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Jeffrey A. Engel. “A Better World . . . but Don’t Get Carried Away: The Foreign Policy of George H. W. Bush Twenty Years On.” DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00831.x. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00831.x> .

Nicholas J. Cull. “Speeding the Strange Death of American Public Diplomacy: The George H. W. Bush Administration and the U.S. Information Agency.” DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00832.x.

Randolph Kluver. “Rhetorical Trajectories of Tiananmen Square.” DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00833.x.

Andrew Preston. “The Politics of Realism and Religion: Christian Responses to Bush’s New World Order.” DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00834.x.

Mary Elise Sarotte. “Not One Inch Eastward? Bush, Baker, Kohl, Genscher, Gorbachev, and the Origin of Russian Resentment toward NATO Enlargement in February 1990.” DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00835.x.

Bartholomew H. Sparrow. “Realism’s Practitioner: Brent Scowcroft and the Making of the New World Order, 1989–1993.” DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00836.x.

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This roundtable brings together a significant group of scholars examining George H. W. Bush's foreign policy from a range of perspectives and disciplines, making their efforts an early, important attempt to evaluate United States foreign policy in the immediate post-Cold War world. Too few of the articles, however, critically engage Bush's policy, and by and large, they fail to address the question of how an administration could confront such fundamental transformations in international affairs with such limited revision of national security policy.

At the outset of his contribution, Jeff Engel notes the increasing availability of archival materials at the George Bush Library in College Station, Texas and urges historians to begin examining Bush's presidency. While only limited documents relating to Bush's foreign policy have been declassified, the materials used by the contributors suggest it will be a productive resource for many years to come. Engel succeeds in capturing the cautious nature of Bush foreign policy, which was best exemplified in its attention to stability and order. He describes a leader that seemed more responsive to events than active in shaping them, and one who remained mired in an outdated vision of the role of the United States in the world rather than one who identified or articulated a new vision for United States policy. Engel's contribution raises questions about the extent to which Bush should be considered a caretaker president; in his conclusion, Engel writes that Bush intended "to keep the world moving in the right direction" rather than to transform the role of the United States internationally. (45)

In Engel's characterization, Bush is well versed and comfortable in the details of United States diplomacy. Yet, at the same time he suggests that Bush not only failed to articulate his vision of a "new world order" but that his administration never reflected internally on what that order might be. Engel offers a convincing explanation for why the Bush administration did not take the United States in new directions in the wake of the Cold War, arguing that for Bush, the reasons for the American Cold War victory offered an outline for its future – Bush hoped to preside over the transatlantic order the United States had aspired to throughout the Cold War. Engel also highlights some of the most common and apt criticisms of Bush's foreign policy, namely that he did not carry his policies through to fruition, or to put it more plainly, that in the case of Iraq, he did not finish the job. Engel could go further, however, in evaluating how the limited ambition of Bush's foreign policy influenced the United States' ability to protect its interests in the world.

Perhaps the most important contribution Engel's piece makes is his analysis of how the leadership of United States President Ronald Reagan and National Security Adviser and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger shaped Bush's style in the White House; in Engel's view, Bush learned from and defined himself apart from these earlier Republican leaders. Whereas Reagan focused on the broad outlines of policy and left the details and implementation to subordinates, Bush wanted his aides to engage in vigorous debate before he arrived at a decision. With regard to Kissinger, Engel argues Bush thought it unwise to have United States policy so closely tied to one individual, instead preferring to

hear a range of opinions. Throughout his article, Engel persuasively demonstrates how Bush's previous positions in Beijing, at the United Nations, as head of the Central Intelligence Agency, and as Reagan's vice president shaped his conception of the role of the United States in the world and led to the distinctive imprint he brought to the conduct of United States foreign policy. In particular, Bush's emphasis on reaching out to other leaders and statesmen had its beginnings in his time in New York, according to Engel, and served Bush well as he sought to forge an international coalition to oust Saddam Hussein from Kuwait.

Nicholas Cull's article focuses specifically on the history of the United States Information Agency (U.S.I.A.) in the years after Reagan left office and characterizes Bush's presidency as marking an erosion of the agency's position in United States foreign policy. Cull highlights the problems caused by centralizing all elements of public diplomacy during the Bush years and outlines what he sees as the missed opportunities by the Bush administration to integrate public diplomacy into the national security structure. Unfortunately, Cull gets too bogged down in the details of the shortcomings and failures of Bruce Gelb, who was Bush's first agency director, without connecting his discussion to the administration and its diplomacy as a whole. In one example, Cull argues the Bush White House did not anticipate or adequately address problems that developed under Gelb's leadership, which he attributes to low estimations of U.S.I.A. without offering sufficient evidence for this explanation.

