, esp. 205-22, 255-63. The case against the need for American intervention in World War II is made in Bruce M. Russett, *No Clear and Present Danger: A Skeptical View of the U.S. Entry into World War II* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).

⁵⁷ Roberts, "Eastern Establishment," esp. 161-68, 578-83.

elite, employ foreign policy issues in an attempt to fulfil those goals just described. Such motives are obviously difficult to elucidate, but historians such as Finnegan and Pearlman have made a promising beginning, and such approaches are likely to prove fruitful in illuminating the roots of the Establishment’s internationalism, which certainly date back to at least the late nineteenth century. It may well be that in many ways the Establishment commitment to “internationalism” and “Atlanticism” fulfilled much the same functions as the “preparedness” movement, providing somewhat aloof patricians with a psychologically satisfying cause around which they could attempt to unite their often somewhat apathetic countrymen, thereby imposing their own ideals upon what frequently seemed an unresponsive citizenry. Warren I. Susman has argued that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries “a new model psychological type” and values, which stressed self-gratification, consumption, and the importance of likeability, replaced an “older... Puritan-republican, producer-capitalist” outlook, which had laid far more emphasis upon “hard work, self-denial, ... sacrifice, and character.”⁵⁸ As a rule, Establishment figures seem to have represented the last generation to embody the older set of values, and the development of their foreign policy tradition in some respects seems an attempt to reimpose these upon their country in general.

It is perhaps significant that, however much they believed the policies which they espoused to be in their country’s best interests, Establishmentarians rarely presented “internationalism” in simple terms of national self-interest. While cynics may argue that this was simply a tactic to make their policies more palatable to the American people, the reason seems to go deeper: Establishment figures – and perhaps even Americans in general – preferred appeals to higher motives. Intervention in both world wars, support for aid to Europe between the wars, and the Cold War were all presented as virtuous and noble causes which Americans ought as a matter of honour to support, sacred duties whose performance would redeem their country from the slough of self-indulgent irresponsibility and materialism.⁵⁹ Repeatedly the same themes were enunciated by a high-minded elite, somewhat insulated from the average citizen’s economic and social worries. Is it too fanciful to regard this attempt to make America over as attempted internal colonization?

Recent works on the Establishment sometimes look rather wistfully to the future re-emergence of a new foreign policy consensus, on which moderates from all political parties can agree.⁶⁰ A sceptic, though, might wonder whether the twenty-five years after 1940 when the Establishment large controlled American foreign affairs should not be regarded as an aberration, due partly to the accident of the very existence of such a cohesive and committed group of individuals, and also to the “preponderance of power,” military and economic, the United States

⁵⁸ Warren I. Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), esp. xx–xxiv, 41–42, 271–85.

⁵⁹ See, e.g., references in Roberts, 563, n. 1.

⁶⁰ Symptomatically, George Bush’s assumption of the presidency generated a slew of approving articles pointing out the degree to which he embodied the Establishment’s foreign policy tradition. See, e.g., E. J. Dionne, Jr., “Which Way Does the New Breeze Blow?,” *New York Times*, Pt. 4, 1; Broder, “NATO.”

enjoyed in those years, which facilitated several foreign policy triumphs and until Vietnam averted major disasters. These essentially transient circumstances are, as John Judis has pointed out, unlikely to recur; indeed, today there is no consensus even within "Establishment institutions" such as the Council on Foreign Relations, the major economic organizations, and the think tanks on such issues as international economic policy and the Middle East.⁶¹ One might even argue that the contemporary disarray in American foreign policymaking rather resembles the period before World War II, when conflicting interest groups within the American body politic struggled with each other over specific issues, and no broad consensus existed. American policymakers' present options are to some extent limited by the pattern of military alliances and commitments, the most significant of these still being NATO, which the United States created after World War II, but the current state of flux in international affairs has now called virtually all of these into question.

I would suggest, however, that the lack of consensus on American foreign policy aims and means may ultimately stem from the perennial absence of any vital and apparent security interests which the United States must, of necessity, defend; that, consequently, the conduct of that country's foreign relations is, perhaps uniquely among major powers, swayed by the often changing and contradictory pressures of domestic politics and the vagaries of public opinion. If so, one of the most unusual periods in American diplomacy may well prove to be those few decades after 1940 when a small, close-knit, dedicated elite of appointed officials succeeded in committing the United States to the defense of Western Europe and ideological opposition to the Soviet Union, and created a near consensus on these policies. The questions then arise, why did this group subscribe to one particular international outlook, and how was it able to obtain such dominance over the shaping of American diplomacy? While we may not yet have definite answers to these questions, what may well prove to be the atypicality and magnitude of the foreign policy Establishment's achievements are quite sufficient reason to welcome and encourage the new interest in "Establishment studies."

⁶¹ Judis, "Twilight of the Gods," 54-55.