

Weltmacht und Weltordnung Roundtable Review



Reviewed Work:

Klaus Schwabe. *Weltmacht und Weltordnung: Amerikanische Außenpolitik von 1898 bis zur Gegenwart. Eine Jahrhundertgeschichte.* (World Power and World Order, from 1898 to the Present. A History of the Twentieth Century). Paderborn: Schöningh, 2005. ISBN: 978-3-506-74783-9.

Roundtable Editor: Thomas Maddux

Reviewers: Günter Bischof, Christian Hacke, Donal O'Sullivan, George Schild, Thomas Schwartz.

Stable URL: <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Weltmacht-und-Weltordnung-Roundtable.pdf>

Your use of this H-Diplo roundtable review indicates your acceptance of the H-Diplo and H-Net copyright policies, and terms of condition and use.

The following is a plain language summary of these policies:

You may redistribute and reprint this work under the following conditions:

- Attribution:** You must include full and accurate attribution to the author(s), web location, date of publication, H-Diplo, and H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online.
 - Nonprofit and education purposes only.** You may not use this work for commercial purposes.
 - For any reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the license terms of this work.
 - Any of these conditions may be waived if you obtain permission from the copyright holder. For such queries, contact the H-Diplo editorial staff at h-diplo@h-net.msu.edu.
-

H-Diplo is an international discussion network dedicated to the study of diplomatic and international history (including the history of foreign relations). For more information regarding H-Diplo, please visit <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/>.

For further information about our parent organization, H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online, please visit <http://www.h-net.org/>.

Copyright © 2007 by H-Diplo, a part of H-Net. H-Net permits the redistribution and reprinting of this work for nonprofit, educational purposes, with full and accurate attribution to the author, web location, date of publication, originating list, and H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online. For other uses contact the H-Diplo editorial staff at h-diplo@h-net.msu.edu.

h-diplo **ROUNDTABLE** *Review*



Klaus Schwabe. *Weltmacht und Weltordnung: Amerikanische Außenpolitik von 1898 bis zur Gegenwart. Eine Jahrhundertgeschichte.* (World Power and World Order, from 1898 to the Present. A History of the Twentieth Century). Paderborn: Schöningh, 2005. ISBN: 978-3-506-74783-9.

Roundtable Editor: Thomas Maddux

Reviewers: Günter Bischof, Christian Hacke, Donal O’Sullivan, George Schild, Thomas Schwartz

Contents

Introduction by Thomas Maddux, California State University, Northridge 2

Review by Günter Bischof, University of New Orleans 5

Review by Christian Hacke, Institute für Politische Wissenschaft und Soziologie, Bonn, Germany 11

Review by Donal O’Sullivan, California State University, Northridge 15

Review by George Schild, University of Tübingen 20

Review by Thomas Schwartz, Vanderbilt University 24

Author’s Response by Klaus Schwabe, Emeritus, Aachen University of Technology 28

This roundtable is also available in separate PDF files for each individual review, at <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/>.

Copyright © 2007 by H-Diplo. H-Net permits the redistribution and reprinting of this work for nonprofit, educational purposes, with full and accurate attribution to the author, web location, date of publication, originating list, and H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online. For other uses contact the H-Diplo editorial staff at h-diplo@h-net.msu.edu.

H-Diplo roundtables website- <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/>
H-Diplo roundtables RSS feed- <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/rss/roundtables.xml>

Introduction by Thomas Maddux, California State University, Northridge

All of the reviewers agree that Professor Klaus Schwabe has had a leading role in the scholarship of German academics writing on U.S. foreign policy and in the training and mentoring of a new generation of German specialists working in this field. His books and essays have been influential in both Germany and the U.S., especially his study on Woodrow Wilson and the Versailles Peace settlement. H-Diplo appreciates Professor Schwabe's willingness to participate in this roundtable on his latest work as well as the contributions of the reviewers, a respected group of European and American historians and political scientists with significant publications in the field.

Since many H-Diplo members may not be as skilled in German as the author and reviewers—the roundtable editor has not read much German since barely making it through a Ph.D. reading exam decades ago—we will use the issues raised by the reviewers to provide some background on the focus and major assessments of the book. Schwabe's response to the reviews is also a revealing and professional engagement with their assessments. Both Schwabe and the reviewers raise a number of issues worthy of further discussion.

1) Focus: Schwabe's focus is on the period from 1898 to the present. He started to write the book before George W. Bush's arrival in the White House and has two limited chapters on the post-Cold War period. To suggestions that he should have started the study in an earlier period in order to discuss the foundations of American attitudes and approaches to foreign relations before 1898, Schwabe replies that this would indeed have been valuable if space and time had permitted. Schwabe's objective is to move beyond German-language studies that focus on specific aspects of the U.S. role in the 20th century and write, for the German market, a "full-length treatment of that subject as a whole ... and to provide a reliable factual basis as a prerequisite for any informed and politically unbiased discussion."

2) Thesis: Schwabe's perspective for interpreting 20th century American foreign policy is to emphasize the different ways in which U.S. policymakers and the American public sought to find an international order that would provide reliable security. Schwabe does not suggest that Americans moved with consensus or a clear understanding of costs and consequences through the century. Instead, Schwabe stresses that from the War of 1898 to the current Bush administration the U.S. encountered a good amount of unanticipated consequences and reversals that affected generations of policy makers and the attentive public. The emphasis on security, however, does shape Schwabe's coverage and influences what he emphasizes with respect to areas of focus, categories of analysis, and schools of interpretation. Within this approach, Schwabe notes three different, recurring approaches: isolationism to avoid entanglements, unilateralism to impose U.S. ideals and interests, and the multilateralism of working with liberal democracies to deal with threats and create international institutions to address a wide range of issues. Schwabe clearly believes that the third approach has produced the most success for the United States.

3) The U.S. mission as symbol of active engagement: Several reviewers note that Schwabe also explores the most important question of how the U.S. has attempted to implement its self-image as a free, democratic-capitalistic society. Should the U.S. stand as a symbol and provide encouragement and assistance when requested or more actively engage to spread its ideals and further its interests? Schwabe explores the different American approaches from the post-1898 challenge of dealing with Cuba and the Philippines to President Woodrow Wilson's wartime crusade to George W. Bush's revival of Wilsonian idealism in a neoconservative quest in the Middle East.

4) Schwabe covers all major U.S. presidents but devotes considerable attention to Wilson, FDR, and Reagan. The reviewers note his well-grounded understanding of Wilson's shift from staying out of WWI to intervention and his quest to shape a new security structure in the League of Nations and promote the spread of democracy. Throughout the study Schwabe gives important weight to domestic politics such as in his assessment of Wilson's failure with the Senate on U.S. entry into the League. FDR receives a sympathetic assessment with respect to his pre-1941 maneuvering to undermine isolationist sentiment and aid the Allies against Nazi Germany. However, Schwabe is critical of FDR's expectations with respect to Stalin and the President's negotiating style in dealing with Stalin's demands.

5) Reagan provides a very revealing challenge for Schwabe who emphasizes the importance of historians "who feel obliged to judge historical developments on their own merits." As he notes in his response, "personally, I vividly recall the devastatingly poor reputation he had in Germany during the first phase of his administration—an estimate I personally shared in those early days. Seen from hindsight, however, there can be no doubt that without Reagan's success in both intimidating and ultimately winning over the Soviet leadership to his concept of détente there would not have come about the big sea change in Europe of 1989/1990." On the other hand, Schwabe notes Reagan's "nonchalance in conniving at terrorist activities and his unstoppable liking for public simplification. But what looked intellectually revolting turned into an asset whenever Reagan had to deal with the American public." Schwabe does criticize Reagan for his unilateralism and his Reagan Doctrine that supported anticommunist freedom fighters around the globe.

6) On the Cold War Schwabe is solidly in the containment camp and emphasizes the success of Washington in its multilateral approach with the European democracies versus the difficulties it encountered with a unilateral approach in Vietnam without very many allies. He gives little weight to revisionist attempts to put significant responsibility for the Cold War on the White House or suggestions that a relaxation of the Cold War could have been worked out with Stalin vis-à-vis Germany or with the post-Stalin Soviet leadership.

7) In response to criticism from some German historians and some of the reviewers that he pays insufficient attention to the influence of historical categories of analysis such as economics, cultural relations, and gender, Schwabe responds directly within his focus of addressing the major issues that shaped the U.S. quest for security:

11 May 2007

- A. On economics, Schwabe is familiar with William A. Williams' Open Door thesis but suggests that it "would be reductionist to assign to a given economic interest—like the American espousal of free trade—an all overarching function in explaining America's role in international affairs. In this sense, the occasional neglect of economic factors in my text is not accidental. I just do not believe, to offer an absurd example, that in 1940-41 F.D. Roosevelt turned America into an 'arsenal of democracy' in order to boost the American steel production. The Marshall Plan, to offer another example of the limit of the economic paradigm, was politically motivated, although it was an economic measure."
- B. In response to gender as a category of analysis and Joan Scott's historic demand in "Gender as a Useful Category of Historical Analysis" (1988) that gender has to be a significant factor in evaluating decisions for war and peace, Schwabe affirms his understanding that in international relations "gender-related questions may additionally illustrate, but never really explain the motives of diplomatic decision makers."
- C. While the linguistic turn of post-modernism "may have been good for linguistics," Schwabe argues that "for the historian, especially of foreign relations, it leads to a dead-end street."
- D. Schwabe considers the cultural approach, "as long as traditional standards of historical research are upheld," as more promising in the sense of culture-forming mentalities that "may be capable of offering clues to the understanding of individual foreign policy decisions of long term significance."

8) Cultural factors should reinforce international history. Schwabe hopes that his book will be "an international history based on an international pluralistic perspective" within the context of familiar challenges to historians: "knowledge of foreign languages, multiarchival research and, if possible, a personal exposure to cultures that are not one's own."

—Tom Maddux

Ranke Redivivus: A German Perspective on U.S. Foreign Policy

Klaus Schwabe, professor emeritus of modern history at the Technical University of Aachen, has been a mainstay in the historical community of German academics writing on U.S. foreign policy for more than a generation. His *Habilitationsschrift* on Woodrow Wilson's difficult role in 1918/19 peacemaking vis-à-vis revolutionary Germany, updated and translated into English as *The World War, Revolutionary Germany, and Peacemaking* (Chapel Hill, 1985) is rightfully considered a classic on Wilsonian diplomacy. He has written numerous essays, some of them groundbreaking, on the U.S. and European integration—the Marshall Plan, the European Coal and Steel Community and the genesis of American midwifery in European federalism, intra-governmentalism and integration strategies¹. He has been a frequent visitor to SHAFR (Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations) meetings and a regular attendant of the annual German American historians gatherings in Tutzing (Bavaria) and other venues. He is a mentor to and champion of young German historians working on topics of U.S. foreign policy. So when Klaus Schwabe, as the culmination of his life's work, writes a history of U.S. foreign policy in his retirement, American historians of U.S. foreign policy rightly ought to take notice

Günter J. Bischof is Professor and Department Chair and Director, CenterAustria (PhD, Harvard University, 1989). 2003/4, 2007-9 Marshall Plan Professor of Austrian Studies. He is also Co-Editor of Eisenhower Center Studies of War and Peace (LSU press, 8 vols.), TRANSACTLANTICA (StudienVerlag Innsbruck, 2 vols), Studies in Austrian and Central European History and Culture (Transaction Publishers, 3 vols.), and Contemporary Austrian Studies (Transaction Publishers, 15 vols.), author of *Austria in the First Cold War, 1945-55* (1999), co-editor (with S.E. Ambrose) *Eisenhower: A Centenary Assessment* (1995), (with S. Dockrill) *Cold War Respite: The Geneva Summit of 1955* (2000) and (with W. Krieger) *Normandieinvasion 1944: Internationale Perspektiven* (2001), as well as books and articles on American diplomatic and international history, World War II, as well as the Cold War in Austria and Central Europe. He is the Recipient of the Early Career Achievement (1999) and Senior Career Achievement (2005) Awards of the UNO Alumni Association, the Austrian Haslauer Foundation Contemporary History Award (2003), Honorary Citizen, University of Innsbruck (2006, Presidential Counsellor, National World War II Museum, New Orleans (2006-). Professor Bischof teaches courses on 20th century international history, World War II, the Cold War, the Vietnam War, and Twentieth Century Austria. His research interests include the Cold War, Marshall Plan, U.S. – Austrian/Central European relations, prisoners of WW II and historical memory of WW II, biography.

