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Introduction by Thomas Maddux, California State University Northridge

In *The Dissent Papers: The Voices of Diplomats in the Cold War and Beyond*, Hannah Gurman has examined familiar U.S. diplomats from George Kennan to George Ball on Vietnam as well as recent participants in the official “Dissent Channel” of the State Department. Gurman, however, applies a dual perspective to her subjects. First, Gurman evaluates their roles as dissenters within the State Department who attempted with mixed success to influence policy decisions and in several major policies during the Cold War “played a key role in the debates leading up to and following the moment of decision” (9). Gurman also concludes that these diplomats shared views on the U.S. role in the Cold War and appropriate policies: “they resisted the logic of the national security state and believed in the foundational tenets of diplomacy, in which power matters more than ideology, foreign policy and domestic politics are considered mutually exclusive, and diplomats, rather than military, forge and maintain a stable international order” (10). Second, Gurman examines American diplomats within the tradition of diplomatic writing and its evolution under the impact of the “ongoing process of bureaucratization” in the State Department and the “evolving relationship between the diplomatic establishment and the White House” in administrations from Franklin Roosevelt to George W. Bush (10). Gurman emphasizes that the growth of bureaucracy in the State Department and increased organization and efficiency in U.S. foreign offices brought a bureaucratic format to foreign posts and internal reports that was “short, efficient, and impersonal” and that “as it passed through these layers of bureaucracy, diplomatic writing tended to become increasingly homogenized, leaving less room for interpretation and dissent” (14). The diplomats whom Gurman focuses on, however, were not “content to write irrelevant reports, telegrams, and memos” and strove to change policy with their writing, a group that Gurman calls “writerly” diplomats “who showed a conscious commitment to the genre of diplomatic writing” (16).

The reviewers welcome Gurman’s study even as they question some of *The Dissent Papers’* specific assessments. As Laura Belmonte notes, the book is a “welcome celebration of elegant prose and careful analysis.” Although the accounts of the diplomats are familiar, Belmonte indicates her increased appreciation for “those who took such great professional risks (and derailed promising careers) in speaking truth to power.” Belmonte does suggest the benefit of more context to Gurman’s study by including an examination of dissent in “other government agencies, NGOs, Congress, the media, and activists.” Sarah Snyder agrees with Belmonte that a definite strength in Gurman’s study is its “ability to bring together familiar stories and showcase them in a new light” and declares that the book is “probingly analytical in all of the rights spots.” Snyder suggests the desirability of a clearer definition of dissent at the start of the study “which obscures the extent to which we should see Kennan, for example, as dissenting from U.S. policy.” Although Elizabeth Spalding suggests that Gurman “somewhat undermines her stated thesis” by suggesting that diplomats should “make U.S. foreign policy,” Spalding welcomes this study and analysis of State Department officials in one volume. “Were diplomats marginalized, as Gurman argues,” queries Spalding, “or were they one community among several that passed their expertise to their chief—the Secretary of State—and, through him, to the President?” For Spalding, the appropriate decision makers are not the Ambassadors and foreign service

officers in the field but Presidents from Harry Truman to Barack Obama with their leading foreign policy advisers. Joan Hoff calls the book an “enlightening study,” and considers the chapter on the “China Hands” as the best existing assessment. She also endorses Gurman’s assessment of Kennan, particularly the development of the early period in Kennan’s career. Hoff, however, questions the inclusion of George Ball since he was not a member of the diplomatic corps, and disagrees with Gurman’s description of Ball as the “consummate internal dissenter” (158). Instead, Hoff approves Gurman’s earlier comment that Ball “did more to sell the war than to stem it” in the first year of the Johnson administration (134). Robert Dean supports Hoff’s criticism noting that Ball “always prefaced his arguments with oaths of allegiance to whatever policy was adopted. He never broke ranks and expressed doubts publicly, and he certainly did not have the courage to resign and genuinely dissent by undertaking any other attempt to bring pressure on the Johnson administration to end the war.”

Dean suggests that Gurman has not developed the full potential of her study and notes that he would have welcomed a “more complete integration of the other structural features of the political, bureaucratic, and policy processes in which the writing [of the diplomats under review] is embedded.” In terms of Gurman’s discussion of the writings of the China hands and ensuing purge of them in the Red and Lavender Scares, the hunt for communists and homosexuals, Dean suggests that Gurman’s section on the effects of this purge on the style of diplomatic writing lacks sufficient analysis of the “central elements that shaped the outcomes,” most notably the conflict between different elites in the bureaucracy and Congress in the destruction of the careers of diplomats and the intimidation of others to conform to imperial Cold War standards and policy.

Gurman’s last example of dissent is the Dissent Channel, an official process in which Foreign Service officers, starting in 1971, could send messages questioning U.S. policies directly to the Secretary of State and receive a response. Gurman suggests that the Dissent Channel reflected the bureaucratic nature of diplomatic writing and the Nixon administration’s effort to manage dissent and limit serious leakage of governmental documents in the aftermath of the Pentagon Papers affair. (172, 175-179) The reviewers do not disagree with her assessment of this issue, although Hoff would have preferred a chapter focused on Melvin Laird who, as Secretary of Defense, advocated policies that would end the Vietnam War. Snyder also would have welcomed more discussion of the consequences of officials using the Dissent Channel. Hoff and Snyder also question Gurman’s use of Julian Assange and WikiLeaks in the introduction and conclusion. (1-3, 206) Snyder suggests that the released State Department documents do reveal the quality of current diplomatic writing but “the relevance to diplomatic dissent is less clear.” Hoff also strongly challenges the linkage of Assange “who indiscriminately leaked the millions of documents on a variety of topics” to U.S. diplomats “who usually did not publicly leak, but instead critically wrote in private about very specific aspects of American politics, is simply not convincing.”

Participants:

Hannah Gurman is a Clinical Assistant Professor at NYU's Gallatin School of Individualized Study where she teaches U.S. history and literature, with a focus on the United States in the world. Her work has appeared in *Diplomatic History* and *The Journal of Contemporary History*, as well as *Salon*, *Huffington Post*, and *Small Wars Journal*. She is a regular columnist for the Institute for Policy Studies' website, *Foreign Policy in Focus*, and is currently editing a volume on counterinsurgency, entitled *A People's History of Counterinsurgency*, being published by the New Press in 2013.

Laura Belmonte is Professor of History and Director of American Studies at Oklahoma State University. She received her doctorate from the University of Virginia, where she studied with Mel Leffler. She is the author of *Selling the American Way: U.S. Propaganda and the Cold War* and editor of *Speaking of America: Readings in U.S. History*. Her current work examines the origins and evolution of U.S. global policy on AIDS. She is also co-writing *Global Americans*, a transnational U.S. history textbook, and revising her *Speaking of America* anthology for a third edition.

Robert Dean is Associate Professor of History at Eastern Washington University, and the author of *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy*.

Joan Hoff is Distinguished Research Professor at Montana State University, Bozeman. Her latest book is *A Faustian Foreign Policy from Woodrow Wilson to George W. Bush*. She is also author of *Nixon Reconsidered*; and *Herbert Hoover: Forgotten Progressive*. Her current research is about the deficiencies of the Obama administration.

Sarah B. Snyder, Lecturer in International History at University College London, is the author of *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network* (Cambridge University Press), which won the 2012 Stuart L. Bernath Prize and the 2012 Myrna F. Bernath Book Award from the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations. She received her Ph.D. from Georgetown University.

Elizabeth Spalding is Associate Professor of Government at Claremont McKenna College, where she teaches U.S. foreign policy and American government and directs CMC's Washington Program. The author of *The First Cold Warrior: Harry Truman, Containment, and the Remaking of Liberal Internationalism*, she has contributed to several volumes on the presidency and U.S. foreign policy and written for the *Wilson Quarterly*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, and the *Claremont Review of Books*. Her current research interests include the war on terrorism, the beginnings and endings of the Cold War, religion and U.S. foreign policy, and the Wilsonian influence on modern American foreign policy. Her PhD in government and foreign affairs is from the University of Virginia.

In an age of emoticons, 140-character tweets, and texting, Hannah Gurman's *The Dissent Papers* is a welcome celebration of elegant prose and careful analysis. Focusing on "the nature, purpose, and influence of diplomatic writing," she aims to demonstrate "the place and evolution of diplomatic dissent" in post-1945 U.S. foreign policy. (3) In addition to examining the bureaucratic history of the U.S. Department of State, Gurman explains how and why it has become difficult for diplomats to challenge the status quo. She provides four case studies of rare instances where "dissenting diplomats played a key role in the debates leading up to and following the moment of decision" (9). Chapter 1 traces George F. Kennan's critique of the militarization of the Cold War after his critical role in shaping the containment policy. Chapter 2 explores how the "China hands" John Stewart Service and John Paton Davies tried to dissuade their superiors from continued support of Nationalist China. Chapter 3 analyzes George Ball's efforts to persuade Lyndon Johnson to stop the escalation of the Vietnam War. Finally, Chapter 4 describes the creation of the State Department's official Dissent Channel and its effect on Watergate-era politics and opposition to the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. Gurman identifies thematic linkages among the disparate cases, asserting that the dissenters "resisted the logic of the national security state and believed in the foundational tenets of diplomacy, in which power matters more than ideology, foreign policy and domestic politics are considered mutually exclusive, and diplomats, rather than the military, forge and maintain a stable international order" (10).

