

Introduction

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Co.P1 What is grand strategy? What does it aim to achieve? Does it have relevance—and, if so, applicability—beyond questions of war and peace? And what differentiates it from normal strategic thought—what, in other words, makes it “grand”?

Co.P2 In recent years, historians and other scholars have offered useful definitions, most of which coalesce around the notion that grand strategy is an amplification of the “normal” strategic practice of deploying various means to attain specific ends.¹ “The crux of grand strategy,” writes Paul Kennedy, co-founder of the influential Grand Strategy program at Yale University, “lies . . . in *policy*, that is, in the capacity of the nation’s leaders to bring together all the elements, both military and nonmilitary, for the preservation and enhancement of the nation’s long-term (that is, in wartime *and* peacetime) best interests.”² John Lewis Gaddis, the program’s co-founder with Kennedy, defines grand strategy succinctly as “the alignment of potentially unlimited aspirations with necessarily limited capabilities.”³ Hal Brands, an alumnus of Yale’s program and a contributor to this volume, observes that grand strategy is best understood as an “intellectual architecture that lends structure to foreign policy; it is the logic that helps states navigate a complex and dangerous world.”⁴ Peter Feaver, who followed Yale’s model when establishing a grand strategy program at Duke University, is somewhat more specific: “Grand strategy refers to the collection of plans and policies that comprise the state’s deliberate effort to harness political, military, diplomatic, and economic tools together to advance that state’s national interest.”⁵ International Relations theorist Stephen Walt is even more precise: “A state’s grand strategy is its plan for making itself secure. Grand strategy identifies the objectives that must be achieved to produce security, and describes the political and military actions that are believed to lead to this goal. Strategy is thus a set of ‘contingent predictions’: if we do A, B, and C, the desired results X, Y, and Z should follow.”⁶

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While clear about grand strategy's purpose, these definitions do not explicitly address its proper scope and focus. Why? In spite of recognizing the complexity of their subject, the generators of these definitions and other noted scholars of grand strategy have often limited their analytic framework to moments of conflict and the "purposeful employment of all the instruments of power available to a security community"—in other words, war.⁷ Tackling episodes from antiquity to the present, in many cases with remarkable depth and sophistication, scholars of grand strategy have examined the relationship between armed conflict and the peace that follows. Many theorists argue that it should continue to be this way.⁸ The tight focus on policy and warfare, they suggest, provides precision, particularly considering that the scope of their work tracks millennia—from Herodotus and Thucydides to Kennan and Kissinger. Even those otherwise insightful studies that look beyond the conduct of warfare still perceive grand strategy as falling strictly within the realm of high diplomacy, deterrence, macroeconomic power, and other measures that fall just short of war—a perspective broader than warfare, perhaps, but not by much.⁹

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Because these scholars focus on statecraft as it has been conventionally understood, they omit much else that could be considered political. However, as the definitions by Kennedy, Gaddis, and others demonstrate, it is possible to consider, and even reach, a more capacious understanding of grand strategy, one that still includes the battlefield and the negotiating table but can also expand beyond them. While the concept of strategy is undoubtedly military in origin, and although strategic culture retains a high degree of its original military character, there is no reason to confine grand strategy solely to the realm of warfare. Scholars have similarly located the origins of sovereignty, law, and statehood in the realm of warfare, yet it is hard to think of these topics as falling exclusively within the domain of military history.¹⁰ Just as contemporary world politics is driven by a wide range of non-military issues, the most thorough considerations of grand strategy must examine the bases of peace and security as broadly as possible.¹¹ As one recent survey of the topic puts it, "An exclusive focus on military force appears inconsistent with the contemporary environment of world politics."¹² A theory that bears little resemblance to the reality around us every day—in which gender, race, the environment, public health, and a wide range of cultural, social, political, and economic issues are not only salient but urgently pressing—can only be so useful.

Co.P5 For this reason, among others, some scholars have doubted the usefulness or even very legitimacy of studying grand strategy. Skeptics tend to mount criticisms in roughly three key areas: definitions, discipline, and scope. One argument that combines definitional and disciplinary criticism argues that “the more the output of grand strategists is examined, the more the enterprise comes down to a desire by statesmen, and their would-be tutors, not so much to understand the world as to stake their place in it.”¹³ Other critics suggest that those who make as well as those who study grand strategy are likely to find the grandiosity they seek. Richard Betts, for example, admonishes scholars that “it is good to step back and realize that there is less in the idea of this voguish concept than meets the eye.” Actual policy is just too messy to be the product of a coherent advanced planning, and grand strategy is not “what actually drives governments’ actions.”¹⁴

Co.P6 Taking the modern United States as a nation-state case study, *Rethinking American Grand Strategy* instead argues for the relevance and usefulness of grand strategy; and, in doing so, demonstrates that grand-strategic analysis can be much more capacious than the usual politico-military framework of international history. To encompass the fullest dimensions of grand strategy, scholarship must include the forgotten voices that contributed to the intellectual architecture, plans, policies, and aspirations of US foreign policy, especially those voices that traditional scholarship has neglected. Not only have these understudied and undertheorized figures and topics long factored into US strategic thought, but they have actively shaped it.¹⁵ One of the principal aims of this book is to integrate these forgotten voices into the broader contours of American grand strategy.

Co.S1 **Case Study I: The Unexpected Grand Strategy of George W. Bush**

Co.P7 Sometimes the most effective and farsighted grand strategy has little to do with armed conflict. By way of illustration, consider the policies of President George W. Bush.¹⁶

Co.P8 It is clear that many people in the Bush administration saw the attacks of September 11, 2001, as an opportunity to deal with Iraq once and for all. Their view carried the day, in the teeth of opposition from national security officials and anti-war protestors alike. But despite Bush’s determination for a showdown with Saddam Hussein, and despite later perceptions, there was

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no rush to war—a full eighteen months passed between 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq. In that time, Bush convened many National Security Council (NSC) meetings on Iraq. Key members of the administration spent countless hours explaining both the nature of what they saw as an Iraqi threat and the regional and international benefits of removing that threat. Most notable was the National Security Strategy, a thirty-one-page document released in September 2002 that explicitly laid out Bush’s vision for prosecuting the “global war on terror.”

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What is particularly striking about those eighteen months of planning and deliberation, however, is how un-strategic the Bush administration’s thinking was: its highly ambitious ends bore almost no relationship to realistic means. For example, in early March 2003, shortly before they would oversee the invasion of Iraq, military commanders met with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and predicted a quick victory that would see US forces occupying Baghdad within a matter of weeks. But those plans, focused narrowly on defeating the Iraqi army, did not come close to matching up with, let alone achieving, the administration’s almost limitless regional and global objectives. At an NSC meeting the day after Rumsfeld’s consultation with the generals, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith laid out a wish list, including the preservation of Iraq’s territorial integrity, an improved quality of life for the Iraqi people, international support for the US invasion, international participation in Iraq’s reconstruction, and the development of “democratic institutions” in Iraq that would serve “as a model for the region” and perhaps even pave the way for a final settlement of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Bush left the meeting uneasy with Feith’s abstractions, but when he met with a Vatican envoy sent to Washington to convey the pope’s opposition to war, he simply repeated Feith’s platitudes.¹⁷ Right on the eve of war, then, the architects of a war entirely of their own making had little grasp of how they were going to complete their design. Unsurprisingly, the war failed to meet its goals and instead caused new problems for American security.