¹ Klaus Schwabe, "Der Marshall-Plan und Europa," in: Raymond Poidevin, ed., *Origins of European Integration* (Brussels: European Community Liaison Committee, 1986), pp. 47-70; idem, "Ein Akt konstruktiver Staatskunst" – die USA und die Anfänge des Schuman-Plans," in: Klaus Schwabe, ed., *Die Anfänge des Schuman-Plans 1950/51* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1988), pp. 211-40; idem, "Das Echo Westdeutschlands auf den Marshall-Plan 1947-49," in: Charles S. Maier/Günter Bischof, eds., *Deutschland und der Marshall-Plan* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1992), pp. 261-320; idem, "The United States and European Integration: 1947-1957," in: Clemens Wurm, ed., *Western Europe and Germany: The Beginnings of European Integration 1945-1960* (Oxford: Berg, 1995) 115-35.

of it.

In fact, while foreign historians writing on U.S. foreign policy and diplomacy have been attending SHAFR meetings regularly and in growing numbers, and have published their work in *Diplomatic History* (*DH*), their work published in foreign languages has unfortunately not been reviewed in *DH*, with the exception of an impressionistic 1987 *DH*-review essay by Lawrence Kaplan.² By contrast, the Canadian journal *International History Review* has been regularly reviewing foreign language literature on diplomatic history. To its credit, the *Journal of American History* ever since David Thelen's internationalization initiative in the mid-1990s has reviewed a growing number of foreign language works on U.S. history and foreign policy as well. But *DH* has been stuck in its rut of reviewing only works in English, ignoring a growing avalanche of literature on the international history of U.S. foreign policy produced all around the world. Might it be that this state of affairs is still reflecting the old charge against "tongue-tied" American diplomatic historians not reading foreign languages, even though it is increasingly untrue?

It is therefore a welcome change that H-Diplo in its discussion forum is beginning to take note of works such as Schwabe's, even if they are not written in English. Schwabe's is a full-fledged 500-page treatment of American foreign policy. It is a good read in German since he does not write in the ponderous and pretentious "academese" so typical of German social scientists. His book therefore should find a wide readership in German speaking lands. He exhaustively has immersed himself and is intimately familiar with all the important English language literature and the various discourses inside and outside the United States on American foreign policy. He shows an impressive command of the secondary literature. He compliments it with a wide array of literature written in German and French. So is his book a major contribution to the literature on U.S. foreign policy in the twentieth century?

To be frank, it is not. Schwabe's book is written in the classical tradition of German diplomatic history writing. It is rank Rankean positivism at its best and worst. It is a text of straightforward diplomatic and political history "*wie es gewesen ist*". His framework is a conservative arch-traditionalist approach of tracing U.S. foreign policy from isolationism to internationalism and interventionism. He includes the traditions of continental expansionism and beyond, revolutionary-anti-colonialism, the temptation to enforce human rights, and the age old missionary impulse of spreading democracy. He is less interested in the economic impulses of spreading capitalism and mass market production. He mentions the "open door" when he has to (1898 and the following years), but does not consider its applicability after 1945. William Appleman Williams and the "Wisconsin School" are not his favorite paradigm, revisionism is not his thing. Like his favorite authors in German political science, who regularly write about foreign policy and who he quotes often (Christian Hacke, Hans-Werner Link, Ernst-Otto Czempel, Stefan Bierling, as well as

² Lawrence S. Kaplan, "The Cold War and European Revisionism," *Diplomatic History*, vol. 11, no. 2 (1987): 143-56.

11 May 2007

Herfried Münkler in his final Bush-chapter), he is firmly in the realist camp who sees no alternatives to the dropping of the A-bombs in 1945 and the emergence of the Cold War by 1947, and the “Nixinger” realpolitik of linkages and trilateralism. His Rankean-Morgenthauian (Hans) German temperament embraces the historical outcomes as they emerged and does not engage revisionist alternatives and counterfactuals. He merrily ignores all the “turns” (linguistic, gender, cultural etc.) that have so prodigiously enriched the interpretive frameworks of the historical profession in the past 25 years or so—and have increasingly come to influence and change in a positive fashion the work of diplomatic historians too.

Schwabe’s substantial book, then, reads like a traditional American diplomatic history textbook, yet with a lot of genuflection to political science categorizations. As the title suggests the overall theme is America’s emergence as a world power and as the post-World War I and even more so post-World War II creator and mediator of the global balance of power. The frame of “American empire” is raised but does not serve as a consistent political/economic framework of interpreting “America and the world” as it does in the recent monographs of Harvard historians Niall Ferguson and Charles S. Maier as well as Bernard Porter and V.G. Kiernan, or more as an economic/cultural paradigm as in Columbia historian Victoria de Grazia’s impressive work.³ Schwabe’s three parts “Between Imperialism and the League of Nations (1989-1920), “The Path to World Power” (1921-1945), and “Cold War Superpower and Beyond” (1945-2000) is even broken down in the traditional fourteen chapters of American textbooks that define a typical semester. This may fill a market niche in German publishing but it does not challenge traditional interpretations of U.S. foreign policy.

Schwabe’s strengths are clearly in the two postwar eras he has studied himself for a lifetime, in tandem with a cohort of American diplomatic historians that followed the same career trajectory going from the post-World War I period to the early Cold War years (most prominent among them Charles Maier, Marc Trachtenberg, Michael Hogan, and Melvyn Leffler). Predictably he is excellent on Wilson and his dream for collective security arrangements and his failure in implementing them. But was Wilson’s and (Franklin Roosevelt’s) utopia of exporting democracy a success?⁴ Was the U.S. with its long tradition of “nation building” never an imperial power (p. 41)? Schwabe is outstanding in putting the “German question” at the forefront of American security challenges in Europe during

³ Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Price of America’s Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2004); Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America’s Advance through 20th-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2005); Charles S. Maier, *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and Its Predecessors* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); Bernard Porter, *Empire and Superempire: Britain, America and the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); V.G. Kiernan, *America: The New Imperialism from White Settlement to World Hegemony* (London: Verso, 2005); for a more polemical view, see John B. Judis, *The Folly of Empire: What George W. Bush Could Learn from Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Scribner, 2004).

⁴ See, for example, William Pfaff, “Manifest Destiny: A New Direction for America,” *The New York Review of Books*, February 15, 2007.

the Cold War. His discussions of the two Berlin crises (1948/49 and 1958-62) and German unification (1989/90) are models of circumspection and admirable economy. But is he not operating with a “Eurocentric” frame in interpreting Washington’s foreign policy? Of course, Schwabe started out as a historian of Germany and taught German history all of his life and it shows in this book. Even though he covers U.S. relations with East Asia (with an entire chapter on the Vietnam War), the Near East, Latin America and Africa, his familiarity with these subject matters decreases in the order mentioned here. This is not surprising as historians like to write about what they know best. But should not the failed U.S. interventionism from Vietnam to Iran to Iraq be the focus of a history of American foreign policy after World War II?

What is surprising is that Schwabe ignores the entire body of a rich literature produced by his younger German colleagues on “Americanization” – along with American and German Studies specialists in his generation.⁵ The strong presence of American mass culture and consumerism in West Germany, Europe, and increasingly throughout the world—growing in intensity after the two World Wars—he has willfully chosen to ignore. Arguably, the generation(s) of German historians coming after him have done some of their best work in this area of studying transnational cultural and political diffusion and thereby have influenced debates in the U.S.⁶ The difference in perspective may have resulted from the fact that many of them have been trained in the interdisciplinary fields of both contemporary history and American Studies⁷, with its increasingly rich traditions in

⁵ The “classic” texts on the Americanization of Germany are Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, “Dimensionen der Amerikanisierung in der deutschen Gesellschaft,” *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 35 (1995): 1-45; idem, *Wie westlich sind die Deutschen? Amerikanisierung und Westernisierung im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), as well as Volker Berghahn, *The Americanization of West German Industry 1945-1973* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); see also the many insightful essays in Frank Trommler/Elliott Shore, eds., *The German-American Encounter: Conflict and Cooperation between Two Cultures 1800-2000* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001); Heide Fehrenbach/Uta G. Poiger, eds., *Transactions, Transgressions, Transformations: American Culture in Western Europe and Japan* (New York: Berghahn Books 2000); Alexander Stephan, ed., *Americanization and Anti-Americanism: The German encounter with American culture after 1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004); idem, ed., *The Americanization of Europe: Culture, Diplomacy, and Anti-Americanism after 1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006).

⁶ Kaspar Maase, *Bravo Amerika: Erkundigungen zur Jugendkultur der Bundesrepublik in den fünfziger Jahren* (Hamburg: Junius, 1992); idem, *Grenzenloses Vergnügen: Der Aufstieg der Massenkultur 1850-1970* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer 1996); Alf Lüdke/Inge Marssolek/Adelheid von Saldern, eds., *Amerikanisierung: Traum und Apptraum* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996); Konrad Jarausch/Hannes Siegrist, eds., *Amerikanisierung und Sowjetisierung in Deutschland 1945-1970* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus, 1997); Axel Schildt/Arnold Sywottek, eds., *Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau: Die westdeutsche Gesellschaft der fünfziger Jahre* (Bonn: Dietz, 1993); Heinz Bude/Bernd Greiner, eds., *Westbindungen: Amerika in der Bundesrepublik* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 1999); see also the pathbreaking work on the “intellectual Cold Wars” by Volker Berghahn, *America and the Intellectual Cold Wars in Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

⁷ There is a growing literature on the emergence of American Studies in Germany; for starters see Philipp Gassert, “Between Political Reconnaissance Work and Democratizing Science: American Studies in Germany, 1917-1953,” Astrid Eckert (interviewer), “American History in Germany: The View of the Practitioners,” *German Historical Institute, Washington, D.C. Bulletin* 32 (Spring 2003): 33-84. The larger context of the postwar European American Studies tradition and its contributions to American History was thoughtfully

11 May 2007

Germany, and not as traditional German historians. As such they are much more “culturalist” in their approach than the traditional school of Rankean positivists prevailing among historians of Germany and historically oriented political scientists on America who have tended to dominate the field of U.S. foreign policy studies in the Federal Republic.

The more sophisticated of this work has seen this “strange thing” of cultural exchange⁸ as a two-way street where both societies (the U.S. and Germany) have been picking and choosing what they found most attractive about each other’s societies and cultures.⁹ Cultural adaptations are being transformed in the process of transfusion. Scholars no longer speak of American “cultural imperialism” where one culture was imposed on another but rather of a “shopping mall” or “toolbox” approach where you select what suits you best (“the phenomenon of selective appropriation”).¹⁰ The American projection of power in Europe after the two world wars came hand in hand with the transmissions of American mass culture.¹¹ West Germany becoming an eager and willing ally of the United States only ten years after its utter defeat and humiliation in 1945 was only possible because of the West Germans’ wholesale embrace of American pop culture and consumer products. Jazz, Hollywood, coca-cola and jeans—as well as American GIs projecting American manhood and power—were as important in rebuilding friendly American-West German relations as placing American military bases, divisions and nuclear weapons in the territory of the Federal Republic.

addressed in Rob Kroes’ retirement talk at the University of Amsterdam with an introduction by David Thelen and responses by David Chidester, Kate Delaney, László Pordány, and Philippe Roger, see “European Anti-Americanism: What’s New?,” *Journal of American History*, vol. 93, no. 2 (2006): 414-51.