Gurman begins her narrative with an assessment of George Kennan, one of the most influential diplomats in U.S. history. As a "*courtesan author*," (an odd term that Gurman never satisfactorily defines) Kennan "displayed a willingness and tendency to exaggerate, understate, and muddle his position, at least in part to maintain favor with a particular patron reader" (30). Frustrated by his exclusion from elite policymaking circles, Kennan seized the opportunity to evaluate Joseph Stalin's February 1946 election speech, penning the 'Long Telegram' that affected the shape of U.S.-Soviet relations for the entirety of the Cold War. With intentional ambiguity, he portrayed the Soviets not only as realists determined to preserve their sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, but also as fanatics blinded by Marxist-Leninism and fears of 'capitalist encirclement.' Kennan's blend of realpolitik and ideology had the desired effect and his superiors circulated his dispatch throughout the foreign-policymaking establishment. Virtually overnight, Kennan moved from political isolation to universal acclaim by colleagues who were wowed by his prophetic insights.

Once in the spotlight, Kennan adroitly modified his recommendations to meet the expectations of his superiors. Although Kennan later claimed that he did not support the universalist dimensions of the Truman Doctrine, Gurman skillfully unpacks Kennan's interactions with important figures like White House Counsel Clark Clifford, Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, and Secretary of State George Marshall to demonstrate his close alignment with the prevailing views of the State Department. But Kennan's "bureaucratic honeymoon" did not last (53). As Kennan pushed for expanded diplomacy with the U.S.S.R., he began to clash with those advocating militarization of the Cold War. Kennan's responses

to the Czech coup, the Berlin blockade, and the establishment of NATO diverged from those of the Truman administration; “[b]y the end of 1948, Kennan had effectively become a dissenter from the official consensus he had helped to establish” (59). When Dean Acheson became Secretary of State in 1949, he did not accord Kennan the freedom and influence he had enjoyed under Marshall. Acheson rejected Kennan’s long analyses, stressing that the role of a diplomat “is not that of a writer of a doctoral thesis” (61). Once again marginalized, Kennan resigned from the State Department, returning to government service for only brief periods over the next two decades. In an ironic twist, the same period witnessed the public’s identification of Kennan as the architect of the militaristic application of the containment policy that he worked privately to prevent.

Gurman next showcases John Stewart Service and John Paton Davies. Raised by missionaries working in western China, both Service and Davies both joined the Foreign Service in the 1930s. Each quickly became critical of the relationship between the U.S. officials in China and the Nationalist regime of Chiang Kai-shek. From 1942 to 1945, they wrote a series of reports urging their superiors to stop supporting the corrupt and inept Chiang and to begin working with the Chinese Communists. During World War II, high-level members of the Franklin Roosevelt administration praised these reports. But after the Chinese Communists defeated the Nationalists in the fall of 1949, conservatives used these same memos to smear Service and Davies as communist sympathizers who intentionally undermined the Nationalists. Joseph McCarthy and others led a political attack on the State Department that resulted in twenty of twenty-two Foreign Service officers specializing in China being marginalized or dismissed. But McCarthyism also had devastating consequences for “insider writing,” which Gurman describes as “the defining form of knowledge production and exchange in the diplomatic establishment” (73). After anti-communist zealots branded diplomatic writing elitist and un-American, the State Department protected itself by discouraging the fieldwork, reporting, and bold writing “which had been integral to broadening and deepening the policy debate” (110).

Despite these constraints, Undersecretary of State for Economic and Agricultural Affairs George Ball urged President Lyndon Johnson and his advisors not to escalate the Vietnam War. “In almost every aspect,” Gurman writes, “Ball’s worldview and philosophy of policy formulation ran against the grain of U.S. foreign policy in Vietnam” (126). But Ball remained the “consummate internal dissenter, refusing to publicize his disagreement with the administration’s policies” (158). He did not join the millions who were openly protesting the war. He did not even abandon his broader support for the policy of containment. While it is debatable whether Ball’s call to pursue diplomacy in Vietnam ultimately prevailed, his critique signaled the waning of the post-McCarthy silencing of internal dissent. When Richard Nixon announced the U.S. invasion of Cambodia in April 1970, twenty Foreign Service officers resigned in protest—“the largest act of internal dissent to date in the history of the State Department” (167).

But Nixon quickly took steps to weaken his State Department critics. In 1971, he supported the establishment of the Dissent Channel, a formal process in which Foreign Service officers could send criticisms of U.S. policies directly to the Secretary of State, who then evaluated and responded to these messages. Although the Nixon administration claimed that the

Dissent Channel reflected its openness toward dissent, the system actually bureaucratized and undermined critiques made by individual diplomats. “In the forty years of its existence,” Gurman concludes, “the Dissent Channel has done little to impact U.S. foreign policy” (172).

The inefficacy of the Dissent Channel contributed to the rise of ‘outside writing’ by diplomats who appealed directly to the general public. In 2003, several diplomats lambasted the George W. Bush administration’s policies in Iraq and Afghanistan. A few, notably John Brady Kiesling and Joseph Wilson, conveyed their dissent not only through internal processes but also in the *New York Times*. Several others echoed their criticisms in the Dissent Channel and also resigned in protest. These actions and the 2010 WikiLeaks’ publication of over 250,000 private State Department cables have helped illuminate the importance of transparency and the vital importance of rank-and-file diplomatic reporting.

While *The Dissent Channel* does not markedly expand or revise the familiar stories of the diplomats it examines, it does inspire admiration for those who took such great professional risks (and thereby derailed promising careers) in speaking truth to power. But Gurman is so focused on the confines of policymaking within the State Department that she neglects the dissenting role played by other government agencies, NGOs, Congress, the media, and activists. The dissenters whom Gurman examines did not offer their critiques in a vacuum; since she does not pay much attention to the context in which these critiques arose, the reader is left with a distorted image of how foreign policy is created and implemented. These quibbles aside, Gurman has produced a well written and thoroughly researched account that merits the attention of serious scholars of U.S. foreign relations.

Hannah Gurman promises a reevaluation of ‘dissent’ in the State Department by examining a contested tradition of diplomatic writing. Much-studied figures like diplomats George Kennan, John Paton Davies and Robert Service, and Under Secretary of State George Ball provide case studies in the process of diplomatic writing and the workings of power. This notion, that the formal conventions of diplomatic writing were themselves historically contingent, culturally constructed, and in some sense provided a terrain for political struggle within the State Department, is interesting. It seems to me, however, that this premise is never developed in a way that would realize its potential.

Kennan and containment, the China Hands and the Red Scare, Ball’s in-house objection to escalation in Vietnam, and even the Nixon-era crisis of legitimacy are all stories very familiar to historians of foreign policy and the Cold War. Gurman seems to promise a close reading of the cables, correspondence, and memoranda, by which she might reveal the deep significance of the formal process of diplomatic writing that arises out of authorial intent and its effect on the policy that shaped history. Instead the story we get seems to be that of the primacy of domestic and bureaucratic politics in shaping outcomes and marginalizing ‘dissent.’ That is not really news. Those who hold high offices tend to follow their own ideological and policy predilections to the fullest extent possible while engaging in calculations and struggles to maintain their position and power within the system. Those who dissent from the currently dominant wisdom do so at their peril, and survive only if they are adroit enough at negotiating the shoals that surround them (e.g., obsequious avowals of fealty accompanying the so-called dissent, à la George Ball). Those who are stranded by shifts in administration, ideology, and policy, and who become targets of convenience in bitter domestic political or bureaucratic rivalries are purged; *pour encourager les autres*, as in the cases of Davies, Service and the other China Hands, or more quietly removed in the case of George Kennan, to suit the convenience of the powerful.