Cull outlines conflicts in United States policy between Voice of America and the U.S.I.A., with each representing one aspect of the American approach toward China – to preserve the long-term stability of the Sino-American relationship versus encouraging the free flow of information, ideas, and objective news coverage. One element largely missing from Cull's study, however, is how tension between the State Department and Voice of America was related to the Bush White House or James Baker's leadership at State. Indeed, Bush's White House is almost absent from Cull's account. Such an omission may be the result of his argument that the U.S.I.A. was largely missing from the administration's policy formulation, but he needs to make the existence or absence of U.S.I.A. connections with the State Department, National Security Council, and White House clearer.

At times, Cull seems to attribute too much agency to the U.S.I.A. For example, his statement that the "USIA and the Bush administration managed to conduct the war without provoking a backlash from the Arab streets or wider sections of Islamic opinion" might have the order of influence of those two actors in reverse. (59) Similarly, when discussing initiatives in Eastern Europe, Cull writes that "the United States had a fundamentally flawed foreign policy structure," but he is primarily focused on the poor integration of public diplomacy, which is less critical to the broader implementation of American policy. (59)

Randolph Kluver's examination of what he terms the "rhetorical trajectories of Tiananmen Square" addresses the collision course between the student protesters and communist officials, which made compromise between the two groups "impossible." (80) Kluver argues these mutually exclusive visions were not understood in the United States at the time given Western views of the students as making a "peaceful, democratic attempt to

move the nation forward in its trajectory of internal reform” versus Chinese party leaders’ characterization of them as “counterrevolutionary and unpatriotic.” (72) Kluver outlines administration struggles to balance support for the students with its relations with party leaders and suggests the United States wanted to avoid the appearance of “interfering” in domestic affairs. (87) Though relevant internal documents may remain classified, I wish Kluver had explained the evidence on which he based his conclusions. Kluver analyzes American efforts to heal the Sino-American relationship and bring China back into world standing in the wake of Tiananmen, but his account focuses on the tactics rather than the content of American policy. I was interested to see more discussion addressing why the United States pursued such a policy and an evaluation of the values and principles guiding American policy. Kluver concludes by arguing that studying the “rhetorical visions” of Chinese students, Communist Party leaders, and Bush administration officials “reveals some interesting aspects of the Bush administration’s diplomacy during this period.” (91) At times, however, his article slighted engagement with the broader questions raised by the roundtable. The real strength of his article is his close attention to the worldviews, goals, and tactics of the two parties in China; more work is needed to integrate United States actors into the story. Finally, Kluver’s account relies primarily upon English-language sources; a brief outline of the availability of Chinese-language sources for this period would be of considerable use to future scholars on these questions.

Andrew Preston’s article offers an useful exploration of the role of religion in the first Bush presidency, one not often regarded as particularly influenced by faith, which Preston argues can be attributed to Bush’s regard for religion as “private, not public.” (96) The bulk of his article traces Bush’s long, awkward relationship with the conservative wing of the Republican Party as well as his difficulties in gaining and maintaining the support of evangelicals and the Christian Right. Bush recognized the political importance of reaching out to evangelicals and made appointments and alliances intended to curry favor with the Religious Right. During the 1988 presidential campaign, he even went so far as to assert, “Jesus Christ is my personal savior.” (100) Bush viewed these steps as essential to securing the Republican nomination, especially with televangelist Pat Robertson in the race. Once in office, however, Preston argues that Bush paid little attention to the Christian Right or its agenda. Instead, he returned to his roots as a moderate and, in Preston’s telling, only reengaged when he faced a 1992 primary challenge from Patrick Buchanan.