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Nearly four years later, Bush launched another strategic initiative to deal with Iraq. Since its start, the war had gone disastrously wrong. Only one of Feith’s objectives, preserving the territorial integrity of Iraq, had been achieved, at unimaginable cost—but even that was simply a status quo objective, not the kind of transformation for which Bush had launched the war in the first place. Bush then fired Rumsfeld after the Republican Party suffered a heavy defeat in the 2006 midterm elections in which the Iraq War was the main issue. Instead of beginning a withdrawal from Iraq, however, Bush

convened a series of high-level, top secret meetings designed to turn the war around. The meetings were, observed Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, being conducted separately, in “atomized fashion,” and needed coordination.¹⁸ Bush placed National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley in charge, who by all accounts brought order to the Bush administration’s chaos. Planning under Hadley was both extensive and intensive, and an administration notorious for its dysfunctional infighting reached a pragmatic consensus. The result was the so-called Surge, a deployment of 30,000 additional troops, combined with new efforts to win over Sunni opposition fighters in Iraq. The new approach, implemented in January 2007, stabilized the war, and Bush and his supporters were quick to claim it as a victory. But while the Surge may have stabilized an ever-deteriorating operational situation, it could not secure a strategic victory in any meaningful sense. The original objectives that Feith had outlined four years earlier still remained well out of reach, and America’s reputation still lay in tatters.¹⁹

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In these two episodes, the same people devoted significant time and resources to forward strategic planning to solving, more or less, the same problem. In 2002–3, the Bush administration’s planning on Iraq was haphazard and unrealistic, and the result was humiliating defeat. In 2006–7, the administration’s planning on Iraq was well coordinated and tightly focused, yet while the result was a tactical success the United States was still no closer to achieving even its most limited, modest goals. The Surge succeeded in the short term by focusing on the small details that would win battles, not wars, and it did not create a peace to follow the fighting. Admiral William J. Fallon, head of US Central Command, put it bluntly a few months after the Surge had been launched. “Nobody’s doing any strategic thinking,” he complained. “They’re all tying their shoes. Now I understand why we are where we are. We ought to be shot for this.”²⁰

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Now consider what might well turn out to be, in the long run, Bush’s most enduring strategic endeavor. As two contributors to this volume, Elizabeth H. Bradley and Lauren A. Taylor, explain, Iraq was not the only focus of Bush’s planning. In a series of secret meetings in 2002, running alongside the administration’s meetings on Iraq, Bush and some of his advisers discussed ways of tackling the AIDS crisis in Africa. The result was an ambitious but realistic plan to fight an epidemic that was ravaging the African continent and had the potential to spread far beyond. Non-traditional foreign policies, including humanitarian causes like health care, are not usually included in analysis of grand strategy. Yet they should be, not simply for the sake of

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inclusivity but because they meet the test of grand-strategic objectives: creating the conditions for an enduring peace, fostering international stability, advancing US ideals and interests, and reducing anti-Americanism. Bradley and Taylor illustrate that the successful implementation of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) owed much to the principles of grand strategy. In doing so, they also show that the boundaries of grand strategy extend far beyond the conduct of warfare.

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What Is Grand Strategy?

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So, to return to our opening question, what is grand strategy? This is unsteady theoretical and historiographical ground, for there are virtually countless definitions in existence, including many not quoted here. “No simple, clear definition of grand strategy can ever be fully satisfactory,” observes military historian Williamson Murray, while others have noted that it is “hard to overstate how much questions of definition bedevil contemporary studies of grand strategy.”²¹ These reservations may be true, but they should not mean that definitions should be avoided altogether. If analysts do not provide high definition to what they claim to be investigating, why should anyone pay attention to their conclusions?²² For a volume on how scholars and practitioners should rethink grand strategy, it is therefore incumbent upon the editors to make clear what we talk about when we talk about grand strategy.²³

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By engaging with various dimensions of the historical record, this volume argues that grand strategy is best understood as a holistic and interconnected system of power, encompassing all aspects of society in pursuit of international goals “based on the calculated relationship of means to ends.”²⁴ While it is, as Barry Posen puts it in a now-classic formulation, “a state's theory about how it can best ‘cause’ security for itself,” how states cause their own security is often down to the actions of non-state actors who produce their own theories of power and security.²⁵ In a representative democracy like the United States, grand strategy helps answer the underlying question, “What is our power for?”²⁶ Capacious and far-sighted (long-term) perspectives differentiate a higher-order (grand) strategy from more proximate strategies, or lower-level operational pursuits and tactics. Grand strategy is not simply about winning wars or attaining specific foreign-policy objectives, important as these priorities are; it is not only an answer to the question of what power

is meant to achieve. Grand strategy is also about creating a durable peace that follows a war and then maintaining the stability of that peace long after the war has faded into a distant memory. It is, and has been, about making or preventing large-scale change. It is—for the United States especially, with its global ambitions, widespread commitments, and enormous capabilities in all forms of power—about trying to shape world conditions so as to ensure the protection of national security and the flourishing of national values.²⁷ If “normal” strategy is pragmatic, essentially an exercise of short-term problem solving, “grand” strategy is ideological, a programmatic vision of reshaping a state’s external environment and reordering, to the extent that it’s possible, the people who live in it.

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While strategy has a conceptual lineage stretching back to antiquity, grand strategy has a decidedly more modern pedigree. Although the label of “grand strategy” might be applied to the statecraft of leaders from before the modern period,²⁸ only in the last two centuries or so have strategic thinkers explicitly conceptualized strategy on a “grand” scale, and only in the last hundred years has strategy been codified as “grand.”²⁹ Even the great Prussian strategist Carl von Clausewitz did not write about “grand” strategy in what is probably the most important strategic treatise in diplomatic and military history, *On War*; nor did his influential contemporaries, such as Antoine-Henri Jomini. In fact, nobody did until the first era of modern globalization, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the mass armies and nationalist movements of the nineteenth century were joined to the industrial economies, innovative technologies, and ideological visions of the twentieth century. Shortly before World War I, two naval strategists, American Alfred Thayer Mahan and Briton Julian Corbett, offered a totalistic conception of strategy that reached far beyond the military, including its economic, political, and, at times, cultural and ideological dimensions. In 1911, Corbett even distinguished between forms of “minor” and “major” strategy. But it was not until after the Great War that “grand strategy” came into existence in a formal and theoretical way.³⁰