Gurman’s narrative is, as one of the book jacket blurbs would have it, “synoptic.” But perhaps too much weight is placed on the centrality of diplomatic writing in constructing the historical significance of the episodes she explores, or maybe one hopes for a more complete integration of the other structural features of the political, bureaucratic, and policy processes in which the writing is embedded. Less synopsis and more detailed political context are needed. Looking at the stories Gurman tells we can venture a few generalizations. The upper levels of the imperial bureaucracies are typically filled by politically well-connected generalists driven by ambition, well versed in the practical virtues of conformity to the conventional wisdom of the moment, and often unburdened by any very deep knowledge of the history, culture, language, or politics of the particular foreign places their decisions affect. ‘Rank and file’ diplomats may, in contrast, have developed considerable language skills, varying levels of understanding and perhaps even empathy regarding the cultures where they serve. In some cases this leads to ‘dissent’ from the orthodoxy of the moment, when U.S. policy seems likely to lead to adverse outcomes according to the diplomat’s understanding of national interest. It also creates an inevitable structural tension within the bureaucracy between the imperial managers and the imperial

functionaries. A persuasive historical account needs to address in some detail the contingencies and particulars of the complex political tensions that are built in to the bureaucracies that manage the American republican empire.

Gurman focuses on the political effects of the process and the styles of diplomatic writing. I am left with the sense that this puts the cart before the horse—that the other central elements that shaped outcomes are largely missing from the narrative, or that they are under-analyzed. This is most apparent in the cases that I am most familiar with from my own research, that of the China hands and Ball's arguments against escalation. Service and Davies were just two targets in a much larger, extraordinarily bitter struggle over power in Washington. That with "the attacks against the China hands, this tradition of insider writing became subject to outside scrutiny" is true, but this fact also obscures aspects of the assault on the State Department during the Red Scare and the long-term effects that the purge produced. (73) *Everything* about the targets of the ultra-right countersubversives came under scrutiny during this era of obsessive witch-hunting. The paranoid-style textual analysis that the China hands were subjected to by Senator Pat McCarran, Senator Joseph McCarthy, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, State Department Security operatives, and their minions and allies was merely the tip of the iceberg.

As the virulence of the politically-driven purge grew, the red-hunters diverted enormous resources to their relentless pursuit. Investigators obsessively sought to establish guilt by association and to find incriminating secrets of any kind, including evidence of sexual 'perversion.' The attacks were not simply assaults on the "defining form of knowledge production and exchange in the diplomatic establishment," they were relentless attempts to destroy the careers of the countersubversives' political and bureaucratic enemies. (73) The counter-perversion crusade, the 'Lavender Scare' that mirrored and buttressed the Red Scare, represented the deployment of inquisitorial power designed to destroy the public identity of targeted diplomats—casting them outside the boundaries of legitimate political manhood. And of course it wasn't only diplomatic writing that came under assault. In the minds of their right-wing adversaries, Service and Davies were implicated in subversion through their association with the Institute of Pacific Relations, and the journals *Pacific Affairs*, and *Amerasia*. The countersubversive exegesis of their diplomatic writing provided only one weapon used against them. It was the totality of the 'evidence' of conspiracy that provided the justification for the purge. The reasons for Davies' dismissal, according to Scott McLeod's Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs, were as follows: "his behavior, activities, and associations as an officer have been such as to reflect adversely upon his judgment, discretion, and security reliability because (1) he opposed and sought to circumvent U.S. poli[c]y toward China in 1942-1945; (2) investigation reflected his close connection with reported Communist elements in the IPR, (3) information received reflected he recommended to another government agency persons of known Communist activities, (4) he associated with a number of persons reliably reported to have been active with Communist Party activities."¹

¹ Unsigned memorandum, "Detailed statistical analysis . . .," n.d. [1954], RG 59, Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs, decimal files, 1953-56, box 15, National Archives.

It was this dynamic, of overlapping state-sanctioned inquisitions seeking to root out “conspiracy,” political, sexual, or both, that drove the Red Scare and ultimately drove many State Department personnel to further retreat into compliance with received imperial wisdom. The ‘attack’ on ‘traditional’ diplomatic writing was merely one vector of a much larger and more complex struggle between competing groups of elites. The lessons, to shut up and go along, to retreat into conformist bureaucratic anti-communist boilerplate, were delivered when the survivors saw the wreckage of the careers of their contemporaries—and that wreckage was produced by much more complex processes than Gurman elucidates.

I can’t help thinking that for this case, Robert P. Newman’s *Owen Lattimore and the “Loss” of China*, not listed in the bibliography, might have provided some of the connective tissue needed to better flesh out this argument.² Newman shows the central importance of guilt by association in the surreal multi-year persecution of Lattimore, a Johns Hopkins ethnologist who specialized in Mongolia. But Lattimore had spent time in China, had even been briefly an American envoy to Chiang during WWII. Most significantly, he had edited *Pacific Affairs* and in his professional life was acquainted with many Sinophiles, Asianists, journalists, editors, and diplomats including Philip Jaffe, Service, O. Edmund Clubb, etc. who were later ‘identified’ by partisans of the counter-subversive ultra-right as the agents of the ‘immense’ conspiracy that lost China. The writings of Lattimore, indicted for perjury before McCarran’s Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, were eventually subjected to the same kind of obsessive counter-subversive textual analysis that figured in the Service and Davies’ cases. But Newman clearly shows how that sort of exegetical persecution was but one aspect of the whole grand inquisition that ensnared Service, Davies and many others. Diplomatic writing was not a special case—the right mobilized the state to enforce orthodoxy (retrospectively defined) against any sort of critical intellectual inquiry produced by those they regarded as enemies.

The case of George Ball and his ‘dissent’ in 1964-65 again is very familiar to historians. But was Ball, in any meaningful sense, truly a ‘dissenter’? Ball, who had seen the fate of the French in Vietnam, was not especially persuaded of the efficacy of aerial bombardment, and, in the context of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, had a refreshing focus on directly-measurable questions of economic and strategic consequence. He advanced a series of arguments against escalation that were premised on protecting ‘credibility,’ thus suggesting that failure was a real possibility, and that such a failure would damage the credibility of the United States much more than simply cutting its losses and getting out. His arguments were perhaps ‘writerly,’ but they were not dissent. He always prefaced his arguments with oaths of allegiance to whatever policy was to be adopted. He never broke ranks and expressed doubt publicly, and he certainly did not have the courage to resign and genuinely ‘dissent’ by undertaking any other attempt to bring pressure on the Johnson administration to end the war. Ball clearly foresaw the likelihood of the disaster to come,

² Robert P. Newman, *Owen Lattimore and the “Loss” of China*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

but actually did nothing material to stop it after Johnson took the decision for major escalation in July 1965. This mirrors his behavior during the Kennedy administration (which, by the way, did not have 11,000 troops in Vietnam in 1961 when Ball assumed office, as Gurman asserts). (120) Ball warned Kennedy against escalation, was put off with a cryptic reply, and didn't pursue the matter. By 1963 he was a member of the group of Kennedy's officials that authorized the coup against Ngo Dinh Diem. Ball, of course, was not alone in offering reasoned cost-benefit arguments against further escalation of American military force in Vietnam—Johnson was clearly warned of the military, strategic, and domestic political dangers by Senator Richard Russell, Vice President Hubert Humphrey, and Senator Mike Mansfield. William Bundy, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, of course, produced his own *bilan* arguing for a negotiated withdrawal, by “shooting your way out of the saloon,” as Daniel Ellsberg phrased it.³ Democratic Senators Wayne Morse, Ernest Gruening, and Frank Church publicly spoke against intervention. We could conceivably argue that Morse, Gruening and Church offered a genuine dissent. Ball and the others, despite their reasoned arguments against the war, were ultimately complicit in a policy of “bureaucratic homicide” as Richard Barnet labeled it.⁴

Gurman's argument that Ball's writerly “internal policy analysis” ultimately achieved a “qualified” vindication with the shift of sentiment by Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Nitze, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Paul Warnke, the Wise Men *et al.*, mistakes reasoned diplomatic and policy discourse for a very belated and partial recognition of defeat in the wake of the Tet offensive (166). From Dwight Eisenhower through Richard Nixon, each President desperately clung to failure in Vietnam. At the end of the Johnson administration this death grip appeared to loosen briefly, but that proved illusory. Johnson and many of his functionaries still harbored the illusion that they could extract concessions from Hanoi through further application of aerial bombardment and ‘search and destroy’ attrition. The fundamental problem was not one of a lack of reasoned discourse about ways to end the war. There had always been only one: stop waging it. By 1968 large segments of the American public were demanding just that. But the domestic politics of ‘toughness’ always precluded the solution—no president believed he could be the first to ‘lose’ a war without committing a kind of political suicide.⁵

Gurman's book ultimately rests on a set of more or less whiggish notions about the potential for rational, professional, ‘logical’ diplomats employing ‘traditional’ forms of critical reportage to facilitate the smooth workings of a wise and effective State Department. Her account of the replacement of ‘traditional’ models of discursive reflection

³ Robert Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy*, (Amherst MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).

⁴ Richard J. Barnet, *Roots of War: The Men and Institutions behind U.S. Foreign Policy*, (New York: Random House, 1972), 13.