Preston’s piece is one of the few to engage Bush’s foreign policy critically. He evaluates Bush’s worldview and characterizes it as “ill suited to the times.” (103) According to Preston, religion didn’t particularly shape Bush’s foreign policy; he was a realist, not a crusader. Preston suggests the Bush White House had little interest in human rights and was not focused on a post-Cold War world that could turn its attention to poverty, discrimination, and other social ills. As Preston writes, “This was not a foreign policy designed to win hearts and minds.” (104) Preston suggests that the end of the Cold War led religious liberals to press for a new framework for United States foreign policy, and evangelicals were similarly distressed by the administration’s inattention to human rights concerns. They and others expressed frustration that Bush did not seem more delighted by the Cold War’s end. Preston also outlines the complicated responses of religious believers to Bush’s war in Iraq, including critical questions about the extent to which it was a “just”

or moral war. (111-2) Preston suggests that Christian conservatives were so opposed to or betrayed by a number of Bush's policies that they stayed home on Election Day in 1992 and contributed to his electoral defeat. In his article, Preston does an excellent job of marrying diplomatic, political, and religious history together in a coherent whole. One question, likely of considerable interest to readers of this roundtable, that Preston might have addressed was how Bush's relationship with the Christian Right shaped his son's relations with the same constituency.

Mary Elise Sarotte's article on the murky history of American and West German commitments on expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) relies upon the widest range and volume of sources of any contribution to the roundtable. Sarotte's work makes excellent use of interviews with policymakers and diplomats at the time as well as research in the United States, Germany, and Russia. To be fair, Sarotte has recently published *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe*, and her article and book draw upon the same body of archival research and interviews. Sarotte, faced with divergent interpretations of Western commitments to the Soviet Union regarding NATO expansion, seeks to uncover how such different understandings could have developed. Sarotte's account outlines how Washington and Bonn both confronted the challenge of managing German reunification and integration into NATO. She begins by explicating what she terms the "mental maps" of the key participants in the critical negotiations. In particular, she explores how the backgrounds of Baker and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev shaped their approaches to diplomacy. Sarotte explains how flaws in Soviet policy formulation and implementation contributed to the confusion over the commitments made to Gorbachev. For Sarotte, as for the leaders twenty years ago, the crux of the confusion is that nothing was written down at the end of the critical Baker-Gorbachev meeting of 9 February 1990. Sarotte suggests that Gorbachev intended to rely on Baker's oral commitment that the "zone of NATO" would not expand. (128) She aptly demonstrates, however, that Baker had not intended his proffer to be a firm commitment but rather one step in a series of talks over the matter. The two leaders thus held different perceptions of whether an agreement had been reached.

Sarotte argues that Gorbachev unadvisedly made a concession on German unification based on his understanding that Baker and West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl had agreed NATO would not extend further east. She characterizes Gorbachev as conducting impetuous diplomacy and failing to secure written assurances. Her telling, however, suggests manipulation of Gorbachev by Baker and Kohl, though it does not engage more deeply whether or not Clinton-era parsing of Baker's language was disingenuous. Greater evaluation of their actions would have been interesting. In addition, a more detailed discussion of Gorbachev's negotiating style would have added to Sarotte's account; for example did he normally forego written agreements or had previous experiences negotiating with Kohl and Baker convinced the Soviet leader the two meant what they said as a commitment?

Bartholomew H. Sparrow's article examines the role of National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft in shaping the foreign policy of the Bush administration. Sparrow writes a laudatory account and suggests Scowcroft's contributions to foreign economic diplomacy

and public relations have been overlooked thus far. Sparrow's overview of the most common characterizations of Bush's foreign policy team and specifically Scowcroft's role differs from those of the other contributors in the sampling of harsh assessments of Bush's foreign policy that he cites, including criticism that it was "mis-guided," "morally obtuse," and "trapped in a time warp." (143) Despite highlighting others' strong criticisms of the administration's policies, Sparrow rates Scowcroft positively and enumerates what he sees as Scowcroft's most important accomplishments. Sparrow points to Scowcroft's temperament, close relationship with Bush, and effectiveness as a manager. He devotes less space to discussing Scowcroft as a foreign policy thinker or to a potentially useful comparison with the role of Bush's Secretary of State James Baker. This reader also would have appreciated a greater sense of Scowcroft's worldview and, in particular, how it shaped his commitment to expelling Iraq from Kuwait. Sparrow's discussion of the administration's China policy might more explicitly have addressed how great a role Scowcroft played given that Bush was, in the words of one of his aides, his own "China desk officer." (38) Sparrow's account argues that Scowcroft's role was integral on a wide range of policy issues but does not adequately explore the extent to which Scowcroft formulated rather than managed United States policy. Furthermore, Sparrow too often lets Scowcroft's justifications speak for themselves without offering his own analysis. (168) The strongest argument that Sparrow makes in support of the Bush administration's foreign policy is that on a wide range of issues, it has persisted. But, he acknowledges that when the administration left office, it had not left a "post-Cold War doctrine" or "contemporary analogue to George Kennan's X article." (175)