⁸ Reinhold Wagnleitner, “‘No Commodity Is Quite So Strange As This Thing Called Cultural Exchange’: The Foreign Politics of American Pop Culture Hegemony,” *Amerikastudien/American Studies* vol. 43, no 3 (2001): 443-70 (with a bibliography of this Austrian author’s seminal work in the Americanization of Europe, 468-70).

⁹ A classic text is Berndt Ostendorf’s “The Americanization-of-Germany Debate: An Archeology of Tacit Background Assumptions,” in: Trommler/Shore, eds., *The German-American Encounter*, pp. 267-84.

¹⁰ Winfried Fluck, “California Blue: Americanization as Self-Americanization,” in Stephan, ed., *Americanization and Anti-Americanism*, pp. 221f. (“toolbox”); Fritz Plasser, “Assessing the Americanization of Austrian Politics and Politicians,” in: Günter Bischof/Anton Pelinka, eds., *The Americanization/Westernization of Austria* (Contemporary Austrian Studies 12) (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2004), pp. 235-54 (“shopping mall”); see also Günter Bischof, “Two Sides of the Coin: The Americanization of Austria and Austrian Anti-Americanism,” in: Stephan, *The Americanization of Europe*, p. 156.

¹¹ The best of this work by young German historians, such as Jessica Gienow-Hecht’s *Transmission Impossible: American Journalism as Cultural Diplomacy in Postwar Germany 1945-1955* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), in turn has become influential in American foreign relations discourse on the theory and practice of cultural transfers, see idem, “Shame on US? Academics, Cultural Transfer, and the Cold War: A Critical Review, along with commentaries by Richard Pells, Bruce Kuklick, Richard Kuisel, and John Dower, *Diplomatic History* vol. 24, no 3 (2000): 465-528.

Young German gender historians have demonstrated how crucially important the “foreign relations” between American occupation soldiers and German women were after 1945 in rebuilding trust and confidence towards the international acceptability of the Federal Republic. During reconstruction after the Civil War gender played a central role in the reconciliation of the two sections of the U.S. that had fought a civil war against each other. Gender played a similar role in the occupation of Germany. As Petra Goedde notes “Many GIs filled a void in German society left by the war-related shortage of German men. They became male providers and protectors to young German women and on occasion functioned as male role models for young German boys.” The Germany Americans encountered after the war was “weak, submissive and disproportionately female.” German women used their bodies as “bargaining chips.” Since most GIs supported their German lovers with food and material goods, “the borderline between love affairs and prostitution became blurred.” By June 1950 almost 15,000 newly-wed German wives of GIs had entered the U.S. (by comparison only 758 Japanese war brides had entered the U.S. during the same time period). Casting Germany in such feminine terms also allowed Germans and Americans to avoid confronting the Nazi past. Goedde’s crucial insight—and one that Schwabe has chosen to gloss over—is that “politics – domestic and international – cannot be separated from the cultural context in which it unfolds.”¹²

Klaus Schwabe has written a straightforward textbook and has been oblivious to the rich subtexts of interpreting the field as they have emerged lately. He has missed an opportunity to write a history of American foreign relations that reaches beyond the pale of traditional political and diplomatic history. American diplomatic history has followed the historical profession’s leads and took the various methodological “turns” in the past quarter century. Unearthing these various subtexts has greatly enriched the field. Schwabe’s German readers will never know unless they follow these discourses in journals of record such as *Diplomatic History* and the *The Journal of Cold War Studies* and read the work of a younger generation of German American Studies scholars. Ultimately, this may be the result of a younger generation of historians pursuing new avenues of scholarly insights and reconceptualizations. It may also indicate that German scholars have long ago ceased to be trendsetters in the historical sciences. The days are long gone when Berlin set the agenda. Now it is being done in Paris, New York, in Oxbridge, the American Ivy League colleges and in California.

¹² See the groundbreaking study by Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. xiii-xxiii, 91 (bodies as bargaining chips), 100f (number of marriages). Maria Höhn traces the same fascinating gendered terrain but with more attention to race, see *GIs and Fräuleins: The German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

Review by Christian Hacke, Institute für Politische Wissenschaft und Soziologie, Bonn, Germany

In any given bookstore today, books about current U.S. foreign policy fill whole tables. Judging from these titles, it is an undoubted “achievement” of the Bush administration that interest in and criticism of the United States have almost become interchangeable. The scholar of history, however, will ask: Does President Bush’s foreign policy signify a radical break with American tradition or are there continuities that help to illuminate America’s role in the world and its behavior on the international scene today? This is one of the key questions Klaus Schwabe addresses in his satisfyingly voluminous history of American foreign policy in the last one hundred years. In doing so, he also points out that the world before the accession of George W. Bush and before 9/11 might not have been peaceful and stable, but that at least the U.S. did a good job as guarantor of world order – *tempi passati*.

Another key question about America’s role in the world is whether the U.S. sees itself merely as a passive example of a prosperous, free, and democratic society or whether it rather engages actively – even employing military power – in the world to spread American ideals and secure American interests. Depending on how Americans at different times interpreted their mission, world politics evolved accordingly. Until 1898 this question remained on the backburner, but when the Spanish-American War led to the – almost accidental – occupation of Cuba and the Philippines by the U.S., the anti-colonial and anti-imperial self-image of the Americans was dealt a first blow.

Klaus Schwabe, one of Germany’s most distinguished scholars of American history, thus chose the right moment in time to let his “Jahrhundertgeschichte” (story of a century) unfold – it is the story of the rise of the United States in international affairs. In contrast to George F. Kennan, who understands the events of 1898 as the American fall from grace, Schwabe regards them as the point of origin of the conflict between American imperialism (mostly among the elites) and American self-sufficiency or even isolationism (mostly

Christian Hacke is Chair of Political Science and Contemporary History at the Institute of Political Science and Sociology, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn. He holds a Ph.D. from Bonn University. He has taught International Relations at the University of the German Military in Hamburg. His selected publications include “Zur Weltmacht verdammt”: U.S. Foreign Policy from Kennedy to George W. Bush, *Munich 2005*; German Foreign Policy from Konrad Adenauer to Gerhard Schröder, *Munich 2003*; U.S. Policy in the Middle East: Continuity and Change from Nixon to Reagan, *Munich 1985*; The Age of Nixon/Kissinger: Conservative Reform of World Politics, *Stuttgart 1983*; The Eastern and German Policy of the CDU/CSU: Ways and Errors of the Opposition Parties Since 1969, *Cologne 1975*; and with Gottfried-Karl Kindermann / Kai Schellhorn (eds.), *The Heritage, Challenge, and Future of Realism: in Memoriam Hans J. Morgenthau, Göttingen 2005 (in English)*. Professor Hacke’s current research interests include “The History, Development, and Impact of Realism as a School of Thought in International Affairs” (Book project); “Energy Dependency as a New Security Issue”; and “Transformation and Political Reform of NATO”.

among the common people): “America began its way to an imperial power with force and energy, but the goal was pursued only half-heartedly. ... The imperialists did not manage to convince the public for good.” (p. 40). This conflict would continue to shape American foreign policy for the next century.

Accordingly, Schwabe identifies President Woodrow Wilson as the personification of America’s missionary imperialism – Wilson’s idealist rhetoric, in this interpretation, mainly serves as camouflage. And although Woodrow Wilson’s vision of a League of Nations failed and caused tremendous international instability in the interwar years, his missionary drive remained a pillar of American foreign policy. Wilson’s legacy – or rather: its idealist interpretation – has been guiding American presidents ever since. They all subscribe to the ideology of American exceptionalism and Wilson’s sense of mission while the majority of Americans are all too willing to take such idealist rhetoric at face value. Thomas Jefferson tips his hat!

Appropriately, Klaus Schwabe puts emphasis not only on the idealist strain of American foreign policy in the first half of the 20th century, but also on America’s sheer economic power – and the interests of economic expansionism that come with it. Regarding the development of the century, the phase of American economic weakness because of the Great Depression and the rise of national-socialist Germany in the 1930s was only an interlude. The President who unified his country to defeat both these challenges, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, is the second major figure in Schwabe’s narrative. He gives due respect to Roosevelt’s crucial achievements, the New Deal and the anti-Hitler alliance from 1941 to 1945, but Schwabe also explains how Roosevelt underestimated Stalin’s cruel resolve. To this day the origin of the Cold War is a matter of debate, but in terms of realpolitik, the division of Europe and the world was a product of the clash between America’s missionary claim and the Kremlin’s policy of conquest and subjugation. In Schwabe’s study, this complicated process is particularly well developed and subtly analyzed, based on a masterful historical knowledge.

Potsdam and Hiroshima set the course in 1945 for the role of the atomic power America in the second half of the century, in the Cold War. Schwabe is right to stress the necessity of a militarization of foreign policy that was inherent to the international constellation. From this vantage point, the major crises in Berlin, Cuba, and Vietnam are logical outflows of a predetermined course of affairs. Their resolution, however, was far from predetermined, and Schwabe excels at illuminating the achievements and failures of each President, the role of the U.S. Congress in international affairs, and the increasing importance of public opinion.

It is worthy of further discussion whether the formative years of the Cold War, especially the aspect of militarization and ideological cold-war liberalism under the administrations of Democratic Presidents Truman and Kennedy, should receive even more thorough treatment than Schwabe grants them. This seems entirely plausible since he portrays Ronald Reagan as the third major President after Wilson and FDR. Schwabe presents

Reagan as the Great Communicator, the mesmerizing mixture of an aggressive ideologue and a shrewd power politician. There is some justice to this almost revisionist interpretation of the often misunderstood and ridiculed leader, but it leads directly to the question of common traits from Wilson to Truman to Kennedy to Reagan. Certainly the development and ambiguity of American cold-war liberalism and, dreadful word, neoconservatism, remains a field of research to be done.

Anyway, Reagan's confrontational – but measured – style paid off in the end. His massive arms build-up and the Strategic Defense Initiative pushed America into economical and social sickness, but this excessive military spending also pushed the Soviet Union over the brink. The selection of Gorbachev as the new General Secretary and Gorbachev's implementation of glasnost and perestroika proved that Reagan's steadfastness was worthwhile: Gorbachev gave in to the pressure and tried to reform the Soviet system of socialism. Over time he had to accept what Reagan understood all along, that the Soviet system was too decrepit to be reformed – any attempt to tinker with it would only precipitate its demise.

Reagan's unswerving belief in the power and ultimate success of freedom and democracy laid the foundation for the triumphal victory in the Cold War that was epitomized in the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany in 1989/90. Schwabe notes that this triumph was accompanied by the prudent forgoing of all symbolic triumphalism on the part of then-President Bush and his Secretary of State, James Baker. Laudably, the author also does not refrain from recounting the darker side of Reagan's strategy and its high costs. Reagan's self-confident unilateralism and use of religiously motivated speech did not only disturb the Soviets but also America's allies, particularly in Europe. It also foreshadows some of the conflicts George W. Bush's foreign policy would bring – the analysis of the parallels and differences between Reagan and Bush Jr. is another field of research that deserves more attention. The complex connections between the Reagan and Bush administrations can also be seen in the Iran-Contra Affair, which very nearly destroyed Ronald Reagan's presidency. It was a grumbling from the repressed underbelly of Reagan's confrontational policy: his readiness, spelled out in the Reagan Doctrine, to support anticommunist "freedom fighters" all over the world often trumped a careful analysis of the consequences. The support of the mujaheddin's fight against the Soviet invaders in Afghanistan would return as a terrible boomerang on September 11, 2001. On the other hand, Reagan's secret, non-military support (in cooperation with Pope John Paul II) of the Polish Solidarnosc movement exhibits the bright and visionary side of the Reagan Doctrine that helped to bring about the implosion of tyrannical Soviet rule. All considered, there seems to be no President whose foreign policy legacy is harder to assess than Reagan's. There are no easy or definite judgments, and Schwabe subtly squirms on the issue as well.