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It was entirely fitting, then, that grand strategy was forged as a separate discipline during the global conflicts of the twentieth century. The phrase “grand strategy” first appeared with some recurrence in English-language writing in the 1860s, but it does not appear to have been much used until the World War II era, with an explosion of use of the term in 1936 reaching a peak in 1944. That there appears to have been a dramatic rise in references, debates, and discussions of grand strategy from 1936 to 1949, with the greatest usage in

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the 1939–46 period, should come as no surprise.³¹ Indeed, grand strategy as a phrase mirrors the wartime intellectual deliberations and planning not just for the conflict but also the postwar peace; it thus maps onto the mid-century “American Century” moment as surely as any declaration by Henry Luce or Franklin Roosevelt. The United States aimed to devise a grand strategy for enduring global power in those years, and everyone knew it. Through these crises, from two world wars and into the global Cold War, intellectual innovators such as Briton Basil Liddell Hart and American Edward Mead Earle made strategy “grand.” Liddell Hart and Earle—the latter the subject of a chapter in this volume—argued that grand strategy encompassed the new dimensions of power in the modern age. Their visions were flawed, but they were visionaries all the same, and they exerted a profound influence on later historians of grand strategy.³²

Co.P17 These figures were not alone in rethinking the best way for states to engage with the new world order. Warfare had always been rooted in politics and policy, but the unprecedented social scale of warfare led to a widespread reconceptualization of those wars. Even before the advent of nuclear weapons in 1945, nation-states had begun devising ways of limiting and perhaps even eliminating warfare itself. But the failure of these ambitions, and the persistent threat of total war in the nuclear age, meant that states had to consider their place in the world in a more comprehensive fashion. The ability of states to project awesomely destructive power far beyond their borders meant that threats had to be identified long before they became imminent.

Co.P18 Because grand strategy is a creature of modern warfare, developed in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, it took a broad view of the factors involved in world security and a robust view of its own role in contributing to it. States also had to consider the emergence of threats from more unconventional sources. Disease, migration, access to foodstuffs and raw materials, the status of women, racism and racial conflict—by the middle of the twentieth century, all these issues and more had to be evaluated as legitimate threats to peace and security. Strategy, which before the twentieth century had been primarily operational and military in focus, could no longer be effective if it ignored the increasingly complicated and integrated modern world system. Grand strategists had to see the whole picture, not just the battlefield, and they had to peer into the future, not just solve the problems of the present. For this reason, it is probably better to think of plural grand strategies rather than a singular grand strategy.

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While it is clear that strategy was born of military and political necessity, grand strategy was born of the need to fit military and political matters into a larger framework. As the case of PEPFAR demonstrates, developing strategies designed to win wars has not been enough to ensure a state's national security or international standing. Strategic studies must therefore take a wider accounting of what is considered "effective" or successful beyond military effectiveness on the battlefield and diplomatic success in the corridors of power.³³

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Recent events underscore the point: strategic thinking in realms other than military security, such as public health, might be even more important in the long run. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, science commentator Anjana Ahuja lamented "the skewed risk-benefit calculations that see bottomless riches apportioned to anti-terrorism measures and a begging bowl to disease control."³⁴ History is instructive here, too: the global scale and scope of the coronavirus pandemic of 2020 are eerily reminiscent of the experience of the influenza pandemic of 1918–19. That pandemic infected 20 to 30 percent of the world's population, accounting for as many as 50 million deaths (estimates range from nearly 18 million to over 100 million), including roughly 675,000 Americans. In the United States, induction camps, cramped quarters, wartime transport, and industry generated optimal conditions for the flu to spread.

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Around the world, global interconnection had reached an apex in world history allowing the flu to reach much of the world in a scant four months and to circumnavigate the globe within a year.³⁵ Though it came to be known as the "Spanish flu," that epithet was the product of political and racial rhetoric rather than science. It emerged in weaponized nationalist form in the British and American press because of skepticism about the pro-Austro-Hungarian leanings of neutral Spain, where the press covered the flu in ways the combatant nations did not permit when Spain's King Alfonso XIII became ill in the spring of 1918. Still, there was no monopoly on wrapping the virus in national stigma: the Spanish sometimes called it the "French flu," while the Germans termed it the "Russian pest." In the United States, Woodrow Wilson's administration took no preemptive public health actions. In correspondence with wartime allies, US military leaders minimized the risk of illness, deriding it at first as a "three-day fever" throughout spring and summer 1918. Wilson never even addressed the American people publicly about the pandemic. Perhaps most shockingly, even in the wake of the pandemic the United States did not develop an internal national public health

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infrastructure or collaborate with the new League of Nations on a multinational strategy to prevent future outbreaks.

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The very martial language of combating the virus was a product of the politico-racial antagonisms of the wartime environment and was generated by the ways in which modern, industrial nations came to muster their resources to confront enormous challenges, be they war or infectious disease. Among the historical insights we can derive from 1918–19 is that without a cohesive public health strategy, both national and international, the devastation was amplified. Wartime and hyper-patriotic pressures in the United States and Britain prevented the adoption of non-pharmaceutical interventions such as school closures, bans on gatherings, enhanced hand hygiene, quarantine, and social distancing that public health officials knew would help prevent spread and ameliorate suffering. The strategic priorities of war took precedence over a cohesive public health strategy, and as a result, six times as many Americans died from influenza than died in the war, and more American soldiers succumbed to the flu and other diseases than died in combat. The supposedly novel interconnectedness of our globalized world is actually not so different from the conditions of 1918–19; now, as then, those connections magnify the problem of pandemics and necessitate longer-term national and international planning.³⁶

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In peacetime, or simply in moments of relative peace, grand strategists (and grand strategies) balance priorities, calibrate means to ends, and preserve essential interests not simply against enemies and competitors but also in relation to allies and neutrals, all of which requires marshaling a society's military, economic, diplomatic, cultural, and even ethical resources. In the current international climate, states take a larger view than developing policies to ensure “victory” in current or prospective future armed conflicts. Having a grand strategy for peace means finding alternatives to armed confrontations in order to secure positive outcomes and, if no other alternative presents itself and war ensues, ensuring that a state will be better off in victory than it had been before the war. The most effective grand strategists plan for a postwar settlement in which their state's external environment is conducive not just to that state's interests but to the interests of entire regions and blocs of nations as well. Conversely, the most notorious episodes in modern history have often come as the result of badly conceived grand strategies in which unrealistic ends outpaced available means.

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In approaching grand strategy, scholars and policymakers therefore need to consider phenomena—such as race, religion, health, and culture—that

are essential to comprehending the world around them but have nonetheless been neglected from traditional grand-strategic analysis. Just as neglected in the American grand-strategic canon are historical and contemporary actors who have usually been kept at arm's length from the policymaking process. According to one study, in the making of strategy, “the playing field is skewed, dominated by powerful, mainstream voices. . . . Policy options that do not fit neatly into an established story are treated as beyond the pale, rarely heard and easily dismissed.”³⁷ Those often-ignored phenomena and people are addressed in the chapters of *Rethinking American Grand Strategy*.

