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In Quest of a Usable Past

Foreign Policy and the Politics of American Historiography in the 1960s*

There is a trait in the historiography of American foreign relations, particularly in the 1960s, that may be more visible in a European perspective, a trait that is, in my opinion, at least typically, and perhaps even uniquely, American: the presentist, instrumentalist, self-centered view of international history.

In an essay published fifteen years ago Louis Morton observed: “. . . preoccupation with history may be said almost to constitute a national trait affecting our policy at home and abroad, often in subtle ways and not always in the best interests of the nation . . . Few people are as conscious of their history as Americans, refer to it so often, or know it so well . . . For Americans history always has a relevance, especially in foreign affairs, that it does not have for most other people”.¹

This observation is a succinct formulation of a phenomenon that struck me as uniquely American twenty years ago, when I began working on a study of American foreign policy in its domestic setting at the turn of the century. The impression was enforced during the years that followed, when the controversy over American foreign policy became extremely heated. The lack of a prevailing consensus on foreign policy was obviously based upon serious, even fundamental, differences of historical interpretation.

The relationship between history and foreign policy is a matter of interaction. The present does not exist independent of the past. If we modify our view of the past, we also alter our perceptual predispositions, our way of perceiving the present and defining its problems. But at the same time, new experiences give us new insights into the past. Historical revisionism, the reconsideration and reappraisal of our view of the past, is generally the response to a new situation. It then becomes, in turn, a factor in the process of change. Revisionism often heralds, hastens and reinforces a reexamination of current policies, which can result in a change of course.

Images of the past and the perceptual predispositions emanating from them have the effect of inducing people to accept or reject information in a certain

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way.² Thus an individual's assumptions about problem realities – the intentions of the actors, attainable goals and effectiveness of means – are determined by the way the past is perceived. As policy makers obviously rely on historical analogies, precedents, parallels and trends in the prediction process, i.e. in their interpretation of a situation and their evaluation of existing options, it follows that a way to change current and future policies is to accomplish a change of beliefs and images of the past.

In the United States much more than in most European countries the ranks of practitioners in the field of foreign policy extend far beyond government officials and politicians. In one of the more successful attempts to apply the concept of paradigm to the foreign-policy field, Michael Roskin defined the community of practitioners as “an elite of persons relevant to foreign policy – both in and out of government, the latter including such opinion leaders as professors and journalists”.³ The tendency of scholars to abandon positions of detachment and make efforts to influence current foreign policy making seems to be on the rise. As Nathan Glazer has observed, more and more scholars are moving “from a stance toward the world that emphasizes detached observation and analysis to a stance in which observation is increasingly mixed with participation, analysis with judgment and advice”.⁴ At the same time, the close connections between academia and government that is characteristic of the American society has meant that foreign policy experts have been moving back and forth between universities, large foundations and research centers, on the one hand and government positions of various kinds on the other.

Important American historiographical traditions can be seen as a series of educational efforts for political purposes. The revisionists of the 1920s and 1930s, writing about the American intervention in the First World War, refuted the so called “submarine school” and represented what Daniel M. Smith has called “the un-neutrality school”.⁵ The interpretations advanced by them were influential, as demonstrated by the fact that their formulae were incorporated in the neutrality legislation of the 1930s. The goal was to ensure that the United States would not again become involved in a war as it had in 1917.

The Second World War not only meant the death of isolationism and unilateralism. It also constituted, as John Braeman has put it, “the decisive impetus for the temporary ascendancy of Wilsonian internationalism among American diplomatic historians”.⁶ Historians and political scientists joined the politicians in an educational effort to prove that the refusal of the United States to become a member of the League of Nations was responsible for the Second World War, and that a repetition could lead to World War III.⁷

However, the Cold War soon led to a dampening of enthusiasm for the United Nations, and, consequently, to a weakening of the belief that American membership in and support of, the League of Nations would have prevented the development that led to the Second World War. Foreign policy practitioners converted to the idea of limited alliances for security, such as NATO. However, in this conversion the historians were, on the whole, one step behind the

politicians – which certainly has not always been the case.⁸

In his address at the closing session of the United Nations on June 26, 1945, President Truman maintained:

“If we had had this Charter a few years ago – and above all, the will to use it – millions now dead would be alive. If we should falter in the future in our will to use it millions now living will surely die”.⁹

Less than four years later he stated:

“It is a single document, but if it had existed in 1914 and in 1939, supported by the nations who are represented here today, I believe it would have prevented acts of aggression which led to two World Wars”.¹⁰

The occasion was the signing of the NATO-Treaty on April 4, 1949. It was no longer the United Nations Charter President Truman was referring to. The United Nations had been replaced by NATO, Wilsonian universalism by the quest for a balance of power. However, the rhetoric remained the same.