The effective and influential diplomacy of the Bush/Baker administration that led to German reunification – against the considerable concerns of the French and the British – and the building of the broadest of international coalitions to oust Saddam Hussein's Iraq

11 May 2007

from Kuwait in 1990/91 figure as a high point of American foreign policy achievements – and also as a somewhat premature end point of Schwabe’s analysis. Regarding the strategic possibilities, the range of scholarly, political, and public debate, and the impact on world affairs, the early 1990s were the most interesting time in American foreign policy in forty years. The age of bipolarity had given way to a – lasting? fickle? – unipolarity; America had emerged from the terrible 20th century victorious over totalitarianism of every stripe, national-socialism, fascism, and communism. But now, bereft of a unifying enemy, what was the United States, blessed with historically unparalleled power and riches, to do?

Ultimately a debate about American grand strategy and the most basic nature of the United States as an international actor, this national and international exchange of ideas and interpretations accompanied all of the 1990s and received another major boost after 9/11. Schwabe, the excellent historian, pays too little mind to these rather recent and strategic developments. And yet, his cursory assessment of the current administration rings true: “At home and abroad, Bush’s pathos of freedom suffers from a lack of credibility, it is hollow. ... America’s triumph in the Cold War was also a triumph of higher political and moral credibility. ... [The downfall of the Soviet Union] therefore is a writing on the wall for the United States. To avoid such a fate, the U.S. needs to turn back and re-emphasize the best traditions of American foreign policy. One of those convictions is, since Woodrow Wilson, the necessity to contain international anarchy through international institutions that establish world order by maintaining liberal values.” (p. 496)

Klaus Schwabe delivers an opulent, elegantly written tome, the sum of his deep and refined knowledge about the history of American foreign policy. His analysis is consistent, informative, and rock-solid. Embedded in a thoughtful context of intellectual history, the author explains that the United States’ rise to power did not occur without backlashes and contradictions and was made possible by domestic as well as international factors. As argued throughout this comment, the only thing left to be desired is a stronger and more reflective exposition of the common elements and motivations of American foreign policy across the decades. America’s liberal internationalism from Wilson to Truman to, well, even Bush Jr. is a multi-faceted school of thought whose subtle changes and modifications warrant a more intimate treatment.

From Co-Imperialism to Unilateralism:

More than 200 times, U.S. troops have been deployed abroad, yet Congress has declared war only five times: at the start of the War of 1812, the War against Mexico in 1846, the Spanish-American War in 1898 and the two World Wars. As Harvard historian David M. Kennedy points out, Congress has acted like 'a sheet anchor, restraining or even extinguishing the martial urge'.¹ While the unique American system of checks and balances has created a dynamic tension between Congress and the President, the White House has generally dominated foreign policy decisions, forcing the legislature to follow suit or face charges of lack of patriotism.

In his seminal study, Klaus Schwabe underscores the difficulties of conducting foreign policy in an open society, an environment which cultivates ambiguity and contradiction as patterns of power. With a discerning yet sympathetic eye, he outlines the path of the United States from reluctant imperialism to superpower status. Schwabe, one of the leading Central European scholars of 20th century U.S. foreign policy, is professor emeritus of Modern History at the Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule (RWTH) Aachen and has written extensively on the foreign policies of Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt. The impressive and extensive synthesis concentrates on the interaction between world leaders and more or less ignores social and cultural factors as well as gender, race and ethnicity.

Donal O'Sullivan is an Assistant Professor at California State University, Northridge. He earned an MA at Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität, Bonn, 1989; a Ph.D. at Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität, Bonn, 1995; and a Habilitation, Catholic University of Eichstatt, 2001. Professor O'Sullivan has published three books in German: Allied Intelligence Co-Operation During World War II (Schoningh, 2007); Stalin's Cordon Sanitaire: Soviet Policy in Eastern Europe and the Western Response (Schoningh, 2003); Fear and Fascination: German and British Images of Soviet Russia (Bohlau, 1996); co-editor, nine books; and 19 published articles in edited volumes and journals. Professor O'Sullivan received the David Thelen Prize of the Organization of American Historians for his article, "The American Venona Project: The discovery of Soviet Foreign Intelligence Networks in the 1940s" Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, 48,4 (2000) 603-629; and the Friedwart-Bruckhaus-Prize of the Hanns Martin-Schleyer Foundation for a 12-part series of 30-minute broadcasts. He has taught at Catholic University Eichstatt and Claremont McKenna College in California.

Characterizing the United States as a world power *sui generis*, the author carefully avoids ideological slant and cheap shots, preferring skillful observation and meticulous study of the archival documentation. In describing the rise of the U.S. from 1898 to today, he strives to portray the historical context free of contemporary bias. In 544 pages (including endnotes), the study explains U.S. foreign policy as less driven by individuals than as a

¹ *Time Magazine*, January 29, 2007, p. 21.

11 May 2007

result of the complex decision-making process of American politics. Specifically, Schwabe is interested in the well-known problem of principles vs. practices – or, if you prefer, morality vs. realism. The key question he asks is: Was Washington, in its missionary zeal to expand its values around the globe, willing to subject itself to the same principles it advocated?

In the introduction, the author identifies four main challenges for a German historian describing U.S. foreign policy: overemphasizing German-American relations, reverting to a simple survey of world politics, measuring U.S. policy against the benchmark of traditional European diplomacy and judging the past from today's perspective. *Weltmacht und Weltordnung* demonstrates his remarkable success in overcoming these obstacles, resulting in a much-needed synthesis based on hundreds of scholarly monographs.²

From the outset, Schwabe notes the fundamental difference between American foreign relations and 19th century European cabinet policy. He insists that claims of continuity must be weighed against the natural tendency of democracies to vacillate and change course based on the vagaries of public opinion. Sensibly, he reminds his European readers of the specific American idiosyncrasies, based on 'five traditions' guiding U.S. relations with the outside world: Isolationism, the revolutionary anti-colonial reflex, the humanitarian impulse, the sense of democratic mission, and expansionism.

As Schwabe describes it, isolationism harks back to the attempt to break free from the 'rotten' absolutist tendencies of the 1700s, and he quotes George Washington's last speech as the foundation of this trend. Yet while steering clear of foreign entanglements, the U.S. also sided with countries shaking off their colonial yoke. The Monroe Doctrine expressed this stance against European powers establishing themselves in the Western Hemisphere. Thirdly, foreign relations have been conducted to better the world by using American influence abroad. Schwabe identifies U.S. support for the creation of Liberia and support for human rights activists around the globe as symbolizing this trend. Specifically, he cites Presidents Carter and Clinton as placing humanitarian aspects high on their foreign policy agendas. Like many later nationalist politicians, American leaders beginning with Thomas Jefferson embraced the notion of being part of a 'chosen people', calling upon their fellow countrymen to spread freedom abroad. Clearly, as Schwabe mentions, this sense of democratic mission was easily exploited for the fifth tendency of U.S. foreign policy: expansionism.

² While the endnotes mention an extensive array of monographs, readers may be interested in the seven most influential books listed in the bibliography: Welsey M. Bagby, *America's International Relations since World War I*, (New York, 1999); Thomas A. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People*, 10th ed., (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1980); Warren I. Cohen, *America in the Age of Soviet Power*, (Cambridge, 1999); Akira Iriye, *The Globalizing of America, 1913-1945*, (Cambridge, 1995); Walter LaFeber, *The American Search for Opportunity, 1865-1913*, (Cambridge 1995); Dennis Merrill and Thomas Paterson, *Major Problems in American Foreign Policy*, 6th ed., (Boston, 2005); Robert D. Schulzinger, *U.S. Diplomacy since 1900*, 5th ed., (New York, 2002).

Within this framework of contradictory tensions, Schwabe characterizes U.S. foreign policy as more dynamic and therefore more difficult to understand than traditional nation-state diplomacy. For the most part of its history, blessed with geographical safety, the United States could afford the luxury of basing its policy on values (p. 4). Faced with the need to explain foreign conflicts to an electorate mostly ignorant of foreign affairs, policy-makers often resorted to simplifying the issues and invoking morality to garner domestic support, thus exposing themselves to charges of hypocrisy abroad.

Yet, while the 'five traditions' convincingly reflect the underlying tensions at work within the foreign policy establishment, Schwabe's narrative avoids translating these categories effectively – which is one of the downsides of composing a synthesis. The author's convincing yet cautious outline reflects what the German academic tradition calls *ein abgewogenes Urteil*, a thoughtful, generally sympathetic position, spiced with mild criticism (i.e. President McKinley's 'dirty war' in the Philippines). Schwabe clearly prefers staying close to the archival documentation while avoiding flamboyant statements.

To emphasize the influence of public opinion, he begins his account with the vital debate between Imperialists and Anti-Imperialists regarding the 1898 Spanish-American war. The decline of Spain's power offered opportunities to take up 'the white man's burden'. But even Teddy Roosevelt (characterized by Schwabe as 'paternalistic' and 'racist') remained a reluctant expansionist. For Schwabe, the Panama Canal turned the U.S. into the hegemonic power in the Caribbean, and the Roosevelt Corollary gave Washington a 'blank check' for intervention in Latin America. However, Americans harbored deep reservations about following in the footsteps of the European empires.

Before World War I, Schwabe concludes, U.S. foreign policy pursued its opportunities for world power only half-heartedly. He maintains that America remained a non-colonial power. At the same time, he reminds us that for Washington, nation-building has a long tradition, and policy-makers in general had few reservations with cooperating with dubious characters, especially in Central and Latin America.

When the United States entered World War I in 1917, with hundreds of thousands of American soldiers setting foot on the Old Continent, the balance of power began to shift. According to Schwabe, President Woodrow Wilson intended to use economic and military power to shape the world along U.S. ideals. However, this attempt was largely foiled by Congress' decision not to join the League of Nations. While favorably inclined towards Wilson's idealism, Schwabe criticizes Wilson's inability to accept a compromise solution on the issue of Congress' unwillingness to join the League of Nations. He asserts that even a limited membership would have been better for world peace than staying out of the organization altogether.

Retreating into 'splendid isolation', the 1920s saw a succession of weak Presidents who limited their foreign policy goals to 'dollar diplomacy', used financial and economic tools to provide stability and, in Schwabe's eyes, neglected security policy altogether. Marking the

11 May 2007

defeat of this policy not with the rise of Nazi Germany, but, interestingly, with the decision by France and other European nations to stop paying off the wartime debt in December 1932, Schwabe views the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt as a vital step forward. FDR was charismatic, a tactical genius, perfectly willing to produce a populist smokescreen to hide his true intentions and imbued with enough foresight to view Hitler as America's most dangerous enemy.

For his European readers, Schwabe makes an effort to explain Roosevelt's adversaries in the isolationist camp. He portrays the 1930s movement 'America First' as a mixture of traditionalism, nationalism, Christian pacifism and sometimes anti-British and anti-Semitic feelings. While he acknowledges the somewhat devious manner in which Roosevelt moved the country towards war, he stops far short of falling prey to conspiracy theories. Indeed, he calls Roosevelt's decision to issue the Atlantic Charter together with Churchill a 'remarkable event': although formally neutral, the administration formulated common war aims with Great Britain (p. 117).