Co.P25 To be sure, sweeping visions of relations between peoples must, on some level, consider the state and interstate relations.³⁸ Strategy sits, as military historian Hew Strachan notes, in the interstices between war and politics; at certain moments, it connects war and politics in order to achieve immediate goals and make possible long-term objectives.³⁹ Inescapably, strategy is, and always has been, an act of statecraft. But it is not *only* that. Either in practice or in analysis, grand strategy need not be limited to formal statecraft, and by expanding our frame of reference beyond the state and interstate relations we aim to arrive at a fuller, richer understanding of the sources and mechanisms of human relations in a global age.

Co.S3 **Toward a New Definition of Grand Strategy**

Co.P26 As a complement to the perspective on grand strategy that has dominated the field, this book proposes to build on the concept of strategic culture.⁴⁰ Premised on the inherent relationship between culture and strategy, this perspective reflects political scientist Jack Snyder's call to explore “the body of attitudes and beliefs that guides and circumscribes thought on strategic questions, influences the way strategic issues are formulated, and sets the vocabulary and perceptual parameters of strategic debate.”⁴¹ As military theorist Colin Gray argues, an intimate and intricate bond exists between strategic culture and the decisions made by those in positions of responsibility within a security community. Strategic culture “can be conceived as a context out there that surrounds, and gives meaning to, strategic behavior” and “should be approached both as a shaping context for behavior and itself as a constituent of that behavior.” According to Gray, “Everything a security community does, if not a manifestation of strategic culture, is at least an example of behavior effected by culturally shaped, or encultured, people,

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organizations, procedures, and weapons.”⁴² Although the impact of strategic culture is often subtle, it is ubiquitous and applies to groups, ideas, and beliefs operating outside of formal politics and policymaking. As such, we propose to include the widest possible range of cultural conditions that “shape the perceptions strategists have of material conditions” as well as the outcomes they seek.⁴³ Doing so yields surprises that deepen as well as broaden our understanding of grand strategy. As the chapters in this book illustrate, hidden grand strategies and strategists abound in the historical record.

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Following the insights of Nina Silove, this book highlights three main types of grand strategy: “grand plans,” “grand principles,” and “grand behavior.” Each of these types, she argues, has its own value, and they all need not be seen in opposition; indeed, viewed comprehensively, they allow for a more thoroughgoing understanding of what grand strategy is in theory and has been, historically, in practice. While we hope to offer conceptual clarity in the study of grand strategy, we also want to emulate Silove’s broad thinking and avoid the strict policing of disciplinary boundaries she rightly critiques.⁴⁴

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Consequently, a key intervention of *Rethinking American Grand Strategy*’s is to approach grand strategy as an epistemology—that is, as a theory of knowledge of international history that organizes outcomes around methods, means, and desired ends. When viewed as a way of organizing knowledge, situated within and emanating from a distinct historical and cultural context, the idea of grand strategy becomes more mobile, its content and operation more readily apparent. Such an approach recognizes the diagnostic, philosophic, prescriptive, historical, and programmatic elements of grand strategy. It expands our reach beyond military means or high-level state actors, both of which have dominated a literature concerned primarily with the applications of hard power and the conduct of warfare.

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If global power is to some extent diffuse, it follows that, as historian Akira Iriye suggests, the world is “created and recreated as much by individuals from ‘lesser powers’ as by the great powers.” In contrast to the traditional power-politics narrative, Iriye observes that “individuals and groups of people from different lands have sought to develop an alternative community of nations and peoples on the basis of their cultural interchanges and that, while frequently ridiculed by practitioners of power politics and ignored by historians, their efforts have significantly altered the world community and immeasurably enriched our understanding of world affairs.”⁴⁵ In this volume, the contributors heed Iriye’s call to broaden the conceptual frame of international history. This new conception comprises sweeping

strategic visions of race, gender, religion, law, transnational activism, international organizations, and core values. This more expansive view does not downplay the centrality of traditional “hard” power, and it does not ask us to ignore the world of high politics, great powers, and international orders. Yet it does call on those who study and practice grand strategy to broaden their perspective and situate unconventional issues alongside the more conventional concerns.

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Yet while power can be diffuse, there are parts of the world in which power is more concentrated than others. The United States is one of those places, and for this reason this volume uses it as a benchmark to rethink grand strategy in history.⁴⁶ While some scholars insist that only great powers can, by definition, have a grand strategy,⁴⁷ we have not chosen to focus on the United States for this reason. For one thing, the contemporary United States is home to a disproportionate number of university grand-strategy programs, which in turn provide much of the recent scholarly work on the topic. But as a topic in its own right, the study of American grand strategy offers a wide range of complementary benefits: few states in the international system project power like the United States. More to the point, very few, if any, other states deploy virtually all forms of social power—military, economic, intellectual, and political—in their engagement with the wider world as the United States does.⁴⁸ Moreover, few states have a foreign policy that imbricates, but is also bedeviled by, such a wide array of social and cultural phenomena ranging from race and religion to gender and sexuality. And few states have generated and participated in a vast range of strategic projects that might be understood as “grand.” The United States is a large, diverse country with an active, complex foreign policy that is both globally active but also deeply rooted in domestic politics; it provides scholars with a suitable laboratory for experimenting with the concept of grand strategy. Thus the scale and reach of American power, both hard and soft, make it an ideal subject for a revisionist study such as this.

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If the United States provides a good focus for rethinking grand strategy, history provides an ideal discipline. Indeed, it is no coincidence that historians of American foreign relations have in recent years pursued an ever-widening array of diverse subjects, along the way innovating new methodologies and theories and blazing new disciplinary trails for international history as a whole.⁴⁹ Political scientists and theorists of international relations occupy a prominent place in the study of grand strategy, but for the most part even they approach the topic historically—that is, with qualitative methods and

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with a deep engagement with the past. This is not a coincidence. “The study of history seems almost written into the DNA of the field,” concludes one study of grand strategy by three political scientists.⁵⁰ Grand strategy is endlessly complex, which makes studying it with quantitative methods difficult; it is more a branch of political thought or political theory, both of which are deeply historical, than other aspects of political science. Similarly, history is usually the preferred method in teaching grand strategy.⁵¹ For these reasons, the contributions to *Rethinking American Grand Strategy* come predominantly from historians, and they have approached the subject by way of examining the past.