⁵ For an extensive development of this argument see my *Imperial Brotherhood*.

in diplomatic writing with 'bureaucratized' boilerplate thus represents a kind of declension from an implicitly idealized past. Perhaps because Americans live in a polarized hyper-partisan republican empire, where the conduct of foreign policy has been relentlessly militarized and removed from any sort of genuinely democratic responsiveness, I don't share Gurman's optimism about the "perfectibility" of the process, or really even the centrality of the State Department itself to the conception and conduct of foreign policy.

Hannah Gurman's account of the men who disagreed with American foreign policy through the Cold War and into the first decade of the twenty-first century is enlightening. Except for George Kennan, most of them have not been given significant treatment by diplomatic scholars for their dissenting views. The Introduction cogently presents a history of how the makeup of the diplomatic establishment changed in the United States from one being dominated by a male social elite to "a meritocracy open to all capable Americans" (22). Despite this evolution toward larger and better trained personnel, Gurman basically concludes that most American diplomats have been ineffectual in the formulation of foreign policy, largely because with few exceptions most presidents either distrusted or ignored the State Department and "diplomats largely accepted their marginalized status" (8).

The importance of the Introduction lies in its emphasis on the distinction between the personal dispatches of "writer" diplomats and the impersonal "more bureaucratic and corporate writings" of most women and men serving abroad as representatives of the United States, especially after WWII (16-17). Gurman also documents the changing size and structure of the State Department as the importance of the country in world affairs increased and faster means of communication and transportation developed in the course of twentieth century. Increasingly, Cold War foreign service officers were "reminded that the job of the diplomat is not to formulate foreign policy but to execute it," as the State Department "continued to bureaucratize and began to adopt corporate management practices" (15).

Except for their being too long and then repeating many of their points in subsequent chapters, the only problem I have with the Introduction and Conclusion is Gurman's emphasis on one aspect of the views of Hans Morgenthau. She quotes or paraphrases him three times as saying that "the success or failure of a country's foreign policy and its ability to preserve peace will depend upon the reliability of the diplomat's reports" (3, 199, 207, 245ftnt1). Nonetheless she concedes that in *Politics Among Nations* "he never engaged in a sustained reflection on his vision of diplomats as the 'fingertips of foreign policy,'" despite or because of the overwhelming influence of his 1948 book on the field of international relations and political science theory (18). Still, Morgenthau lamented the loss of the "peculiar finesse and subtlety of mind" of the typical diplomat, because he viewed American diplomats "as the potential prophets of American foreign policy" (4, 199).

In conceptualizing their grand unifying theories, other theorists who preceded or followed Morgenthau, such as Raymond Aron, Kenneth Waltz, Alexander Wendt, and Richard Ned Lebow, have also not given much practical consideration to the reports of rank and file bureaucrats within the State Department, whether they were dissenters or conformists or 'writerly' or simply mundane composers of diplomatic dispatches.¹

¹. *Conference on REALIST Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), *passim*; Richard Ned Lebow, *A Cultural Theory of International Relations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), H-Diplo/ISSF Roundtable Review, Vol. II, No. 7 (2012).

Gurman concludes her book by favorably comparing Morgenthau and Julian Assange. To liken someone, who indiscriminately leaked the millions of diplomatic documents on a variety of topics through WikiLeaks, to Morgenthau's ostensible high regard of individual diplomats and her own research on a handful of men who usually did not publicly leak, but instead critically wrote in private about very specific aspects of American policies, is simply not convincing.

Since Kennan remains the most prominent and effective of all the dissenters in this book, the first chapter devoted to him deserves particular scrutiny. Unfortunately, it is less instructive about Kennan because so much has been written about him, especially since the publication of John Lewis Gaddis's long-awaited biography last year.² In particular, Gurman is not explicit about the impact of Kennan's 'Long Telegram' and 'Mr. X' article on American foreign policy. Because of their ambiguousness and muscular language they simply seem to have lent themselves to manipulation by government officials such as Secretary of Defense James Forrestal and Secretary of State Dean Acheson. For example, she details the ways in which Kennan followed Forrestal's suggestions for revising both documents and "never corrected Forrestal's interpretation of the 'Long Telegram' in his public talks" (39). As a result, she implicitly downplays the conventional interpretation that Kennan actually wrote his 'Mr. X' article as a critique of the Truman Doctrine despite his belated claim in his memoirs that he did, although she mentions his frustration over being "a perceived architect of an increasingly militaristic and anti-diplomatic foreign policy" known as containment (65).

More importantly, Gurman does accurately depict Kennan in the early stages of his diplomatic career as a latter-day Henry Adams because "his identity as an unappreciated rank-and-file diplomat was inextricably connected to his identity as a frustrated writer and alienated intellectual" (26). She also skillfully shows how he later ingratiated himself as a "courtesan author" with a succession of high level "patron reader[s]" within the State Department immediately following the Second World War in order to become, according to his colleagues, "a true prophet and master in the tradition of diplomatic writing" (30, 35, 50). Although Gurman tries to anoint as prophets the other dissenters she writes about, such as John Stewart Service, John Paton Davies, George Ball, Thomas Boyatt, and John Brady Kiesling, none compares to Kennan.

The second chapter on the "China Hands" is the best one in part because there were more diplomats who questioned the American policy of providing more support to Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalist government and, in some cases, cooperation with Chinese communists. Gurman concentrates on the reports and activities of the two sons of missionaries, Jack

². Nicholas Thompson, "Ideas Man: The Legacy of George F. Kennan," *Foreign Affairs*, 91, no. 1 (January/February 2012): 148-153; Eric Alterman, "Gaddis's Kennan: Strategies of Disparagement," *The Nation*, April 2, 2012, 9; Louis Menand, "GETTING REAL: George F. Kennan's Cold War," *The New Yorker*, November 14, 2011, 76-83; and Frank Costigliola, "Is This George Kennan?" *The New York Review*, December 8, 2011. John Lewis Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2011).

Service and John Davies, U.S. Foreign Service officers, indicating that they attracted supporters who served with Service and Davies in China, like Joseph Stilwell, John Carter Vincent and George Atcheson, Ed Rice, Philip Sprouse. Because Service and Davies's forthright diplomatic accounts "became associated with communism" during the McCarthy era (despite Kennan's support), they set back future attempts at producing "writerly" dispatches (87, 98-99, 110).

Gurman points out that Davies initiated the idea of the White Paper that would include his and Service's "inside writing" to public examination (87). Their views, however, were marginalized in the final version of the White Paper which tried to explain the hopelessness of the ability of the United States to prevent the Communist take-over of China, while at the same time exorcizing Mao and his Communist rule. This argument backfired on both the China Hands and on officials in the Truman administration because the China Lobby succeeded in damning them as having 'lost China,' (90) the former by respectively being too enamored of Mao and the latter by not doing enough to support Chiang Kai-Shek. The last charge was true. Truman and Secretary of State Dean Acheson both underfunded aid to the Nationalists in 1948 because they thought China was a "lost cause" (87). The public was not told this in the White Paper because the administration wanted to resolve itself of any complicity in the fall of China to the Communists.

Gurman does not mention that the administration had up to this time also misled the public into thinking that those who opposed the Nationalists were nothing more than Chinese populists. The White Paper's inside primary information from the China Hands clearly refuted this idea and fueled the rage of the China Lobby. She does, however, in this chapter and the next one, carefully detail the subsequent rise, fall, and demise of the careers of Davies and Service. Those more cautious souls like Sprouse and Rice survived the McCarthy and China Lobby purge. However, Gurman asserts that the mistreatment of some of the China Hands determined that the State Department backed away from "bold diplomatic writing" for several decades and that this meant by the 1960s that diplomats in Vietnam did not engage in any field work or even put their names on their mainly innocuous reports -- much to the detriment of U.S. foreign policy. (110)

Gurman singles out George Ball's attempt to influence Vietnam policy, not as a member of the diplomatic corps, but as an Under Secretary of State during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. This choice is curious since the main thesis of the book examines the impact, or lack thereof, of traditional diplomatic appointees. Clearly George Ball was not in that category and so his futile efforts to change Lyndon Johnson's mind does not make him a "consummate internal dissenter" (158) in keeping with the others discussed in this book. Even though, unlike selected foreign service officers, as a dissenter inside the executive branch Ball never risked his career, Gurman still admires his "*writerly* approach" in contrast to the "*public rhetorical emphasis*" (author's italics) of the president and his senior political advisers (121).

The eight memoranda he wrote to Johnson from October 1964 to September 1966 opposing escalation of the war in Vietnam came to naught and despite the details Gurman provides about them she concludes that he "did more to sell the war than to stem it" (134).