During the wartime Grand Alliance, Schwabe notes how Roosevelt was put on the defensive by Stalin by a couple of unnecessary blunders and some more significant illusions about the character of the Soviet regime, reserving harsher words for Churchill's imperial ambitions. But apart from some smaller points, Schwabe lauds Roosevelt's United Nations model as the most important U.S. contribution to world security in the 20th century. The Four Policemen constituted a form of a 'co-operative imperialism', a difficult concept to stomach for those on the fringes of the police station, especially those with a long history of imperialism themselves (like France and Britain). Schwabe defends Yalta, and justifies the whitewashing of Stalin in American public opinion with Roosevelt's conviction that only the alliance with Moscow could successfully defeat the Nazis and the Japanese. There was no real alternative, he asserts.

A small remark might be of value here. The outline mostly steers clear of intelligence affairs, which is perhaps a wise choice in a book attempting to outline 100 years of foreign policy. Yet, there are some pitfalls. For example, while Schwabe mentions the significant influence of Harry Dexter White in reforming international financial institutions (p. 139), he does not identify him as a Soviet agent. And while he devotes several pages to the CIA's Bay of Pigs disaster and the assassination of Salvador Allende, it would have been interesting to hear Schwabe's assessment of Soviet intelligence and the penetration of American society during the 1940s.

It should be obvious by this point that Schwabe devotes little time or space to revisionist arguments. For Schwabe, Roosevelt's successor Harry Truman did not pursue a clear-cut global Cold War strategy, and he sees no reason to assess an active expansionist U.S. policy. More important in explaining the course of events are Truman's personality and the new balance of power as well as the demise of the traditional German and Japanese powers, which forced the President into a more antagonistic role towards the Soviet Union.

11 May 2007

It is in the final chapter that Schwabe's account, an historian's foray into the contemporary world, becomes passionate. Not surprisingly, he faults the administration of George W. Bush with a serious departure from multilateralism. While the war in Afghanistan had been conducted with the assistance of a broad international coalition (Schwabe underscores the efforts of Secretary of State Colin Powell), the Iraq war marked the triumph of unilateralism. But, as Schwabe notes, the failure to locate WMDs and to find evidence of ties between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda significantly damaged U.S. credibility. As a key concept of President Bush's foreign policy, the notion of 'preemption' remains fuzzy.

Concurring with internal critics like Joseph S. Nye, Robert Tucker and G. John Ikenberry, Schwabe defines the Bush doctrine as a clear break with past U.S. foreign policy. Instead of being the last resort, preemption became the lode star for Washington's relations with the outside world. He contrasts America's isolation under George W. Bush with the political and moral credibility during the fifty years of the Cold War. Schwabe does not doubt that future administrations will return to the multilateral approach which he calls among 'the best traditions' of U.S. foreign policy. Ending his book with a look at the gap between rhetoric and reality, Schwabe is optimistic about the eventual path of U.S. foreign policy: international anarchy has to be contained with peaceful means and through international institutions, which has been a fundamental tenet of U.S. foreign policy since the days of Woodrow Wilson, and only the U.S. is able to secure a world order based on liberal values and the rule of law. *Weltmacht und Weltordnung* has already become a fundamental textbook in the German-speaking academic world, contributing to an informed debate over U.S. foreign policy, which is vital in an age when slogans abound and crude Anti-Americanism has become fashionable. Schwabe's comprehensive and ambitious book serves this purpose exceptionally well.

Review by George Schild, University of Tübingen

European observers are often amazed by the sudden and radical changes in American foreign policy after the inauguration of a new president. When Bill Clinton came into power after the end of the Cold War, it appeared that he would usher in a new period of American isolationism. Clinton believed that the country's main problems were economic in nature ("it's the economy, stupid") and that foreign entanglements in the Balkans and in Africa were not in the interests of the United States. For a while, America wasn't a team player in the international diplomatic arena, because America didn't appear to be interested in playing at all.

The arrival of George W. Bush in the White House in early 2001 and the events of 11 September changed the basic foundation of American foreign policy. Defending the country from external threats became the prime task of the government. Again, however, America wasn't a team player because it relished in the thought of being the world's only superpower.

Georg Schild is Professor of North American History at the University of Tübingen, Germany. He earned his MA in 1989 at the Free University Berlin, his Ph.D. in 1993 at the University of Maryland at College Park, and his Habilitation in 2001 at the University of Bonn. His books include Bretton Woods and Dumbarton Oaks: American Economic and Political Postwar Planning in the Summer of 1944 (New York: St Martin's Press, 1995), Die bedrohte Supermacht: Sie Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik der USA nach dem Ende des Kalten Krieges (Opladen: Leske und Budrich, 2002), and Zwischen Freiheit des Einzelnen und Wohlfahrtsstaat: Amerikanische Sozialpolitik im 20. Jahrhundert (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2004). Professor Schild's current research interest is in the history of war in America.

Klaus Schwabe's magisterial study *Weltmacht und Weltordnung*—world power and global order—was written at a time when the debate about America's future foreign policy was in full swing after September 11, 2001. The author does not place political or ideological grand designs at the center of his analysis. Instead, the theoretical framework of U.S. foreign policy that he lays out at the beginning of the book serves merely as an illustration of the bandwidth of American political debates during the last 110 years. Foreign political ideals such as isolationism or expansionism interact in a rapidly changing world with friends and foes and force the United States to constantly adjust its foreign policy. The lens through which Schwabe interprets 20th century American foreign policy is the country's search for an international order that would provide the greatest possible security.

Schwabe commences his study with an analysis of the War of 1898. The symbolism of that conflict was quite striking. Less than a decade after Americans had settled their part of the North American continent (the closing of the frontier), the United States looked abroad for new territories to settle. America challenged the old colonial power Spain that was clinging on to its last colony in the New World. Expansionists like Theodore Roosevelt, Alfred T. Mahan, and Josiah Strong dominated the American foreign policy debate at the turn to the 20th century. They believed that America's security depended on overseas territories. The focus of the national debate at the time was limited in scope, emphasized expansionist

military arguments and thereby masked the fact that America fought the War of 1898 without a clear understanding of the costs of extending its sphere of responsibility beyond the home continent to include tens of thousands of Spanish speaking Catholics. In 1899, the Philippine uprising under Emilio Aguinaldo shocked the Administration of William McKinley and forced America into fighting a brutal war of attrition against an indigenous national movement. Mark Twain at the time wondered whether there were two different Americas, “one that sets the captive free, and one that takes a once-captive’s new freedom away from him, and picks a quarrel with him with nothing to found it on, then kills him to get his land.” For the United States, the experience of that war appeared so unappealing that America refrained from further imperialist adventures.

America resumed its search for order and for the country’s role in the international political arena during the First World War. Initially, President Woodrow Wilson opposed entering into the conflict. He changed his mind, however, when he began to view the war as an opportunity to influence the prevailing system of international politics. Wilson sought to use America’s military might (and moral superiority!) to replace the old system of military rivalries with a new order based on the rule of law. The president made it clear in April 1917 that the United States would not enter the Great War for territorial and economic gains. Instead, Wilson sought to conduct a crusade to “make the world safe for democracy” and envisioned a democratic peace based on his Fourteen Points Address. On the one hand, America would be one country among many, on the other hand it would be the undisputed moral leader of the world.

Wilson’s attempt to lead by moral example was frustrated, however, by the Allies and by American senators. England and France did not want to conclude a democratic peace after the sufferings of the war. American lawmakers criticized the participation in the League of Nations because membership appeared to indicate a loss of U.S. sovereignty. Twice the Senate voted down the Treaty of Versailles. In the battle between American leadership and isolationism, the latter won. Without American participation the League failed to provide forceful support for weak nations during the 1930s.

During the Second World War, America joined forces with England to save the world from a deadly combination of vicious tyrants or—even more menacingly—from one tyrant dominating the entire Eurasian landmass. The close cooperation of American and British troops fighting side by side between 1941 and 1945 was the climax of America’s willingness to join forces with other nations in a team effort.

At the same time, isolationism appeared discredited. After the U.S. was drawn into the second worldwide conflict within one generation, it became clear that the international community had to develop new security structures that would put checks on aggressive nations. In order to achieve that goal, President Franklin D. Roosevelt believed that Japan and Germany had to be weakened permanently and that the U.S.A. had to cooperate closely with the U.S.S.R., Great Britain, and China. Those four states would be charged with maintaining peace and security as “co-operative imperialists”, as Schwabe puts it. Just as

Wilson's idealist concept of a global legal order died in the harsh climate of domestic postwar politics in 1919 and 1920, Roosevelt's realist approach also came to naught. Soon after the end of the war it became clear that the basic American political beliefs were incompatible with those of the Soviets.

Schwabe begins the chapter on the history of the Cold War with a reminder that while in retrospect the United States appears as the most powerful nation in 1945, Americans at the time felt insecure. The Soviet Union with its powerful Red Army and propaganda machine appeared to threaten the freedom in Europe and Asia. Schwabe concludes that the Truman Doctrine—America's promise to aid all free peoples in their struggle against suppression—was not offensive in nature, but a protective measure to prevent a communist takeover of Europe.

America's Cold War strategy was most successful where it sought to promote democracy in close cooperation with its overseas partners. Despite America's leading role in NATO, politicians from allied countries such as West Germany's first chancellor Konrad Adenauer were quite successful in influencing American foreign and security policy. U.S. administrations believed they had to take German and European public opinion into consideration.

In other parts of the world such as Asia, the Cold War became a hot conflict. Schwabe leaves no doubt that this was to a large extent a mistake of America's Cold War strategy. America did not counter the communist threat in Asia with democratic alternatives, but allied itself with authoritarian regimes.

President George W. Bush's current policy in the Middle East reminds Schwabe of Wilson's early 20th century vision of security. Like Wilson, Bush believes that American security depends on an expansion of democracy. Schwabe is skeptical, however, as to whether Bush will succeed in creating an international order of democratic states by deploying military forces.

The 20th century was a period of America's rise to power. This ascent was accompanied by Washington's constant search for a coherent foreign policy, for a global political and economic order, and (for Schwabe's purposes most importantly) for America's own role within that order. Throughout the 20th century, Americans debated whether the country should abstain from foreign entanglements (isolationism), whether it should dominate the international political system (because America was morally or militarily superior to other nations) or whether the United States should join forces with other states in order to create democratic international institutions. At various times, different approaches gained the upper hand. To Schwabe, the irony of America's diplomatic history is that policy options one (isolationism) and two (domination) appear most attractive from many Americans' point of view. Schwabe, however, leaves no doubt that America was most successful when it worked closely with those countries that share its liberal democratic ideals. Isolationism paved the way for the Second World War, unilateralism was responsible for short sighted

11 May 2007

military conflicts such as the Vietnam War. Cooperating with other nations in creating a global order to fight terrorism and hegemonic aspirations and to promote liberal values would mean drawing the right conclusions from the experiences of American 20th century foreign policy.

Review by Thomas Schwartz, Vanderbilt University

Klaus Schwabe might be surprised at this, but I recently used his book to illustrate a point to my Vanderbilt freshmen in an American history survey class. I had given them the assignment to place themselves in the United States Senate in February 1899. They were asked to prepare a speech either in favor of or opposed to ratifying the Treaty of Paris which ended the Spanish-American War. In effect, I was asking them whether or not they agreed to the annexation of the Philippines, and to the formal acquisition of an American Empire. Not surprisingly, in these days of the Iraq surge and general disillusionment with the direction of American foreign policy, they voted overwhelmingly to reject the treaty. The few who took the contrary position sounded very much like the current Administration, as they asked their fellow students, “Well, what is your plan?”