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Case Study II: Barack Obama, Reluctant Strategist

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For all its power and range, the United States is hardly omnipotent. In fact, conducting US grand strategy has become so complex that attempting to do so is close to being mission impossible.⁵² Seeking a way through this complexity by reducing his overriding approach to one concise, explicit statement, Barack Obama chose four simple words: “Don’t do stupid shit.”⁵³ Obama was not simply warning against ill-considered policies and half-baked operations in the wake of the Iraq War—he was also expressing his disdain for grand-strategic thinking of any kind.

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But Obama and his closest advisers went further with their critique. They refused to countenance the national security intellectuals and architects from think tanks and universities who had agitated for regime change in Iraq and who now offered the administration their own visions for America’s purpose in the world. One of Obama’s closest aides, Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes, memorably described this Washington-based foreign-policy elite as “the Blob,” an amorphous group of centrist Republicans and Democrats, many with area expertise, who were suspected of having a vested interest in keeping America active in the world. The Blob, Obama and Rhodes implied, was an undifferentiated and unthinking mass with unstoppable force but little actual purpose in the practical formulation of US foreign policy. Americans had to be more realistic, Obama and Rhodes argued. They had to deal with “the world as it is,” as Rhodes titled his memoir of his time in the Obama administration, and not try in vain to remake it how they wished it to be.⁵⁴

Co.P34 Despite Obama's repudiation of the national security establishment, his administration did not shirk the intellectual work essential to the policy-making process. In fact, Rhodes helped preside over the largest NSC staff in US history.⁵⁵ And Obama's foreign policy did not lack for ambition—witness his attempted rapprochement with Cuba, his nuclear deal with Iran, and his pivot to East Asia. Rather, Obama's concern focused in particular on those grandiose initiatives—the kind that led the nation into Iraq—in which the nation's aims greatly exceeded its means. Instead of remaking the world, Obama wanted to avoid the Blob's "stupid shit" which, inevitably, led to tragedy.

Co.P35 As Obama discovered, though, avoiding stupid shit is not as straightforward as it sounds. After all, shit happens.⁵⁶ Following the outbreak of civil war in Syria, in March 2011, he came under increasingly heavy domestic pressure to intervene in support of the rebels fighting the government of Bashar al-Assad. At the very least, many of his advisers wanted him to authorize the sale of US weapons to the rebels. Obama refused to do either, but this only brought him greater criticism at home. In August 2012—during the escalating Syrian civil war but, more crucially, in the midst of a presidential election campaign—he declared at a press conference that the United States would intervene if Assad or his allies crossed "a red line" by using chemical weapons. When Assad's forces openly crossed that line a year later, by using chemical weapons in an attack on Eastern Ghouta, Obama did not respond by deploying American power. He instead sought congressional approval for military strikes against Syria, and, while Congress debated intervention, Russian President Vladimir Putin filled the breach by brokering a settlement with Assad that made US intervention unnecessary. In his attempt to avoid repeating Bush's mistakes in Iraq, Obama had boxed himself in on Syria. He side-stepped one pile of stupid shit only to step right in another.

Co.P36 Few Americans wanted to repeat their misadventure in Iraq. But while Obama's desire to avoid foreign entanglements was widespread, it was not universal, and his critics, including some inside his own national security team, took him to task for avoiding grand strategy. For these critics, the Obama administration's commitment to a more deliberative, realism-driven foreign policy was itself a failure. Samantha Power, a passionate advocate of humanitarian intervention and a key member of Obama's national security team, frequently tried to goad the president into doing more.⁵⁷ Hillary Clinton, who served as Obama's first secretary of state and nearly became his successor as president, chafed at the administration's strategic lethargy.

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“Great nations need organizing principles,” she told an interviewer after leaving the State Department and during the long run-up to the 2016 presidential election. Attempting to avoid making mistakes “is not an organizing principle.”⁵⁸ Others chimed in. “This administration is notable for its lack of grand strategy—or strategists,” the *Washington Post* intoned in 2010. In his *Newsweek* column, historian Niall Ferguson blamed Obama’s struggles in the Middle East on a “lack of any kind of a coherent grand strategy, a deficit about which more than a few veterans of US foreign policymaking have long worried.”⁵⁹

Co.P37 The contrasting strategic problems of two recent presidents, Bush and Obama—one criticized for doing too much, the other too little—seem to suggest that the key problem lies not with the principle of having a grand strategy. Indeed, as Obama discovered in the wake of his non-intervention in Syria, a president cannot be without a grand strategy.⁶⁰ Nor can the president simply appear to be “leading from behind,” as one of his advisers put it when the British and French took the initiative during the 2011 invasion of Libya.⁶¹ Obama learned from these mistakes. After his Libyan and Syrian debacles, he devised a more coherent—and successful—grand strategy of restrained engagement designed to reduce tensions and normalize relations with historic enemies like Cuba and Iran.

Co.P38 Obama’s journey to discovering his grand strategy was painful but hardly unusual. Leaders of the most powerful state in the international system have found it difficult to avoid thinking strategically even when they have wanted to. Presidents, who sit at the very center of that power, need to conceive of ways in which that power can be projected efficiently, effectively, and morally, factoring in American ideals alongside national interests. As political scientist and foreign-policy columnist Daniel Drezner observes, national security officials must strike a delicate balance when devising a grand strategy. On one hand, they must do enough strategic planning to chart a successful path in the world and not entangle the United States in lost causes and unnecessary wars. On the other, they have to guard against the common tendency of strategizing too grandly and leading the nation, and the world, into interventionist disasters, such as the wars in Vietnam and Iraq.⁶² Sometimes formalizing and codifying strategy has had a stultifying effect on foreign policy; at other times, in its quest to find solutions, grand strategy has created problems where none had existed.⁶³ David Milne reminds us, in his contribution to this volume and elsewhere, that diplomacy is as much an art as it is a science.⁶⁴ Getting it right is difficult.

Rethinking American Grand Strategy

Co.S5

Co.P39

Generally, courses in grand strategy have tended to exalt far-sighted individuals, usually decision makers from elite backgrounds struggling against the shortsighted constraints of the small-minded. Though there is less of that thinking today, as contributor Beverly Gage reveals all too often such coursework or scholarship has been a kind of “Great Man” theory of history on steroids, with the Great Man serving simultaneously as a detached analyst and the object of study—for example, Henry Kissinger’s classic work *Diplomacy*, along with his more recent book, *World Order*.⁶⁵ Laws and norms, culture and collaboration, economic development, gender, race, sexuality, public health, social movements, and non-governmental organizations are all eclipsed by Kissinger’s more concentrated understanding, however erudite it may be, of the historical development and utility of grand strategy. Nonetheless, these neglected subjects contribute to the capacious vision of twenty-first-century security that Kissinger’s work, in fact, aims to achieve.