Among other things, Ball appeared on television defending the administration's policy and the State Department published and publicly distributed his speeches. Gurman's research into the content of Ball's memoranda and his interaction with certain members of the administration including the Wise Men,³ in addition to Johnson, is meticulous, but in the end it is inconsequential despite her claim that his criticism of the logic of escalation came to fruition after Ball no longer served in government with Johnson's announcement in March 1966 to stop the bombing and to not run again for president.

I found the most interesting aspect of Gurman's account of Ball to be his association with Jean Monnet, the French official who directed post-WWII economic planning in France and successfully advanced European economic cooperation in the European Coal and Steel Commission. Gurman makes a convincing case for the impact on Ball of Monnet's idea about using thinking and persuasion to achieve the economic integration of Europe that ultimately led to the European Monetary Union. Monnet's emphasis on writing influenced Ball through his work with him on the "reports of the French Supply Council and the subsequent Schuman Plan" (125). Whether Ball's "faith in institutions" (126) and "reconceptualizing the international order" through writing can be found in his eight memoranda is not as self-evident, as Gurman later claims in this chapter. Moreover, Ball's work with Monnet is not stressed in either the books she cites in footnote 9 on page 230 or in the latest collection of essays about Monnet.⁴ That Ball learned from Monnet about the importance of writing cannot be questioned, but how much Monnet's vision of peace through commerce affected his views on Vietnam is not revealed in his dissenting memoranda.

Gurman gives much-deserved attention in her last chapter on the Dissent Channel that was created in 1971 within the State Department and ultimately failed in its mission to change, let alone modify, policy. No president since Nixon has done anything except to oppose internal dissenters and they all manipulated the Dissent Channel while "formally encouraging dissent, while at the same time deflating the most serious threat posed by internal dissenters" (189). Gurman, nonetheless, tries to place more negative emphasis on the Nixon administration by saying that in addition to the "secret Plumbers Unit", saying that it created "other overt and unabashed plumbers' units, who would accomplish with legal means" what it could not do surreptitiously (176). This statement applies primarily to Daniel Ellsberg, who was a leaker, not an internal dissenter. Practically the only achievement of actual members of the Dissent Channel during Nixon's years in office was to "contribute to a growing concern about leaks" (178).

³ The "Wise Men" represented a group of former U.S. officials that President Johnson began to consult on Vietnam starting in November 1967. The group included Dean Acheson, George Ball, McGeorge Bundy, Clark Clifford, Arthur Dean, Douglas Dillon, Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas, Averell Harriman, Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., Robert Murphy, Cyrus Vance and Gens. Omar Bradley, Matthew Ridgway and Maxwell Taylor.

⁴ Dean J. Kotlowski, ed., *The European Union: From Jean to the Euro* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000). See also Asaf Siniver, *Nixon, Kissinger, and U.S. Foreign Policy Making* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Interestingly, Gurman might have concentrated, as she did in the chapter on Ball, on Melvin Laird who, as Secretary of Defense, unsuccessfully opposed the secret bombing Cambodia. While he lost on this issue, he exercised considerable influence as the unofficial author of the Vietnamization program (a term he coined), the Nixon Doctrine, and of the end to the draft. It is noteworthy that Laird took these positions before the creation of the Dissent Channel. Like Ball, Laird was more interested in ending the war in Vietnam rather than winning it.⁵

Instead, Gurman reverts to naming and researching the activities of little-known members of the Dissent Channel such as Thomas Boyatt, who was chief of the Cyprus desk and criticized U.S. policy in Cyprus in a 1974 memorandum. Kissinger successfully prevented this information from being released to the Pike Committee⁶ by arguing that officers of the Dissent Channel had to be protected from the type of criticism that had occurred under McCarthy. Although New York Democratic Representative Otis Pike did not buy this argument, George Kennan surprisingly did. Gurman unconvincingly links the State Department's refusal to turn over the full text of the Boyatt memorandum to the Committee to the significance of Nixon's refusal initially to turn over the White House tapes.

Her other dissenter in this chapter is John Brady Kiesling, who resigned from his position as political counselor at the U.S. embassy in Athens before the invasion of Iraq, which he opposed. In 2006 he wrote a book about his career and opposition to the war.⁷ Unlike Boyatt, Kiesling became a public opponent of the war by going on a national lecture tour and, unlike Ball, he joined rather than disdained the anti-war movement. Two other State Department officers also resigned after reading Kiesling's resignation letter. Gurman agrees with Kiesling that he set an example for how diplomatic insiders could become outsiders.

Gurman has written a very valuable book about a neglected group of critics of U.S. foreign policy. It is unfortunate that the arrest and imprisonment of PFC Bradley Manning, who was convicted sentenced to life imprisonment for leaking State Department cables to WikiLeaks, occurred too late for her to include him because he has not survived, as all her other subjects did, the full wrath of the government's dislike of leakers. Like Ellsberg and Assange, he falls outside the category of 'writerly' opponents of U.S. foreign policy. Unlike them, he faces life in jail.

⁵ Author's interview with Laird, October 5, 1984; Roger Morris, *Uncertain Greatness: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 87-88, 153-154; Joan Hoff, *Nixon Reconsidered* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 163-166, 212-215; and Conrad Black, *A Life in Full: Richard Nixon* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), 586, 591, 608.

⁶ The Pike Committee (the House Select Committee on Intelligence launched an investigation in 1975 on the process of gathering intelligence and making decisions in recent foreign affairs crises such as the August 1974 coup in Cyprus.

⁷ John Brady Kiesling, *Diplomacy Lessons: Realism for an Unloved Superpower* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2006).

At a time when the history of United States foreign relations is increasingly expanding in new directions, Hannah Gurman's work succeeds in returning our attention to diplomats and their work. For all of the significance of nonstate actors, members of Congress, and others, Gurman's book reminds us that diplomats, even more so today in Iraq and Afghanistan, are on the front lines of American engagement with the world.

Among the strengths of this manuscript is Gurman's ability to bring together familiar stories and showcase them in a new light. Gurman examines what she terms "dissent" by George Kennan, China experts John Paton Davies and John Stewart Service, and Undersecretary of State George Ball but doesn't treat her chapters as isolated case studies (9). For example, Kennan, the first diplomat she profiles, returns in a later chapter as a champion of political reporting, defending Service's dispatches from China during the 1940s.

Gurman illuminates how State Department personnel conceived of policymaking and their role in it. To some degree, the persecution of China hands Davies and Service suggests that the 'sausage-making' aspects of policymaking should be shielded from political scrutiny. Gurman might explore this idea in greater depth particularly as it intersects with the recent WikiLeaks releases she highlights in her book. Gurman's work betrays a strong interest in the act of writing, subjecting it to scrutiny as close as the memoranda she analyzes. She offers a particularly interesting analysis of George Ball's penchant for endlessly revising memoranda and his aim to revise U.S. policy toward Vietnam. Her book is probingly analytical in all of the right spots.

Nonetheless, Gurman's complex account prompts further questions. For example, how much did proximity to Foggy Bottom matter? Is the dissent of those based in Washington different from those stationed abroad? Do diplomats have an easier chance of being heard in dispatches sent back from post? Her description of Kennan's relationship with his political patron Undersecretary of the Navy James Forrestal is particularly engaging and begs further analysis of the psychology of the men she profiles. Must these diplomats dissent because they lack the social acuity to draw attention to their views through other means?

Some of these questions might have been addressed by a clearer discussion of terminology at the outset of the book. Gurman does not sufficiently define dissent, which obscures the extent to which we should see Kennan, for example, as dissenting from U.S. policy. Related to this, she suggests that U.S. diplomat John Brady Kiesling, who resigned in opposition in 2003 to the coming war in Iraq, was not opposed to becoming "a public dissident" (193). It isn't clear from her discussion whether the terms dissident and dissenter are interchangeable or if they suggest different proximities to power.

Gurman's study is most interesting when it moves beyond familiar characters such as Kennan, Davies, and Ball to explore the 1971 creation of a "dissent channel" in the State

Department.¹ She effectively discusses congressional interest in Cyprus desk officer Thomas Boyatt's dissent channel memo that argued the United States could have acted to prevent the recent coup in Cyprus. Here she makes broader connections to power struggles between the executive and legislative branches and to greater congressional assertiveness in the wake of Watergate. However, beyond exploring the political manipulation of diplomatic dissent, greater discussion of the consequences of using the dissent channel would have illuminated its purpose. For example, she writes, "The channel proved that dissent could be tolerated so long as it remained inside the bureaucracy. To be sure, several users of the Dissent Channel were fired. And many more received negative evaluations" (189). Was there consideration of developing greater protections for foreign service officers who used the dissent channel given that both the Accra and Cyprus dissenters whom she profiles were re-assigned after sending their memos? Their views might finally reach the top of the chain of the command, but what were the consequences for their careers? Were there examples of personnel using the dissent channel and remaining in their positions? Or did utilizing the channel make continued involvement in that aspect of U.S. policy untenable?