How does the Schwabe book figure in this? Although only one student could translate the title—a sad commentary on foreign language knowledge perhaps—I used it to show the students that to many Europeans, and especially to this distinguished German historian, 1898 was the year of America’s ascendancy, when Europe discovered the American “threat,” and saw a new power emerging in international relations. In that sense Schwabe follows in a long tradition whose founding father might be considered George Kennan, who in his *American Diplomacy 1900-1950*, saw in the Spanish-American War—now titled the Spanish-American-Cuban-Filipino War—the true beginning of American foreign policy. It was not a terribly auspicious beginning, as Kennan noted, “that in the reasons governing our resort to war and the determination of the character of our military operations, there was not much of solemn and careful deliberation, not much prudent and orderly measuring of the national interest.” (p.19) Schwabe does not disagree, although rather than indict policymakers in the way Kennan did for their “legalism-moralism” approach, Schwabe seeks to explain the fairly half-hearted approach of the United States to imperialism, the hesitations and constraints that existed within the American political system. Far more than most foreign observers, Schwabe recognizes how important America’s domestic politics are to the conduct of its foreign policy.

Thomas Schwartz teaches courses in the history of American foreign relations, with an emphasis on the twentieth century. He is the author of America's Germany: John J. McCloy and the Federal Republic of Germany, a study of U.S. policy toward Germany immediately after World War II, and Lyndon Johnson and Europe: In the Shadow of Vietnam (2003), an examination of alliance politics during the Vietnam War. Schwartz's research interests include the interaction between domestic politics and foreign policy, transnational coalitions and alliance politics, the role of the American presidency in alliance leadership, and the new international history of the Cold War. He is currently working on two book projects: one is a short history of the Cold War, tentatively entitled, The Long Twilight Struggle, and the other is a biography of the former Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, tentatively entitled, Henry Kissinger and the Dilemmas of American Power.

Not surprisingly, given his own earlier research and extensive writings, Woodrow Wilson looms large in the story that Schwabe tells. Schwabe recognizes Wilson’s roots in

11 May 2007

America's Progressive reform movement, and the contribution that this thinking makes to his most important and revolutionary contribution to American foreign policy, the concept of collective security and the League of Nations. My only reservation here is that we need to avoid the temptation of reading some of our current struggles back into the contest between Wilson and his opponents, men like Senator Henry Cabot Lodge. Schwabe terms Lodge and his associates "unilateralists," making them sound like the intellectual ancestors of the current Bush Administration. However, many of those in the Lodge camp actually favored multilateral security arrangements with countries like Britain and France, but were dubious about Wilson's more universal and global vision, with its reluctance to make important distinctions between central and more peripheral American security interests.

The next great figure in Schwabe's story is Franklin D. Roosevelt, who led America into the Second World War. Schwabe is sympathetic to Roosevelt's dilemma in leading an isolationist-inclined America to recognize the genuine threat which Hitler's victories posed. He presents Roosevelt's efforts in a sympathetic light, even while recognizing that they involved a fair amount of deception and misleading public statements. Interestingly enough, and counter to a great deal of revisionist historiography, Schwabe is quite critical of Roosevelt's overly generous attitude toward Stalin and the Soviet Union, arguing that the President underestimated Stalin's determination to remain in control of the territory he conquered and to dominate the rest of Europe as well. Although Schwabe is clearly aware of the revisionist literature on this subject, he is not persuaded. And with good reason, for as Wilson Miscamble's recently published *From Roosevelt to Truman* makes clear, Roosevelt's legacy of attempting to conciliate Stalin greatly complicated the first months of Truman's administration.

Schwabe's treatment of the Cold War era invites comparison with the widely acclaimed history by John Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History*. Schwabe is more favorably inclined toward John F. Kennedy, seeing a link between Kennedy's strong stance against Soviet missiles in Cuba and his resistance to Soviet pressure on Berlin that some American historians like Gaddis tend to doubt. Schwabe is also tougher on Reagan than Gaddis, whose high estimation of the leadership qualities of the 40th President has also stirred controversy. Although willing to give Reagan more credit than most European historians for his unyielding stance on the stationing of American missiles in Europe, and the impact that this may have had on Soviet leaders, Schwabe is more critical of some of the more misguided efforts of the administration in Central America and the Middle East. Schwabe's book is even kinder to George H.W. Bush, whose skillful handling of the issue of German reunification may eventually win him more distinction among American scholars, but who still languishes in historical estimation because of his overwhelming re-election defeat in 1992.

Schwabe's treatment of a century of American foreign policy reflects the scholarly perspective of a postwar German generation, strongly influenced by the relationship with the United States that brought about their country's recovery and renewed strength, while at the same time occasionally disappointing them in its mistakes and tragic policy errors,

11 May 2007

including both Vietnam and now Iraq. Not surprisingly, the book has been received in Germany as an important corrective to the recent public discourse, which at times has been over-the-top in its condemnation of the United States. (One wonders—and doubts—whether Schwabe’s generation will have a successor willing to be as understanding or sympathetic to American policy.) Schwabe’s book is a balanced treatment of the United States, yet still calls on American leaders to recognize that America’s victory in the Cold War was less about armaments or forcing the Soviet Union to its knees as some Reagan hagiographers present it, and more about America’s political and moral legitimacy as a superpower leading an alliance of democracies, and exercising its power through such multilateral forums such as NATO. This was a legitimacy the Soviet state never acquired.

I have very few strong disagreements with the story that Schwabe tells. I would rather that my contribution to this roundtable rest in raising two issues. The first is where we should begin the study of American foreign policy. In such works as *Ideology and US Foreign Policy* by Michael Hunt, *Special Providence* by Walter Russell Mead, and *Dangerous Nation* by Robert Kagan, scholars are making the case that the pre-1898 period, the years in which America was both a colonial outpost of Europe and the first 122 years after the Declaration of Independence, are much more important to understanding American foreign relations than scholars following the Kennan lead have considered. Whether it is factoring in American racial prejudices, as Hunt does, or categorizing particular schools of American thought – the Hamiltonians, Jeffersonians, Jacksonians, and Wilsonians—as Mead does, or in recognizing how aggressive, dangerous, and even revolutionary the rest of the world saw the young United States, as Kagan discusses, all these authors and others have suggested that we neglect the era before 1898 at our peril. More than a decade ago that dean of American diplomatic historians, Walter LaFeber, lamented to me that so many history departments were only offering American foreign relations as a one semester, 1898 to the present, course, leaving out the narrative, controversies, and even personalities—John Quincy Adams was one of LaFeber’s favorites as Secretary of State—that laid the foundations for American foreign policies. For my own part, I am as guilty as many in the profession of emphasizing the 20th century, and especially the post-1945 period. But in my recent work, I have been struck by how much the United States behavior toward Latin America in its earlier history may offer some guidance to explaining its response to the post-1989 era. Just as the United States dealt with the many smaller and less powerful Latin American countries from its position of hegemony with a mix of military and economic tools, there have been echoes of this in the lone superpower, “indispensable” nation period of the 1990s and post 9/11 eras. Perhaps this is where a book like Schwabe’s calls for a companion volume dealing with this earlier era in American diplomatic history.

The second point I would raise is the struggle between unilateralism and multilateralism in American foreign relations. Schwabe caps his critique of George W. Bush and his foreign policy failures with a strong argument on the need for the United States to exercise its power through multilateral institutions. Schwabe, like so many Europeans, and especially Germans, sees this as central to a renewed legitimacy for American power. As sympathetic as I am to this argument, I also see it as reflecting a difference between American and

11 May 2007

European thinking. The new German state that grew up after 1945 was thoroughly integrated in multilateral and European institutions in a manner which fundamentally shaped the political culture of that state. It still pursued national interests like reunification, but it did so, as Timothy Garton Ash's book *In Europe's Name* argued, through such institutions as the European Union and NATO. To Germans, there is not the tension that sometimes exists for Americans between our own governing institutions and multilateral bodies like the United Nations or the World Court. Although I would also applaud the way in which the first President Bush organized a coalition to oust Sadaam Hussein from Kuwait, it is still somewhat jarring to read in his memoirs that he believed that the UN Security Council's vote in 1991 authorizing the use of force was all the justification that he needed, and that he would have ignored a Senate vote that opposed military action. In fact, of course, he was able to carry the Senate—by a very narrow margin - but I use this to illustrate some of the tension that does exist between American ideas about democracy and accountability, and the exercise of power through multilateral or international institutions. After all, the Security Council authorizing the use of force contained such democratic countries as China, Yemen, Zaire, and Zimbabwe! Why should any American necessarily accord it a greater right to legitimate the use of force and the possible loss of American lives and treasure? Without sounding like a right-wing Republican hostile to the United Nations, I do think this is a legitimate question that holds no easy answer.

However, neither of these two points should detract from the admiration and praise I have for this book. I have known Klaus Schwabe for more than twenty years, and consider him both a friend and a very distinguished collaborator in this field. He has produced an outstanding work of scholarship and synthesis.

Author's Response by Klaus Schwabe, Emeritus, Aachen University of Technology

If you are not a native English speaker and are engaged in scholarly work on American history, you are immensely indebted to the H-Diplo Roundtable for helping to overcome the language barrier that still separates historical scholarship outside the English-speaking world from that carried out within its confines. H-Diplo thus contributes considerably to the growth of a truly international history. Personally, I am grateful for having been able to submit the findings of my survey on America's 20th century foreign policy to a critical review on the part of distinguished colleagues both from the United States and Germany. Needless to say, the favorable comments I find in all of the reviews are a source of a deeply felt gratification for me. Looking at some of my younger German colleagues I also have no reason to share Thomas Schwartz' doubts as to whether the "understanding" approach in the study of American diplomacy will continue to find followers among German historians.

But my five reviewers will expect me to address their critical observations. They can be divided up into two categories – a majority pointing out to aspects where my text could have been better, and a minority, who want me to have written an altogether different book.

The suggestions for improvements in my account, the first category, are of such a variety that it seems impossible to subordinate them to a number of guiding topics. For that reason I would prefer to deal with them in chronological order. Thomas Schwartz in one of his remarks goes back to the 19th century roots of

Klaus Schwabe's professional career started with academic training at the Universities of Berlin, Oxford, Ohio State University, and Freiburg. He completed his Ph.D. at Freiburg in 1958 under the direction of Gerhard Ritter, and his Habilitation in 1969 in Modern European and American history. His teaching career included positions at Freiburg, Chair at Frankfurt University, and Chair at Aachen University of Technology until his retirement in 1997. His numerous monographs include Wissenschaft und Kriegsmoral. Die deutschen Hochschullehrer und die politischen Grundfragen des Ersten Weltkrieges (German professors in Germany's war propaganda in World War One), (Göttingen, 1969); Woodrow Wilson (1972); Woodrow Wilson, Revolutionary Germany, and Peacemaking 1918-1919 (Chapel Hill 1985, original in German 1972); Gerhard Ritter. Ein politischer Historiker in seinen Briefen (Gerhard Ritter. Life and letters), (Boppard, 1984); Quellen zum Friedensschluß von Versailles [three language documentary of the peace negotiations in Paris 1919] (Darmstadt, 1997); and Weltmacht und Weltordnung. Amerikanische Außenpolitik von 1898 bis zur Gegenwart. Eine Jahrhundertgeschichte (World Power and World Order, from 1898 to the present. A history of the Twentieth century), (Paderborn, 2006) (XIV, 560 pp.), 2nd printing 2006-7.

Professor Schwabe has also edited Die Ruhrkrise 1923 (1986), The Beginnings of the Schuman Plan (1988), Adenauer und die USA (1994), and Deutschland und der Westen : Deutschland und Westeuropa (1994). He is co-editor/co-author of Rußland-Deutschland-Amerika. Festschrift für Fritz Epstein (1978), and Die deutschen Eliten und der Weg in den Zweiten Weltkrieg (1989) A complete bibliography is available in: Guido Müller (ed.), Deutschland und der Westen. Festschrift für Klaus Schwabe (Stuttgart 1998), pp.13-17.

11 May 2007

America's 20th century diplomacy. I can only agree with him as to the need to do so, and was forced to neglect this important aspect by the constraints of space alone. In fact, I think that the somewhat cavalier attitude early American administrations developed in dealing with the sovereign rights of other countries was rooted in America's diplomacy in Central America and the Pacific in the decades before the Spanish American War. As the case of Nicaragua showed in the mid-fifties, this behavior did not only reflect America's revolutionary tradition and the rivalry with British claims, but also the overwhelming power the "Yankee" republic enjoyed as compared to its small neighbors in Central America(p.10) ¹.