Co.P40

Such latent notions of “rethinking,” or “re-conception,” serve as grand strategy’s historical leitmotif. Methodologically, then, *Rethinking American Grand Strategy* builds on the previous literature in two ways. First, it broadens the range of topics treated historically, as well as the range of scholars from outside the field of conventional diplomatic and military history. Second, it offers specific, empirically detailed case studies to demonstrate why history matters in developing new thematic approaches to a more expansive understanding of grand strategy. The main purpose of the chapters in this volume is to expand the boundaries of what constitutes grand strategy, who the actors are, and how one engages with the field.

Co.P41

While keeping statecraft as a central focus, these new interventions undermine and complicate the definitions of state interests and enhance our appreciation of the “intermestic”—the interaction and overlap between domestic and international affairs.⁶⁶ At the intersection of race and grand strategy in this volume, for example, Adriane Lentz-Smith explores historically marginalized actors who articulated their own alternative visions of the United States in the world that continue to resonate today. Christopher Nichols’s chapter similarly traces W. E. B. Du Bois’s black-nationalist worldview as it adapted elements of the language of “self-determination” advanced by Woodrow Wilson and turned it against articulations of US democracy promotion. Other chapters complicate the “intermestic” in similarly provocative

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ways. Emily Conroy-Krutz's chapter on foreign missions makes a case not just for the importance of religion in the history of US foreign relations but in the very ways we conceptualize grand strategy. Daniel Tichenor shows that the sweep of immigration policy can be categorized and understood in grand-strategic terms. Laura Briggs argues that transnational adoption, and reproductive politics more broadly, must be understood as key elements in a broader US grand strategy.

Co.P42 The complexity of grand strategy as an analytic problem is also reflected in a measure of disagreement among our contributors on matters of scope, scale, and valence. There is even a good deal of skepticism about the very legitimacy of the concept itself. By contrast, others question the need to expand the parameters of grand strategy. The scholars in this volume therefore do not unanimously agree on exactly what constitutes grand strategy, let alone its dimensions and scope. They nonetheless concur that we should continue to study grand strategy even as we expand its terms. In the end, this volume does not claim to offer a definitive answer to what grand strategy absolutely is, or has been. Indeed, asking questions and offering new possibilities, rather than providing a dispositive settlement to a large and growing field, is the mission that lies at the heart of this book.

Co.P43 *Rethinking American Grand Strategy* is organized into five parts. It begins by establishing a firm foundation of definitions, debates, and key ideas before moving on to situate them historically from the late eighteenth century to the present. It then shifts to focus on (re)assessments of key figures and groups before concluding with a dynamic set of new approaches and reflections for rethinking the history of American grand strategy in new and even radical ways.

Co.P44 Part I, "Frameworks," offers new perspectives on some fundamental debates about American grand strategy. It opens with Hal Brands making the case for doing grand-strategic historical analysis properly by highlighting several fallacies scholars should avoid. Beverly Gage then proposes a theory of social movements as a new lens through which to perceive grand strategy. Bradley and Taylor's analysis of PEPFAR follows as an example of how the principles outlined in the first two chapters can be applied.

Co.P45 Part II, "Historical Grand Narratives," provides a sweeping chronological overview of American grand strategy from the nation's founding to the current era. The chapters move from the grand-strategic calculus embedded in the Federalist Papers to the role of Southerners and slavery

in US foreign policy before the Civil War, and from grand strategies related to naval power to the most ascendant ideas at work in America's rise as to become a global power and then superpower since the end of World War I.

Co.P46 Part III, "Recasting Central Figures," examines some of the most familiar historical actors in the study of American grand strategy: Woodrow Wilson, W. E. B. DuBois, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Edward Mead Earle, George F. Kennan, Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, and George H. W. Bush. But as Michaela Hoenicke-Moore illustrates, ordinary Americans, central figures in a foreign policy conditioned by democratic politics and popular opinion, must also be considered. In these chapters, scholars reconsider these central figures by shedding new light on their principles, policies, and context.

Co.P47 The fourth part, "New Approaches," builds on the foundations established by the previous chapters to propose a range of new ways to study grand strategy. Many of these approaches, such as reproductive rights, public health, the environment, humanitarianism, immigration, and race, have not featured much in the voluminous existing literature. Other topics, such as war, law, domestic politics, and religion, may have appeared in previous scholarship but not necessarily in the ways presented here. Collectively, these chapters are informed by social history's emphasis on the importance of voices from below. This bottom-up perspective is not intended to supplant grand strategy's usual top-down focus on strategic leaders and thinkers. Instead, it is meant to offer complementary approaches that will make the study of grand strategy more rounded, better informed, and more consistent with how the world actually operates.

Co.P48 The final part offers two chapters that use the halcyon days of American grand strategy—the mid-twentieth-century moment when victory in World War II and the first years of the Cold War saw the United States become the most powerful state in the world—to reflect on the meaning and limits of grand strategy's history.

Co.P49 Ultimately, this book argues that the strategic-cultural umbrella provided by an epistemological way of conceiving of the history of grand strategy has tremendous potential. It forces us toward a broader vision of the national, international, and transnational dimensions of the United States and the world. Our more expansive view does not downplay the centrality of traditional "hard" power, nor does it ignore the world of high politics, great powers, and international orders. But it does call on those

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who study and practice grand strategy to expand their perspective and situate unconventional issues alongside the more traditional concerns. This book therefore presents a challenge to which we hope future scholars and policymakers will respond in surprising and exciting ways.

Notes

1. Scholars routinely note that there is no single, authoritative definition of “grand strategy.” For the most thoughtful of the recent analyses, see Lukas Milevski, *The Evolution of Modern Grand Strategic Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Nina Silove, “Beyond the Buzzword: The Three Meanings of ‘Grand Strategy,’” *Security Studies* 27 (2018), 27–57; and Thierry Balzacq, Peter Dombrowski, and Simon Reich, “Is Grand Strategy a Research Program?” *Security Studies* 28 (2019), 58–86. While it is true that grand strategy lacks an agreed definition, this is also true for many concepts (such as “ideology” or “liberalism”) as well as for seemingly self-evident categories of analysis (such as “religion” or “gender”), all of which are nonetheless subjects of intensive study.
2. Paul Kennedy, “Grand Strategy in War and Peace: Toward a Broader Definition,” in *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, ed. Paul Kennedy (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 5. Emphasis in original.
3. John Lewis Gaddis, *On Grand Strategy* (New York: Penguin Press, 2018), 21.
4. Hal Brands, *What Good Is Grand Strategy? Power and Purpose in American Statecraft from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 1. This is the definition many of the contributors to this volume use or adapt themselves.
5. Peter Feaver, “What Is Grand Strategy and Why Do We Need It?,” *Foreign Policy*, April 8, 2009, http://shadow.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/04/08/what_is_grand_strategy_and_why_do_we_need_it.
6. Stephen M. Walt, “The Case for Finite Containment: Analyzing US Grand Strategy,” *International Security* 14 (Summer 1989), 6.
7. Colin S. Gray, *War, Peace and International Relations: An Introduction to Strategic History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2012), 349.
8. Most notably, see Edward Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987); and Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). The IR theorist Robert J. Art holds a slightly more expansive view of grand strategy, but still rests it on a foundation of warfare—why, when, how to fight them, and how to win them—because this is the main way to distinguish “grand strategy” from “foreign policy.” See Robert J. Art, “A Defensible Defense: America’s Grand Strategy after the Cold War,” *International Security* 15 (Spring 1991), 5–53; and Robert J. Art, *America’s Grand Strategy and World Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2009). In a similar vein, see Patrick Porter, “Why America’s Grand Strategy Has Not