This book would have been stronger if Gurman had undertaken a comprehensive evaluation of the hundreds of messages that foreign service officers sent through the dissent channel after Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's departure. She alludes to several issues, including U.S. policy toward Argentina in 1977, that were raised through the channel but doesn't explore the stories surrounding these messages in any depth. Gurman highlights the twenty foreign service officers who protested the United States invasion of Cambodia in a 1970 letter to Secretary of State William Rogers, which she describes as "the largest act of internal dissent to date in the history of the State Department" (167). Following this analysis with an examination of State Department reporting on the Cambodian genocide in the Carter years would have added to her study. She might also have examined those who protested United States inaction on Bosnia. Open dissent regarding United States policy on Bosnia included an April 1993 letter signed by a dozen diplomats alleging "Western capitulation to Serbian aggression."² In this instance the channel seems to have been ineffective in managing internal dissent, leading three foreign service officers to resign in rapid succession and publicly criticize U.S. policy.³ How did the dissent channel figure in their efforts to urge a different course?

¹ Gurman might also have compared the establishment of the dissent channel with other bureaucratic re-organization of the State Department at the time such as the reforms designed to enable the State Department to track international human rights violations more effectively. See Barbara Keys, "Congress, Kissinger, and the Origins of Human Rights Diplomacy," *Diplomatic History* 34:5 (November 2010): 823-51; and Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-3, Documents on Global Issues, 1973-1976*.

² Samantha Power, *"A Problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2002), 301.

³ *Ibid.*, 312-5.

Methodological challenges may have limited Gurman's sources; she reports that dissent channel messages are filed with more routine cables and no effort is made to identify them to future readers. It would have been interesting to hear more about how Gurman located the dissent channel messages she discusses and what we might learn when additional dissents are found.

Finally, Gurman frames her book with the WikiLeaks release of 251,287 State Department cables. Such a connection might attract mainstream attention, but I wonder if the analogy is appropriate. "Cablegate," as the release has been dubbed, does help us reflect on diplomatic writing by providing, for example, unvarnished political reporting on foreign leaders, but given the telegrams Gurman cites, its relevance to diplomatic dissent is less clear.

The *Dissent Papers: The Voices of Diplomats in the Cold War and Beyond* chronicles the rise, fall, and rise again of several State Department figures as prophets of U.S. foreign policy. Hannah Gurman's stated topic and purpose--"to show the place and evolution of diplomatic dissent writing in the larger arc of the 'American century'" (3)--fills a surprising gap in the literature of both the IR and history disciplines. Readers will profit from the author's examination of then-contrary, now-unclassified policy writings--what she terms the 'dissent papers,' in a deliberate nod to the Pentagon Papers--and their authors, such as George F. Kennan, John Stewart Service, John Paton Davies, and George Ball. These diplomat-writers served in the State Department at different times, in different locations, and at different levels, but they share a sort of unity in the modern era, according to Gurman, after the rejections of the excesses of McCarthyism, the opening of relations with the People's Republic of China, and the shift in government and public opinion after the Vietnam War. Gurman's analysis is strongest in the chapters that focus on individual Cold War dissenters and flags in the penultimate chapter, which considers an overall "dissent channel" in the Watergate era and during the Iraq War. Although she treats texts that "critiqued the reigning logic" (8) of their time throughout her book, Gurman is most informative and intriguing when she characterizes their authors, the "voices" that are alluded to in her subtitle.

For her theoretical understanding of the role of the conventional diplomat, Gurman invokes Hans Morgenthau's classic formulation in *Politics Among Nations* that diplomats ought to be the "fingertips of foreign policy" (4). She then separates her selected diplomat-writers, promoting them as "in-house authors of dissent," rather than fingertips of policy (8). Nevertheless, her scaffolding, as initiated in the introduction, developed in the interior chapters, and completed in the conclusion, relies on Morgenthau's argument. She argues that certain fingertips should be hailed as prophets. She also embraces Morgenthau's well-known point that "[t]he success or failure of a country's foreign policy and its ability to preserve peace will depend upon the reliability of the diplomat's reports." (3, 199) Moreover, she selects another figure from Morgenthau's time, George F. Kennan, as her touchstone. Kennan dominates the foundational chapter of the book, and he makes an important cameo appearance in the China chapter. Then Gurman returns to Kennan in order to compare him, favorably and frequently, to George Ball during the Vietnam era (133, 140, 155-56). By the end of *The Dissent Papers*, Gurman holds up Kennan as the model for a nonconformist diplomat-writer. The problem, it seems, rests with government officials who were slow to grasp what Kennan perceived from the beginning and the fact that he and other dissenters should have been seen as the fingertips of policy. To bring her argument up to date, Gurman commends President Barack Obama and his advisors for following Kennan's advice rather than the policies of previous presidents.

Even though Kennan was on the outs for part of his tenure at State, he undeniably served as the fingertips of policy in, especially, the Baltics, Germany, and the Soviet Union. Observing, reporting, researching, synthesizing, and offering his considered opinions were the substance of his work (and influence). Gurman, however, somewhat undermines her

stated thesis by suggesting that fingertips--or, for that matter, dissenting fingertips--either do or should actually make U.S. foreign policy. While they provide invaluable service, diplomat-writers such as Kennan are not and cannot be the brain, heart, and soul of the nation's foreign policy. The diplomat's essential job cannot be confused with other, even more essential jobs--notably that of the president and his secretary of state--in the shaping and execution of American foreign policy.

Gurman concerns herself with the 'American century,' which ranges from the 1940s to at least the end of the Cold War and suggests that United States foreign policy should be defined primarily in terms of diplomacy. But it seems more accurate to conclude that rank-and-file diplomats, such as Kennan, were not in charge. Even in the nineteenth century, which offers the European model so prized by Morgenthau, foreign relations were most shaped by both the diplomats and military leaders at the very top. (And though this model wrought a long period of system preservation from the end of the Congress of Vienna to the beginning of the First World War, the system became less stable over time, typically aimed to suppress democracy and political openness, and ended in a global war that shattered the system itself.) For its part, U.S. foreign policy in the American century--and now--featured presidential leadership, diplomacy, military strength, and intelligence. The question, then, goes to position and perspective. Were diplomats marginalized, as Gurman argues, or were they one community among several that passed their expertise to their chief--the Secretary of State--and, through him, to the President?

The President has become central to American foreign policy decision making in the modern era. To be sure, he relies on his Secretary of State. At its most collaborative and perhaps successful levels, think of Harry Truman and Dean Acheson, Dwight D. Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles, Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, and Bill Clinton and Madeleine Albright. These relationships worked because either the Secretary of State largely agreed with the President's approach--as with Kissinger and Nixon--or the Secretary's tactics and policy implementation supported the President's principles and strategic vision. (Acheson's geostrategic realism backing up Truman's liberal internationalism comes to mind.) At times, though, some relationships have not turned out well in the modern era, and the buck stopped with the president. Think of John Kennedy and Dean Rusk, Ronald Reagan and Alexander Haig (not George Shultz), Jimmy Carter and Cyrus Vance, or George W. Bush and Colin Powell. The mismatch either lasted only one term--such as with Powell--or quickly gave way to a person in sync with the president. The case of Jimmy Carter is especially instructive. Carter may have wanted to stick with Vance, because they were philosophically compatible, but developments in international politics ultimately caused him to listen more to National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski and to feel betrayed by Vance's subsequent resignation. But this case also reflects the growth in U.S. power and importance in world politics, the rise in influence of the national security advisor, and the emergence of the president as the crucial figure from the executive branch in American politics (both domestic and foreign). President Barack Obama could not carry out his foreign policy agenda without Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, but he is the 'decider' (to use a tainted word that Obama would probably agree with off the record).

Another key reason that Gurman thinks that diplomats have been marginalized is the bureaucratic growth of the State Department, which has resulted in “tensions and distance between the diplomatic establishment and both the White House and Congress” (7). While this factor is noteworthy, it is not all that historically or politically relevant for Presidents, who have never mixed much with the bureaucracies of their executive branch departments and agencies. Why should the State Department be any different? Presidents interact most with and rely on their Secretaries (or the Deputy who is acting in his chief’s behalf when the Secretary is traveling). Further, it is the Secretaries who are in charge of their departments--that is, of their own rank and file. Questions about reform at State that have been raised by Clinton’s Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, which is modeled on the Department of Defense’s Quadrennial Defense Review, should be studied and answered. Perhaps structural improvements will help information and analysis bubble up better to the chief executive. But the President is going to understand such enterprises largely through his top advisors’ eyes. What is now most important in American foreign policy is the professional and personal relationship--the tangible and the intangible included--between the President and his Secretary of State and between the President and his National Security Advisor.