Were these the beginnings of an American imperialism? Günther Bischof takes exception to my book's inconsistent use of American imperialism as a continuing frame for interpreting the United States as a global actor during all of the 20th century². My answer to this is that I restricted the use of the term "imperialism" in my account not accidentally, but on purpose. In fact, it is a major point of my interpretation to show that only during the short period following the Spanish-American war did a majority of American official and public opinion advocate an American brand of the kind of imperialism that was then *en vogue* in Europe. Following the disenchantment triggered by the guerilla war in the Philippines, "informal empire" and "hegemony"³ became the terms that, I believe, most fittingly describe American attempts to exercise influence abroad – both as a program and largely as a practice. In contrast to the school of William A. Williams, I do not equate informal empire with "imperialism" (pp. 40 ff.). It is true that during the first two decades of the 20th century America's behavior in the Caribbean at times came close to outright imperialism. But even in such cases (like Haiti, p. 47) simple annexation of the occupied areas or their subordination to some American colonial office were never considered. Especially after the election of Woodrow Wilson and certainly during World War One, an anti-Imperialist interpretation of America's foreign policy gained the upper hand. Henceforth until most recently, the American public and along with it the American administrations cultivated a self-image that Niall Ferguson has aptly described as an "empire in denial"⁴.

This applies, of course, above all to President Wilson. This most influential tradition-builder of U.S. foreign policy in the 20th century refined, as I try to show, the American anti-

¹ Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Grundzüge der amerikanischen Außenpolitik 1750-1900*, (Frankfurt, 1984), p. 133. Page references in brackets refer to my own book.

² I am indebted to Bischof for calling my attention to some most recent interpretations of American imperialism – publications many of which were not yet in print when I wrote the respective chapters.

³ The standard work to which scholars in Germany still refer for defining this term is: Heinrich Triepel, *Die Hegemonie. Ein Buch von führenden Staaten*, (Stuttgart, 1938).

⁴ Niall Ferguson, *Colossus. The Rise and Fall of the American Empire*, (New York, 2004), pp.6, 13ff. As a personal note I may add that knowing the German propaganda slogans sweepingly condemning „American imperialism“ in two world wars and remembering them from the end of World War Two, I feel a special obligation as a historian to use this term discriminately.

imperialist stance during the First World War and immediately afterwards. His idealistic plea for a new international order based on cooperation in a League of Nations and on the principle of self-determination was sincere, and some of his occasional deviousness and prevarications notwithstanding, I regret that I apparently created the impression that I dismissed Wilson's foreign policy program merely as "camouflage", as Christian Hacke believes. Actually, I tried to stress that in my view Wilson was deeply serious in his belief that the United States should become an integral and cooperative part of the new multilateral peace keeping organization he advocated (pp.55 f., 70 f., 77).

Schwartz argues that during the League fight in 1919 many of Wilson's Republican adversaries were in fact as much "multilateralists" as the president himself. In a sense this is true, as people like Lodge advocated a continuing alliance among the victors. Still, the senator was not prepared as Wilson was to enlarge and ultimately globalize this alliance, and he insisted more than Wilson did that this all-powerful victors' alliance not infringe on America's sovereign right to take diplomatic decisions in accordance with its own interests. So, Wilson rightly condemned Lodge and his supporters as advocates of "imperialism" (p. 74). In a way, Lodge anticipated what I called "cooperative imperialism" in interpreting Franklin D. Roosevelt's war diplomacy.

On the other hand, I fully agree with Schwartz as far as the more structural problem he raises – the problem regarding the legitimacy of decisions taken by and in the name of a global organization in opposition to the express wishes of a nationally elected and thus politically representative body of a given member country. Does the intent of a democratically elected national representation not enjoy a higher degree of legitimacy than a chance majority decision of the UN Security Council of which some members may lack any democratic legitimacy? George H. Bush ignored this dilemma in the statement Schwartz quotes, and it is indeed this dilemma which explains and excuses the negative attitude the American public adopted with regard to the United Nations at times during the seventies and afterwards (p. 387 f.). But does this unpleasant reality detract from the indispensable obligation of every country to engage in multilateral cooperation, and does it obliterate the need for each government to seek the approval of such cooperative policies on the part of its national constituency?

Wilson's successors encountered the same basic problem: To what extent can the United States, being face to face with the ugly realities of international life, afford to remain faithful to its democratic mission? Georg Schild seems to give a special twist to this dilemma by stating that Franklin Roosevelt's realism came to naught – apparently once he had to cope with Stalin's pretensions. Then, after the war, he states, American basic beliefs proved incompatible with Stalin's diplomatic agenda. Schild thus perceives a difference between Roosevelt and his successors. I would not want to deny that, as compared with Wilson, Roosevelt was more of a realist and had a clearer notion of the primary responsibility of the great powers for peacekeeping; but I would qualify this by adding that it was not only Roosevelt, the realist, but also Roosevelt, the idealist (or the ideologue), who clashed with Stalin. After all, it was Roosevelt who at Yalta endorsed the declaration on a liberated

Europe. As a pure realist he should not have harbored any illusion that Stalin would ever take this idealist program serious. My point is that because Roosevelt proved to be serious in his idealist convictions by demanding western style democracies also in the areas of Europe liberated by the Red Army, he himself was the first to stumble into what was later called the Cold War (p.149).

It remains an open question whether or not the following course of the Cold War was more or less predetermined, as Hacke suggests. I tend to agree with him as far as the German question was concerned. Differently from Donal O'Sullivan I would argue that it was not so much the demise of Germany's and Japan's traditional military power that led to the Soviet-American antagonism, but the continuing economic and demographic potential of the two countries. In hindsight it seems indeed doubtful whether the United States and the Soviet Union had any chance of reaching an agreement on the future of their former major enemies – at any event as soon as each side began to regard the other as a rival in Europe and the Far East and became aware of Germany's (and Japan's) potential as an ally either with the West or the East. In this restricted sense the Cold War was pre-determined.

But this does not mean that the Korean or the Vietnam wars, or other conflicts, were equally inevitable. In the Korean case Stalin was under no constraints to authorize the North Korean invasion of the South, nor was there any unavoidable constraint for the United States to get entangled in Indochina once France had lost control of its former colonies (pp. 218, 310 ff.). Hacke also raises the intriguing question whether the historian can perceive common traits in linking American Wilson-style and Cold War liberalism with later neoconservative ideas regarding America's role in the world. Obviously, some "neo-cons" established such links, so that the problem boils down to the question whether these neo-conservatives in claiming to carry on Wilson's legacy do justice to the former president's aspirations or not. My own impression is that the neoconservative democratic missionary ideal is in fact Wilsonian, including the acceptance of military means in order to defend and enhance that mission. The point where Wilson and his neo-conservative imitators clearly diverge is the all-important issue as to what diplomatic and military instruments to resort to in serving the missionary ideal. In this respect there is a major difference between Wilson's the multilateralist and his basically anti-militarist stance on the one hand and the position of his neo-conservative would-be disciples on the other (pp. 484 ff., 489). Above all, American presidents from Truman to Reagan avoided a direct military clash with the Soviet Union, because they rightly feared that such confrontation would escalate to an uncontrollable nuclear war. Instead, they carefully managed the political confrontations that flared up, like Truman at the time of the Berlin blockade, or like Kennedy in response to the building of the Berlin wall and to the Cuban missile crisis⁵.

⁵ Schwartz notes that I disagree from John Gaddis in seeing a strong link between the Berlin and the Cuban crisis. To what extent the two crises were linked from the Soviet point of view is a question addressed to the Soviet side, which is not my major concern, although I took note of the fact that Soviet diplomacy hardly ever mentioned Berlin during the Cuban missile crisis. My own argument is based on the American record (tapes) which shows that the Berlin issue was always present in the minds of the responsible officials of the Kennedy administration (pp. 283, 288).

11 May 2007

All this seems to apply to the last Cold Warrior, President Reagan, as well. I agree with Hacke that there is hardly any American president whose foreign policy is more difficult to assess than Reagan. Personally, I vividly recall the devastatingly poor reputation he had in Germany during the first phase of his administration – an estimate I personally shared in those early days. Seen from hindsight, however, there can be no doubt that without Reagan's success in both intimidating and ultimately winning over the Soviet leadership to his concept of *détente* there would not have come about the big sea change in Europe of 1989/1990. Despite his public braggadocio Reagan won these successes without risking a direct military confrontation with the USSR. On the debit side I see his nonchalance in conniving at terrorist activities and his unstoppable liking for public simplification. But what looked intellectually revolting turned into an asset whenever Reagan had to deal with the American public. I think that both his admirers and his detractors agree on the outstanding talent this former actor and great communicator displayed in this respect.

Thus Reagan is prominent in my analysis because I attempt to bring in the domestic aspects of America's foreign policy. Here American public opinion looms large. Contrary to Schild's assertion, I did not want to convey the conclusion that the American public generally tended to opt for the extremes ("isolationism" versus "domination"). In my view, the American public does not seem at all continuously to be wedded to any particular set of foreign policy priorities. What counts in the public eye in the United States is the moral and traditional justification on which specific foreign policy decisions are based – an observation that goes a long way in explaining the ideological underpinnings of America's diplomacy.

When I started writing my book, George W. Bush had yet to be elected and only science-fiction movies foreshadowed what was to happen on 9/11. As I continued, I treated the various phases of America's foreign policy rather as results of foregoing developments than as an anticipation of what followed. This explains the inadequacies of the two final chapters of my book – inadequacies which Hacke justly points out. To an extent, these shortcomings have something to do with the difference between a political scientist, who has professionally to be present minded, and the historian who feels obliged to judge historical developments on their own merit. Thus, I discussed the Clinton administration under the aspect of the process of winding up the cold war and its relics. It is obvious that this alone cannot be today's perspective.

This brings me to the kind of comments that suggest that I should have written a different book. I am especially grateful for this criticism as it offers the opportunity for me to submit in somewhat more detail what the lack of space forced me to touch on only briefly in my introduction. My critics thus give me the chance to explain the selection I made from the record and the methodical lines I tried to adhere to in my account. Not unlike some of my German reviewers, some of my critics in this roundtable regret that I have neglected certain topical areas that they feel should have been included in my account like intelligence affairs, economics, the more or less recent "turns" in historiography like the

linguistic, the gender and the cultural turn. Generally, they miss references to revisionist interpretations, and they think that my treatment of my topic is somewhat conventional, if not “arch-traditionalist”, as Bischof puts it. Before going into details, let me say that I find this criticism well founded on its terms. But I also trust that I had good reasons for deciding to write the book the way I did.

The intelligence aspect raised by O’Sullivan is relatively easy to address. Whenever I found out that intelligence reporting and/or covert action had an immediate impact on decision making in Washington I referred to it. As a few examples I mention the Zimmermann telegram of 1917, “magic” for World War Two, the American intervention in Iran to oust Mossadegh, the coup in Guatemala (1954), the prehistory of the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Iran-Contra Affair and the support for Solidarnosh (pp. 57, 120ff., 246ff., 247, 278 ff., 402 ff.). I did not mention the penetration by Soviet intelligence of American society during the forties as I cannot see that this “penetration”, if it really was one and Alger Hiss notwithstanding, influenced the basic direction of the American policy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. If I had decided differently and had fully entered the vast field of American espionage no end of my account would have come into sight, as questions of intelligence and espionage, often raising military technicalities, have to be analyzed in detail and still tend to become elusive in some cases.