- Changed: Power, Habit, and the US Foreign Policy Establishment,” *International Security* 42 (Spring 2018), 9–46.
9. See, for example, Williamson Murray, “Thoughts on Grand Strategy,” in *The Shaping of Grand Strategy: Policy, Diplomacy, and War*, ed. Williamson Murray, Richard Hart Sinnreich, and James Lacey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 6.
 10. The literature here is endless, but for a recent, succinct, and above all persuasive overview, see Jens Bartelson, *War in International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).
 11. Following Kennedy’s definition, quoted above, scholars have explored how grand strategy aims to shape the peace following a major war. For example, see G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); and Williamson Murray and James Lacey, eds., *The Making of Peace: Rulers, States, and the Aftermath of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
 12. Balzacq, Dombrowski, and Reich, “Is Grand Strategy a Research Program?” 69.
 13. Thomas Meaney and Stephen Wertheim, “Grand Flattery: The Yale Grand Strategy Seminar,” *The Nation*, May 28, 2012, 27–31.
 14. Richard K. Betts, “The Grandiosity of Grand Strategy,” *Washington Quarterly* 42:4 (Winter 2020), 7.
 15. The literature, published mostly in the last two or three decades, illustrating how gender, sexuality, and race were a part of the history of American foreign relations, is too vast to cite here. But for leading examples, see Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998); Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Carol Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944–1955* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); and Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).
 16. On considering the Bush administration in grand-strategic terms, see two articles by John Lewis Gaddis: “A Grand Strategy of Transformation,” *Foreign Policy* 133 (November–December 2002), 50–57; and “Grand Strategy in the Second Term,” *Foreign Affairs* 84 (January–February 2005), 2–15.
 17. Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 325–332.
 18. Quoted in Bob Woodward, *The War Within* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008), 174.
 19. For the most thorough appraisal of the Surge, which includes praise as well as criticism, see Timothy Andrews Sayle, Jeffrey A. Engel, Hal Brands, and William Inboden, eds., *The Last Card: Inside George W. Bush’s Decision to Surge in Iraq* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019).
 20. Quoted in Woodward, *The War Within*, 343.

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21. Murray, “Thoughts on Grand Strategy,” 5; Balzacq, Dombrowski, and Reich, “Is Grand Strategy a Research Program?” 66.
22. A penetrating insight gleaned from Silove, “Beyond the Buzzword.”
23. With apologies to Raymond Carver and Nathan Englander.
24. Charles Edel, *Nation Builder: John Quincy Adams and the Grand Strategy of the Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 5.
25. Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 13. For a more recent, slightly revised version—this time applied specifically to the United States—see Barry R. Posen, *Restraint: A New Foundation for US Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 1.
26. Jennifer Mitzen, “Illusion or Intention? Talking Grand Strategy into Existence,” *Security Studies* 24 (2015), 62.
27. This formulation of grand strategy is based on the authoritative definition of “national security” as devised by Melvyn P. Leffler. See his *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992); and *Safeguarding Democratic Capitalism: US Foreign Policy and National Security, 1920–2015* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 317–335.
28. As insightfully achieved by Gaddis in *On Grand Strategy*, and as many grand strategy courses challenge students to do.
29. Perhaps this is why two important historical overviews of strategy as practiced around the world since antiquity more or less ignore grand strategy. See Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986); and Williamson Murray, Alvin Bernstein, and MacGregor Knox, eds., *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
30. For the most thorough of recent accounts of this conceptual history, see Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy: Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); and Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). But for a condensed version, split into two parts, see Lawrence Freedman, “The Meaning of Strategy, Part I: The Origins,” *Texas National Security Review* 1 (December 2017), 90–105; and “The Meaning of Strategy, Part II: The Objectives,” *Texas National Security Review* 1 (February 2018), 34–57.
31. These observations, courtesy of Google Books NGram Viewer, come from searches of the phrase “grand strategy” (accessed August 11, 2019).
32. Kennedy, “Grand Strategy in War and Peace,” 2–7.
33. Among the best of such studies, however, are Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray, eds., *Military Effectiveness*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy during the Cold War*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); William C. Martel, *Victory in War: Foundations of Modern Military Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Williamson

- Murray, *War, Strategy, and Military Effectiveness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Williamson Murray and Richard Hart Sinnreich, eds., *Successful Strategies: Triumphant in War and Peace from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); and Ann Hironaka, *Tokens of Power: Rethinking War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
34. Anjana Ahuja, “The War on Germs,” *Financial Times*, April 11–12, 2020, Books section, 8. Her observation here was drawn from Michael T. Osterholm and Mark Olshaker, *Deadliest Enemy: Our War against Killer Germs* (New York: Little, Brown, 2020).
 35. This era of globalization now has a large scholarly literature, but a good place to start is Emily S. Rosenberg, ed., *A World Connecting: 1870–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).
 36. On the US reaction to the 1918–19 flu pandemic, see Christopher McKnight Nichols, “President Trump’s Desire to Reopen Businesses Quickly Is Dangerous,” *Washington Post*, March 25, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/03/25/president-trumps-desire-reopen-businesses-quickly-is-dangerous/>; Christopher McKnight Nichols, “Oregon Response to Flu in 1918 Offers Insights for Coronavirus Fight in 2020,” *The Oregonian*, April 5, 2020, <https://www.oregonlive.com/opinion/2020/04/opinion-oregon-response-to-flu-in-1918-offers-insights-for-coronavirus-fight-in-2020.html>; Christopher McKnight Nichols et al., Roundtable, in the *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* (October 2020). See also John Barry, *The Great Influenza: The Story of the Deadliest Pandemic in History* (New York: Viking, 2004); and Nancy Bristow, *American Pandemic: Lost Worlds of the 1918 Influenza Epidemic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).
 37. Ronald R. Krebs and David M. Edelstein, “Delusions of Grand Strategy: The Problem with Washington’s Planning Obsession,” *Foreign Affairs* 94 (November/December 2015), 109–116, 116;
 38. Charles Hill, *Grand Strategies: Literature, Statecraft, and World Order* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), prologue, 88.
 39. Strachan, *Direction of War*, 20–23.
 40. Alastair Johnston, “Thinking about Strategic Culture,” *International Security* 19 (Spring 1995), 32–64.
 41. Jack L. Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1977), 9.
 42. Colin S. Gray, “Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back,” *Review of International Studies* 25 (January 1999), 50–52.
 43. Johnston, “Thinking about Strategic Culture”; Darryl Howlett, “Strategic Culture: Reviewing Recent Literature,” *Strategic Insights* 6 (November 2005), <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/11212>
 44. Silove, “Beyond the Buzzword,” 55–57.
 45. Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 2.
 46. On the value of US-centric approaches, see Daniel Bessner and Fredrik Logevall, “Recentering the United States in the Historiography of American Foreign