Harry Truman never forgot that it was Dean Acheson, then Undersecretary of State, who waited alone on the train platform for the President after his party’s heavy 1946 midterm election losses. When it was time to replace George Marshall--the ‘great one of the age,’ in Truman’s words--the president picked Acheson and continued with the most consequential foreign policy of the postwar era. Marshall and Acheson differed in terms of personality, but both served their president. Truman grew to know what he wanted and what he thought was best for America and the world, and he relied on these two men to help make his policies happen. Did Truman get some of his information from Kennan? Yes, he did. Did he know when this information was from Kennan? Most likely not. Kennan would have approved only the Marshall Plan. Truman understood that the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, NATO, and the policies that followed all needed to go together in order to form the strategy of containment. In this case, the dissenting diplomat was wrong.

We have desperately needed a book on this topic. One does not have to agree with Gurman’s assessment of the dissenters, but all can appreciate the analysis of these State Department figures’ positions in one volume. Readers will rest most comfortably with Gurman if they are historical revisionists. Those who find that the archival evidence of recent years largely endorses the views and policies of early cold warriors, such as Truman, Acheson, and Charles Bohlen, will praise the topic and be frustrated with the thesis.

Author's Response by Hannah Gurman, New York University

I would like to thank Tom Maddux for organizing this roundtable and Laura Belmonte, Robert Dean, Joan Hoff, Elizabeth Edwards Spalding, and Sarah Snyder for their reviews, both generous and critical, of *The Dissent Papers*. It is especially gratifying to have one's work discussed with such rigor and insight, and I am appreciative of the opportunity to respond. Given the reviewers' thorough summaries, I will not rehash a synopsis of the book, nor will I be able to respond to every comment and question.

That's probably for the best. These roundtable reviews have become a valuable forum not just for discussing the fine points of individual works, but also for dealing with broader, reflexive issues. Questions about what the history of U.S. foreign relations is and how we study it are implicit in many of the reviewers' comments. In responding, I would like to bring these questions to the fore, by situating my remarks within a slightly broader set of definitional, substantive, and methodological issues that pertain not only to the book, but also, more loosely, to the state and direction of the field.

In the opening of her review, Snyder aptly calls attention to the multiple ways in which the history of U.S. foreign relations has expanded in recent years to include "non-state actors, members of Congress, and others." This expansion, which has been the focus of many probing discussions on H-Diplo, is of course part of a much longer transformation that has been taking place in the humanities since the 1960s, with the rise of the New Left and its attendant methodological and ideological revisions. In the process of absorbing these developments, and becoming what is variously called U.S. foreign relations, the U.S. and the World, or international history, diplomatic history has evolved from a field that tended to reflect the ideology and demographics of the foreign policy establishment to one that is characterized in large part by critique of U.S. empire in its various guises.

How does a book about dissenting diplomats and their writing fit into this landscape? As an admirer of the *avant-garde* in this evolution, I grappled with this question from the time that I began researching and writing what eventually became *The Dissent Papers*.

One issue that strikes at the core of this question and is implicit in a number of the reviewers' comments is whether the diplomats I feature in this book were *really* dissenters, which leads to a number of definitional, conceptual, and methodological questions. In the interest of full disclosure, the focus on diplomatic writing preceded the focus on dissent. One issue that I struggled with was how to collectively characterize the beliefs and actions of the diplomats whose writings I wanted to engage in the book. Eventually, I settled on the term dissent, although the term "voice"—which appears in the subtitle and draws from Albert O. Hirschman's classic work on organizational decline, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty* (1970)—is probably more precise.¹

¹ Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).

Dissent is a very charged term, which Snyder suggests might have been defined more clearly in the book. Refining definitions is often a good thing, but I wonder whether any amount of refinement would solve what I think at base are not just technical concerns, but also ideological ones. If the issue were merely technical, one could begin, as I do, by distinguishing between democratic protest and internal disagreement. Although the term dissent is typically associated with the former, it does have a history within government institutions. Think of the Supreme Court in which unelected judges with various ideological positions can register their dissent with the majority view.

As far as I can tell, the use of the word dissent in the State Department is much more recent—dating back to the mid-1960s—when administrative reformers were grappling with how to reinvigorate morale within the rank-and-file in the midst of the Vietnam War—leading to the implementation in 1971 of an official Dissent Channel through which State Department officers could register their opposing views on a given foreign policy, typically after having exhausted the normal reporting channels. This is admittedly different from the experiences I document in earlier chapters of the book in which John Stewart Service and John Paton Davies attempted to influence the policy outcome in real time through reports from the field, and different still from George Kennan and George Ball who were (to various extents) part of the high-level debate in Washington. While I point out these distinctions in the book, I agree that they could be sharper.

However, Dean's questioning of whether George Ball was a dissenter seems to rest on somewhat different grounds. His doubts stem from Ball's safe form of opposition, in which he ensured his colleagues from the start that he would not rock the boat if the decisions concerning Vietnam did not go his way. This gets at the heart of a broader critique, which underscores the relative conservatism and institutional loyalty that characterized the diplomats I feature in this book. I agree that there are serious ethical and moral failures in Ball's stance, which I make a point of noting, but perhaps not sufficiently. More broadly, while I shrink from the language of admiration, which Hoff uses to describe my stance toward Ball, I acknowledge a palpable tension between my repeated assertions that I do not wish to idealize the diplomats in this book and the book's overall tendency to hold them up as exceptions of a sort.

The language of dissent may not be the most productive, but getting rid of it doesn't quite solve the problem. Regardless of whether one uses the term dissenter to describe Ball or the others, there is, in my view, a dearth of conceptual space and terminology in the existing literature for mapping out the differences—however big or small—between the likes of Ball and others who were more vigorously advancing escalation. As Anders Stephanson has since pointed out to me, Michel Foucault's concept of "parrhesia," a risky act of truth-telling from within the circles of power, might be productive here.² But, following Dean, the relatively staid quality of these diplomats' arguments can make the

² Michel Foucault, "Discourse and Truth: the Problematization of Parrhesia," lecture, University of California at Berkeley, Oct.-Nov. 1983, <http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/>.

language of truth, often associated with more radical voices, seem somewhat misplaced. The language of risk also raises questions, following Snyder, about how risky the acts I document in this book really were. In the case of the Dissent Channel, to answer Snyder's question, statistics compiled by the American Foreign Service Association suggest that users of the Dissent Channel were very likely to be transferred, but not very likely to be fired. Many, including Thomas Boyatt, were promoted, and went on to have successful careers in the department.³

In *The Dissent Papers*, I chose to keep at bay the dichotomies of heroes and villains, truths and lies in order to analyze the writings of individual diplomats who were frustrated with the *status quo* and who thought they were doing something to change it. Beyond the concerns of this book, however, I think there are some larger questions at play: how does one capture the dilemmas experienced by individuals within the foreign policy establishment without engaging in hagiography? More broadly, how do we expose imperial scripts without ironing out the wrinkles within those scripts?

In *The Dissent Papers*, I chose to ground such questions in an examination of the State Department. The book thus departs from the premise that the State Department, as an institution, has often existed in tension with the reigning policies of the nation and their attendant ideologies, and is therefore a useful place to study rifts within the foreign policy establishment. I was particularly interested in identifying a collective worldview and set of practices within the diplomatic establishment and seeing whether and how that mapped onto the arguments of individual diplomats. The book focuses on moments in which dissenting diplomats were not entirely on the margins—but had somehow gotten the attention of presidents and their advisors, and eventually congress and the public—in order to trace the production and reception of their arguments within a broader context.

Several of the reviewers point out that the State Department is not a particularly important place to look for understandings of how U.S. foreign policy is formulated. Spalding argues that presidents do and should make foreign policy, while both Belmonte and Dean note the relative absence of other actors in the story—such as congress, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), and the public. Responding directly to these points, I would argue that Spalding's observation is the premise that fuels this book. How, I seek to understand, did State Department officials deal with the reality of their marginalization during pivotal moments of decision-making? While the book focuses on the State Department, I would hasten to add that congress and other groups do play a role in the book, especially in the chapters on the China Hands and the Dissent Channel.

In any case, yes, the book is primarily about the State Department. Of course, if one is seeking a comprehensive history of a particular policy or era in U.S. foreign relations, a

³ David T. Jones, "Is There Life After Dissent?" *Foreign Service Journal* (June 2002), <http://www.afsa.org/fsj/journal2000.cfm>. Using statistics compiled by the American Foreign Service Association of diplomats who received awards for dissent, Jones observes that the higher one's status is at the time of using the Dissent Channel, the less adverse the impact is on his or her career.

study of the State Department, or for that matter, of almost any organization, will always be lacking. Nonetheless, so as long as we are expanding as a field, I think it is important to expand the boundaries of what counts as history in histories of U.S. foreign relations. Surely, the field will continue to be dominated by works that seek to explain the origins and development of a given policy or historical event in the history of U.S. foreign relations. And increasingly, it will use an international lens to do so. But this need not preclude other interventions, including those that seek to do something other than tell the story of “x” policy or “y” event.