The other aspects that Bischof in particular finds inadequately represented, if not totally ignored, touch on questions of methodology. As Bischof not incorrectly observed, my book to an extent can be compared with an American textbook. The reason why I opted for this format lay in what the German language book market has to offer on American history. There is, of course, an impressive amount of research going on dealing with numerous special aspects of American history and in part related to American foreign policy. The German market is also flooded by numerous more or less essayistic assessments of America’s role in the world in the 20th century – in many instances friendly disposed, in others and especially after the beginning of the present Iraqi war derogatory and slanted⁶. But there did not exist a full-length treatment of that subject as a whole. This being so, I regarded it as my first assignment simply to “put the record straight”, i.e., to provide a reliable factual basis as a prerequisite for any informed and politically unbiased discussion. In this endeavor a good dose of positivism was indispensable.

In this connection, Bischof mentions Leopold von Ranke as a high priest of positivism. In this, I am afraid, he is wrong. To Ranke the substance of history was “das Realgeistige” (i.e. a combination of the material with the spiritual)⁷. History to him was an art and only partly

⁶ One notable exception is the survey by Stephan Bierling which covers American foreign policy from 1917 to the present and adopts a detached position similar to my view [Stephan Bierling, *Geschichte der amerikanischen Außenpolitik. Von 1917 bis zur Gegenwart*, 271 pp., (München, 2003)].

⁷ Leopold von Ranke, *Das politische Gespräch und andere Schriftchen zur Wissenschaftslehre*, (Halle, 1925), p.22.

11 May 2007

a science (“Wissenschaft”)⁸. In this sense, I never could be content with a fact-mongering presentation of my subject. The real historian’s craft is to find context and meaning and on this basis to establish a focus, a “conceptual core”, as Marc Trachtenberg puts it, for his narrative⁹.

For my book I focused on what to me appeared to be the primary motive of America’s foreign policy in the 20th century – the effort to prevent the world from sinking into violence and international anarchy (a term coined before 1914) and instead to create structures and devices that promised a globally peaceful change. Seen from that perspective, American national interest and global welfare seemed to coincide. This approach is of course in no way original; numerous colleagues shared it thus forming a sort of mainstream consensus. There was enough room for relative originality on my part whenever I took up the crucial question as to how and to what extent America managed to come to grips with this self sought assignment. By selecting a widely accepted analytical basis, I also felt, I would facilitate a meaningful discussion of both the achievements the United States could claim and the missed opportunities and failures in dealing with the outside world it had to concede. This main-stream approach, I hoped, would finally help me avoid a number of pitfalls waiting for a non-American – and particularly a German – historian, who writes on America’s diplomacy. Such pitfalls are: (1) an encyclopedic and indiscriminate enumeration of America’s ubiquitous involvements in all parts of the world; (2) seeing America’s world policies in the light of the German-American relationship, certainly a key factor in 20th century American foreign relations, but only a segment of a broader picture¹⁰; (3) the application of the standards of traditional European diplomacy to the American example, instead of focusing on the Washington perspective; (4) a fixation on the present time as the sole yardstick for historical judgment, certainly a violation of the traditional principle that historiography in assessing events of the past always and primarily take account of the perspective of that particular past.

Beyond such practical considerations, I am convinced that the topical emphasis of my narrative led straight to the major issues of international relations in the 20th century and America’s contribution to them. More than anything else, the course of 20th century was determined by two World Wars and a Cold War, the latter together with its attendant proxy wars. Caging the bestial proclivities of man and thus opening ways for human decency to

⁸ Rudolf Vierhaus, “Leopold von Ranke. Geschichtschreibung zwischen Wissenschaft und Kunst”, in *Leopold von Ranke, Vorträge anlässlich seines 100. Todestages*, (München, 1987), pp.31 ff.

⁹ Marc Trachtenberg, *The Craft of International History. A Guide to Method* (Princeton 2006), p.30.

¹⁰ This is the reason why I largely excluded the certainly impressive recent German scholarship on German-American relations. The publications to which Bischof calls the reader’s attention mostly belong to this category. In addition, most of them deal with the *effects* of American cultural penetration in Germany. To my understanding, this is primarily German history. At any rate, to extend my analysis to this field would have forced me to attempt the same in other contexts like Japan, Eastern Europe or Latin America. Obviously, this would have been impossible for lack of space. It would also have diverted my analysis from its focus, which is the Washington perspective.

assert itself was the major issue – an issue gaining in urgency under the impact of nuclear armaments. Hard and soft power, security, the political and military balance, legitimacy and human responsibility were therefore the problems that seemed most relevant; personal decisions, most of the times from the top down, counted no less than anonymous structures. Compared with these questions of life and death other problems like international trade, gender, social and cultural trends were certainly contributory, but in the last analysis much less instrumental in determining the course of international relations and the United States' role in them.

To be sure even this synthesizing as well as selective approach created agonies in the process of identifying which publication should be regarded as relevant, and omitting what appeared only as marginal. There is no way for a single author to consider all the thousands of titles in English, but also in German and French, related to the subject. What helped in groping one's way in that maze was one's own pre-knowledge and besides what I would call an "instinct" for novel revelations based on new evidence. In such cases it did not matter to what extent such findings could be regarded as "revisionist" or not – in the last analysis a continuous process of self-revision starting from one's own premises and pre-knowledge went on.

Given the limited space available for footnotes, I had to accept that it was impossible to refer to, let alone discuss at length the historiography dealing with my subject. Had I tried this, cuts at other places in the manuscript would have been unavoidable. Unfortunately, none of my critical reviewers so far has had palpable propositions to make that would have unburdened my text of some possibly less relevant passages. I still welcome suggestions! There would have been another drawback had I tried to incorporate some debates among expert historians into my manuscript: Such discussions would have diverted the average German reader's attention from the thrust of my argument. By implication I did refer to some controversies like the one surrounding William A. Williams; but discovering such references required an extremely careful reading of my footnotes¹¹.

The question remains to what extent the focus of my narrative had to lead to the exclusion of the potentially relevant areas that my critics found missing. I will deal with them one by one starting with the economic aspect. Clinton's famous dictum: "It's the economy, stupid" has accompanied me during all my life beginning with my years as a high school student in the Soviet zone of occupation in Germany. At the university level I was confronted with the same battle cry, this time coming from American historical revisionism of people like Charles Beard or Harry E. Barnes and then prominently espoused by William A. Williams. I read Williams's *Tragedy of American Diplomacy* as the result of an insider's tip (it was H.U. Wehler). Then I discussed the relevance of economic factors for America's foreign policy at length with my students as an academic teacher. The conclusion at which I arrived was that economics – in the American case as an example the commitment to the Open Door – is a

¹¹ Williams see: Schwabe, *Weltmacht*, pp. 40, 516, note 36. See also Beard: p. 99; Hogan: p.519, note 10; Alperovitz: pp.160, 524, note 31.

11 May 2007

powerful factor influencing America's foreign relations, but that it still would be reductionist to assign to a given economic interest – like the American espousal of free trade – an overarching function in explaining America's role in international affairs. In this sense, the occasional neglect of economic factors in my text is not accidental. I do not believe, to offer an absurd example, that in 1940-41 Roosevelt turned America into an “arsenal of democracy” in order to boost the American steel production. The Marshall Plan, to offer another example of the limit of the economic paradigm, was politically motivated, although it was an economic measure.

On the other hand, I did try to deal with economic conditions whenever the evidence convinced me of their impact on the general course of American foreign relations. To quote only a few examples, I stressed Wilson's concern about American prosperity when I discussed his neutrality policies (pp. 48f.). My account of the twenties represents a sort of indictment against the then prevailing American foreign policy, which largely relied on economic means alone to promote America's national interests (p.89). I mention the economic background of the American interventions in Iran of 1953. Last but not least, I devote a whole subchapter to the end of America's financial hegemony beginning in 1965 (pp. 373ff.). I admit, though, that I could have treated the problem of international access to raw material more prominently.

My critics furthermore miss an extensive use of the gender paradigm in my book¹². Again, this omission is not accidental, because in my understanding of international relations gender-related questions may additionally illustrate, but never really explain the motives of diplomatic decision makers. It seems indicative to me that the journal *Diplomatic History* contains only a few gender related contributions¹³.

Bischof also regrets my neglecting the “linguistic turn”. Once more, this omission did not occur by chance. For the historian the “linguistic turn” raises a fundamental question of methodology¹⁴. In line with medieval “Pyrrhonism” this post-modern school denies the existence of an objective reality independent of human perception and expression. Objectivity as a guiding principle of historical research and interpretation is, therefore, discarded. I cannot see how this methodology can give room for any successful historical inquiry, as it blurs the principle of causation and suspends what the German historian Kosellek called the “veto power” of the sources, i.e. the historian's obligation to be prepared

¹² For an exception, see p.33.

¹³ Recently I discovered Helen Laville, “ ‘Our Country Endangered by Underwear’: Fashion, Femininity, and the Seduction Narrative in *Ninotchka* and *Silks Stockings*”, in *Diplomatic History* 30, 4, Sept. 2006, pp.623ff.

¹⁴ For the following I rely on Trachtenberg, *The Craft of International History*, pp.10 ff.; Melvyn P. Leffler, “New Approaches, Old Interpretations, and Perspective Reconfigurations”, in: *Diplomatic History* 19,2, 1995, pp.180f.; and Frank Ninkovich, “No Post-Mortems for Postmodernism”, in: *Diplomatic History* 22,3, 1998, pp.453ff., 459f.

11 May 2007

to correct – revise, if you will – a given interpretation of a past event in the light of new evidence, be it factual or archival. The linguistic turn may have been good for linguistics; for the historian, especially of foreign relations, it leads to a dead-end street. Personally, I have a particular aversion to it, as one of its patron saints, Friedrich Nietzsche and his concept of what is history, were exploited by Nazi historians who wanted to create a useful past that could be put into the service of the Nazi ideology and its fight against “bourgeois objectivity”¹⁵.

In seeing limits in the usefulness of the just mentioned paradigms I have to agree with Bischof that I did not write the book he had hoped for. There is one area, though, that Bischof mentioned and that seems to me to be promising, as long as the traditional standards of historical research are upheld, and that is the cultural approach. As a student of a history of another country not using your own native language you are immediately struck by differences in culture. The wars of the 20th century accentuated such differences by raising the question of national identity. Culture also forms mentalities and in this respect comes close to the good old history of ideas. In this sense it may be capable of offering clues to the understanding of individual foreign policy decisions of long term significance. On the other hand, the present debate between the Western and Islamic influenced cultures has underlined the importance of culture as a mass phenomenon¹⁶. America as a more and more globally present great power had continuously to cope with such cultural differences, not least during the Cold War. In concluding my book, I called the readers’ attention to nation-building as a central concern of America’s foreign policy in the 20th century (p. 487). This American objective combined political, military, as well as cultural challenges, and thus assigns an outstanding role to the inquiry into cultural factors.

The inclusion of the cultural factor into diplomatic history should also create an awareness of cultural differences, as soon international relations are under discussion, and fend off national parochialism, whatever “turn” may serve as paradigm¹⁷. What ultimately is needed, and what I intended to contribute with my book, is an international history based on an international pluralistic perspective. Only by absorbing a multicultural perspective, the scholar of international relations is able to form a judgment that avoids national reductionism. This implies the knowledge of foreign languages, multiarchival research, and, if possible, a personal exposure to cultures that are not one’s own. In this respect the book by Toshi Hassegawa, *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan* (2005) which was discussed at an H-Diplo roundtable possesses an exemplary quality.

¹⁵ For that see Klaus Schwabe, ed., *Gerhard Ritter. Ein politischer Historiker in seinen Briefen*, Boppard 1984, pp.73f.308f.; also Trachtenberg, *The Craft of International History*, p.10ff.

¹⁶ Leffler, “New Approaches”, pp.184ff.

¹⁷ Michael H. Hunt, “The Long Crisis in U.S. Diplomatic History”, in *Diplomatic History* 16.1, 1992,130ff.