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- Relations,” *Texas National Security Review* 3 (Spring 2020), <https://tnsr.org/2020/04/recentering-the-united-states-in-the-historiography-of-american-foreign-relations/>
47. See, for example, Murray, “Thoughts on Grand Strategy,” 1.
48. This follows the classic typology of power developed in Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986–2013).
49. Americanists are not the only innovators within international history, but no other grouping of international historians has reflected or innovated as much. For a primer, see the essays in Frank Costigliola and Michael J. Hogan, eds., *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 3rd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
50. Balzacq, Dombrowski, and Reich, “Is Grand Strategy a Research Program,” 83. See also Williamson Murray and Richard Hart Sinnreich, *The Past as Prologue: The Importance of History to the Military Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Hill, *Grand Strategies*; Peter R. Mansoor and Williamson Murray, eds., *Grand Strategy and Military Alliances* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); and Gaddis, *On Grand Strategy*.
51. Robert Ralston et al, “Teaching Grand Strategy,” *H-Diplo Roundtable* 21 (April 2020), <https://issforum.org/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XXI-35.pdf>.
52. Robert Jervis, “US Grand Strategy: Mission Impossible,” *Naval War College Review* 51 (Summer 1998), 22–36.
53. Jeffrey Goldberg, “The Obama Doctrine,” *The Atlantic*, April 2016.
54. Ben Rhodes, *The World as It Is: A Memoir of the Obama White House* (New York: Random House, 2018).
55. According to the *Washington Post*, “Obama’s NSC staff has been widely criticized for its size—at least 400 people at its zenith, more than half of them policy advisers, with the rest in administration and technology support—and for what some of his former Cabinet officials have called excessive “micromanagement” of their departments.” When Susan Rice joined the Obama administration in July 2013, “she reduced the overall staff size by 15 percent and cut policy and senior staff positions by 17 percent, to fewer than 180.” “Rice Favors ‘Mean but Lean’ National Security Council,” *Washington Post*, January 17, 2017, www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/rice-favors-mean-but-lean-national-security-council/2017/01/16/6244aa3c-dc49-11e6-ad42-f3375f271c9c_story.html?utm_term=.cbf9292494a8. On Rhodes and the “blob,” see David Samuels, “The Aspiring Novelist Who Became Obama’s Foreign-Policy Guru,” *New York Times*, May 5, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/08/magazine/the-aspiring-novelist-who-became-obamas-foreign-policy-guru.html?_r=0.
56. As pointed out, by way of reference to the strategic thought of Napoleon and Clausewitz, in Gaddis, *On Grand Strategy*, 203 (see also 308–309). On the unavoidable importance of contingency in strategy, see Strachan, *Direction of War*, 235–252. There is considerable irony in the fact that Donald Rumsfeld made this very same observation—sanitized as “stuff happens”—as Iraq was descending into chaos shortly after the 2003 US invasion. “Rumsfeld on Looting in Iraq: ‘Stuff Happens,’” *CNN*, April 12, 2003, <https://edition.cnn.com/2003/US/04/11/sprj.irq.pentagon/>. For an

- explanation, see Stephen Benedict Dyson, “‘Stuff Happens’: Donald Rumsfeld and the Iraq War,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 5 (October 2009), 327–347.
57. “We’ve all read your book, Samantha,” an agitated Obama retorted during one meeting when Power was agitating for intervention. The book was her Pulitzer Prize-winning *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2002). Power herself investigates these tensions at some length in *The Education of an Idealist: A Memoir* (New York: Dey Street, 2019). For a penetrating critique of Power’s worldview, see Daniel Bessner, “The Fog of Intervention,” *New Republic*, September 4, 2019, <https://newrepublic.com/article/154612/education-idealist-samantha-power-book-review>.
 58. Jeffrey Goldberg, “Hillary Clinton: ‘Failure’ to Help Syrian Rebels Led to the Rise of ISIS,” *The Atlantic*, August 2014.
 59. Both quoted in Daniel W. Drezner, “Does Obama Have a Grand Strategy? Why We Need Doctrines in Uncertain Times,” *Foreign Affairs* 90 (July/August 2011), 57.
 60. For contrasting views on this issue, see Daniel W. Drezner, Ronald R. Krebs, and Randall Schweller, “The End of Grand Strategy: America Must Think Small,” *Foreign Affairs* 99 (May/June 2020), 107–117; and Andrew Ehrhardt and Maeve Ryan, “Grand Strategy Is No Silver Bullet, but It Is Indispensable,” *War on the Rocks*, May 19, 2020, <https://warontherocks.com/2020/05/grand-strategy-is-no-silver-bullet-but-it-is-indispensable/>.
 61. Ryan Lizza, “The Consequentialist,” *New Yorker*, May 2, 2011, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/05/02/the-consequentialist>. The remark was highly controversial and Obama himself both denied and disavowed it: David Jackson, “Obama Never Said ‘Leading from Behind,’” *USA Today*, October 27, 2011, <http://content.usatoday.com/communities/theoval/post/2011/10/obama-never-said-lead-from-behind/1#.XZErC2ZOik>.
 62. Drezner, “Does Obama Have a Grand Strategy?” 57–68.
 63. For an incisive assessment of whether devising a strategy is actually good strategic practice, see especially Richard K. Betts, “Is Strategy an Illusion?,” *International Security* 25 (Fall 2000), 5–50. But see also Steven Metz, “Why Aren’t Americans Better at Strategy?,” *Military Review* 77 (January–February 1997), 187–190; Jervis, “US Grand Strategy: Mission Impossible”; Colin Gray, “Why Strategy Is Difficult,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 22 (Summer 1999): 6–12; Krebs and Edelstein, “Delusions of Grand Strategy”; and Drezner, Krebs, and Schweller, “End of Grand Strategy.”
 64. David Milne, *Worldmaking: The Art and Science of American Diplomacy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015).
 65. Beverly Gage, “‘Strategy’ May Be More Useful to Pawns Than Kings,” *New York Times*, September 3, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/03/magazine/strategy-may-be-more-useful-to-pawns-than-to-kings.html>; Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994); Henry Kissinger, *World Order* (New York: Penguin, 1994).
 66. The term is from Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall, *America’s Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009). While the contributions in this volume add new aspects to our understanding of how national

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societies shape international grand strategies, they are not the first to draw this connection. See, for example, Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein, eds., *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993); and Kevin Narizny, *The Political Economy of Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007).