Why not more histories of failed influence? Why not more genre-busting accounts, which progress through a series of mis-en-scènes, and whose protagonists, like that in Norman Mailer’s *Armies of the Night: History as a Novel, the Novel as History* (1968), are somewhat pallid and regressive, but nonetheless complicated figures, who occupy the vast space between brash imperialism and ardent anti-imperial activism? ⁴ More methodological, subjective, and epistemological diversity of this sort would, in my view, benefit the field, bringing in valuable insights from other disciplines in the humanities, such as literature and anthropology, where master narratives are frequently analyzed in ways that are more attentive to the issues of reproducing new master narratives in our own writing.

In terms of the State Department, we certainly don’t need bland, whitewashed histories of the diplomatic establishment, and I hope that my book is not read as such. Instead, I see it somewhat in the vein of Robert Schulzinger’s *The Making of the Diplomatic Mind* (1976), which provided valuable insights into the cultural history and development of the diplomatic establishment, serving to some degree as a counterpoint to the official histories commissioned by the Department.⁵ As the field of U.S. foreign relations beefs up its cultural studies credentials and looks beyond Record Group 59 (the general records of the State Department in the National Archives), I see no reason why this thread should be cut short, why, in other words, innovative studies of the diplomatic establishment would need to be thrown out with the bathwater of crusty diplomatic history.

The Dissent Papers is as much a study of diplomatic writing as it is one of dissenting diplomats. To the extent that the diplomatic establishment has developed a worldview over the course of its existence, I argue that key aspects of that view are embedded in its evolving tradition of diplomatic writing—which encompasses everything from field reports to synthetic analyses of policy in Washington to everyday influence peddling and the gossip of inter-office communiqués. In different ways, the diplomats I feature in this book displayed an unusual commitment to these forms of writing—which occasionally became part of the public debates over their influence and that of the diplomatic establishment more broadly. For the most part, this is not a cause-effect argument, in which I assert that

⁴ Norman Mailer, *The Armies of the Night: History as a Novel, the Novel as History* (New York: New American Library, 1968).

⁵ Robert Schulzinger, *The Making of the Diplomatic Mind: The Training, Outlook, and Style of United States Foreign Service Officers* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1975).

diplomatic writing determined or explains “x” policy outcome. Instead, I trace the production and reception of diplomatic writing as a reflection of individual, institutional, and political views on a specific policy as well as the status and morale of the State Department in a given era. The process of this writing also struck me as key, signaling how the act of producing and exchanging information in a given form and through an evolving set of rituals became an important part of the diplomat’s worldview.

I think this aspect of the book is easily overshadowed by discussions of dissent and debates that concern specific policies and historical events. So I appreciate the reviewers’ comments on this score and the chance to respond to them. First, I want to clarify the use of Hans Morgenthau’s quote about diplomats as the “fingertips of foreign policy.” As Hoff points out, and as I explain in the book, Morgenthau never developed this point, though in *Politics Among Nations* (1948) and elsewhere, he associated the lack of realism in U.S. foreign policy with the debilitation of the skills and mindset of classical diplomacy.⁶ Morgenthau’s quote thus serves as an indicator of an ideological link between classical realists and the U.S. diplomatic establishment, while at the same time reflecting the tendency in such theorists to truncate their claims about diplomatic writing. (Incidentally, by juxtaposing Morgenthau and Julian Assange, I did not mean to suggest an ideological affinity, but instead, to underscore the contrast between the two and remark on how it was Assange, not Morgenthau, whose leaking of the 250,000 State Department cables unwittingly led the public to reflect, albeit temporarily, on the nature, purpose, and influence of diplomatic writing.) I frame Morgenthau’s quote as an invitation to pursue the matter further, by engaging in a more sustained theoretical and empirical analysis of diplomatic writing vis-à-vis U.S. foreign policy.

The usefulness of this approach ultimately depends on its successful application in individual chapters. On this score, Dean voices skepticism, particularly with respect to whether diplomatic writing is a productive lens for thinking through the ordeal of the China Hands. I would agree that the targeting of the China Hands is not explainable solely through this lens, nor do I attempt to make such an argument in the chapter. Dozens of works, many cited in my book, do a good job of documenting the purge of the China Hands and tracing the various ideological threads of McCarthyism. My goal was not to rehash that work, but to add to it, in particular by tracing how diplomatic writing figured into the story—how the China Hands rose to prominence alongside innovations in diplomatic field reporting and how well-known aspects of the McCarthyist attacks—including anti-intellectualism, guilt by association, and communist conspiracy within the government—also targeted and affected the practices of such reporting.

This is not an entirely novel argument on my part. It draws heavily from David Halberstam’s *The Best and the Brightest* (1972),⁷ which could be considered the crowning

⁶ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Knopf, 1948).

⁷ David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (New York: Random House, 1972).

journalistic example of a larger body of scholarly work interested in the politics of knowledge production within the foreign policy establishment. Though *The Best and the Brightest* is known for its incisive critique of epistemological hubris inside the Kennedy administration, its lamentation over the fate of the China Hands belies a faith, perhaps misplaced, in the knowledge and practices that eroded as a consequence of their dismissal. Nostalgia for the China Hands aside, the broader intention of my argument was to similarly underscore a link between the forms and substance of knowledge production and exchange inside the foreign policy establishment. It is an effort, admittedly under-developed and over-determined in places, to consider how a genre courses through foreign policy history.

Following Dean's misgivings, I would venture to say that, for some in the field, this is a rather suspect approach. While studies of the role of gender, race, and class are increasingly prominent in the history of U.S. foreign relations, the idea of a genre as a lens goes against some of the basic premises of historical analysis, especially of policy. The categories of identity politics can be more easily integrated into traditional narrative history writing. For good reasons, we see these constructions as having a material and social reality. The formation and maintenance of social categories and ideologies have immediate and palpable long-term effects on individual lives and on the world. To date, however, historians in general, and of U.S. foreign relations in particular, have done relatively little work to unpack the narrative forms and structures that embed and perpetuate systems of thought around these categories. Subsequently, one can sometimes come away from histories of U.S. foreign relations with an undeveloped sense of how a given ideology maps out onto cultural forms and debates within or outside the foreign policy establishment. Ideology frequently appears as content without form. In my view, the expansion of the history of U.S. foreign policy could benefit from more socially-embedded formal analysis, drawing from the work of Frederic Jameson, David Harvey, Hayden White, and others, while infusing that body of scholarship with an equally beneficial dose of empirical and archival inquiry.⁸

Finally, some comments on sources and errata. I appreciate the reviewers' attention to accuracy and their suggestions for additional sources. In the interest of space, I will respond to just a couple of those points here.

In her comments, Snyder observes that the chapter on the Dissent Channel would have been stronger if I had examined more of the hundreds of messages submitted through the channel. I agree. Unfortunately, this is not something I was able to do for this project. In addition to being tucked into various country files, the vast majority of these messages remain classified. The National Security Archive attempted to launch a lawsuit to obtain

⁸ Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991); David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (New York: Blackwell, 1989); Hayden White, *Metahistory: Six Critiques* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1980). By grouping these works together, I do not mean to homogenize their approaches to thinking through the various relationships between writing and event, base and superstructure, genre and ideology, or the various other considerations of form and content to which they belong.

some of these messages, but ultimately decided not to, as, according to senior analyst William Burr,, it determined that the case law was not on their side.

Dean notes that Robert Newman's *Owen Lattimore and the "Loss" of China* (1992) is missing from my bibliography.⁹ Lattimore's case appears only briefly in the book, and I agree that it would have been useful in fleshing out the relationships between the diplomats and the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR) in particular. Robert Newman's work on China was extremely helpful in this project, and he generously sent me the cassette tapes of his extensive interviews with the China Hands from the 1980s.¹⁰ While I don't detail the IPR connection sufficiently in the book, I do discuss the various professional and personal connections between journalists and diplomats in China during the 1930s.

Dean correctly points out the mistake in troop numbers on page 120. By the end of 1961, there were approximately 3,000 troops in Vietnam. The 11,000 figure represents troop levels at the end of 1962.

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⁹ Robert Newman, *Owen Lattimore and the "Loss" of China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

¹⁰ I was especially influenced by an article Newman published about the *China White Paper*, a report issued by the Truman administration in August 1949 explaining the administration's stance on the "loss" of China. Robert Newman, "Self-Inflicted Wound," *Prologue* 14, no. 3 (Fall 1982): 141-156, cited in *The Dissent Papers*.