The re-evaluation of the Wilsonian internationalism triggered by the Cold War coincided with the emergence of the realist school, which questioned the very concept of supranational organization as a guarantee of security. As Charles Neu has observed, the realists of the 1950s – Hans Morgenthau, George F. Kennan, Robert Osgood and others – “took a didactic attitude toward leading the American public to a new level of awareness”.¹¹ Focusing on such concepts as “national interest” and “balance of power”, the realists attacked the legalistic and moralistic character of traditional American foreign policy.¹²

In his well-known essay “Emergence to Power” published twenty years ago Ernest May maintained that writings on American foreign policy could be separated into Rankean – those who asked “What happened?” and Actonian – those who asked “What went wrong?” The second group was looking for forces or groups and individuals in America on whom to lay the blame for actions and policies perceived as grave mistakes. May found a connection between the Rankean attitude and multinational approach, and between Actonian intent and a national perspective. He contended that, in current writing, both the Rankean attitude and the multinational approach were on the rise, a thing he found highly satisfactory.¹³

Three years prior to the publication of May’s article John Higham had published his important analysis “The Cult of the American Consensus”, in which he pointed out that since the 1940s a striking change had taken place in American historiography.¹⁴ Emphasis was no longer on social strife, conflict and confrontation in the American past, but on continuity, consensus, stability and pragmatic moderation.

The 1960s saw a drastic change, where neither the Rankean, multinational approach nor emphasis on consensus were particularly noticeable.

Influential commentators such as George F. Kennan, Hans Morgenthau and

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., continued to pay tribute to the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan and NATO as policies consistent with their times, adequate responses to the problems and challenges of the early post-war era. At the same time they condemned the American foreign policy of the middle and late 1960s as utterly out of date and misconceived, especially with regard to Southeast Asia.¹⁵ Hans Morgenthau was active in the teach-in movement of 1965, when academics first voiced protests against the major escalation of the Vietnam war.¹⁶ Kennan was very effective when testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in February 1966. Schlesinger and Morgenthau both took part in a symposium on the war in Vietnam, sponsored by the Adlai Stevenson Institute of International Affairs in Washington, D.C., in June, 1968, a conference of considerable interest in this context.

The 26 participants were mostly prominent scholars with relevant expertise, but also current and former government officials, and journalists. The conference was chaired by John K. Fairbank and the list of participants was impressive: Stanley Hoffmann, Samuel P. Huntington, Henry Kissinger, Hans Morgenthau, Ithiel de Sola Pool, Edwin Reischauer, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Albert Wohlstetter, Adam Yarmolinski and others.

Even if the majority of the participants did not think of themselves as historians, the papers and arguments presented were, in fact, exercises in history. Grappling with the problems of causes and possible future effects of the American intervention in Vietnam, they all delved into the past for possible answers. No consensus appeared. Revisionist views were represented by, among others, Richard Barnet, – whose book *Intervention and Revolution* appeared at the time of the conference – Daniel Ellsberg and John McDermott. The participants addressed such questions as the functions and effects of images of the past on the perception and interpretation of contemporary situations and events, but they also dealt with the related and pertinent question of what “lessons” to draw from the Vietnam war. There was a common awareness of the fact that these “lessons” would depend on the interpretation of the American intervention in a historical perspective.

In the debates Samuel Huntington struck a defeatist note:

“If the legacy of misplaced analogies which the past has bequeathed to the Vietnam debates is even half equated by the misplaced analogies which Vietnam bequeaths to the future, terror will compound in a positively horrifying manner. It is conceivable that our policymakers may best meet future crises and dilemmas if they simply bloc out of their minds any recollection of this one. The right lesson, in short, may be an unlesson”.¹⁸

Albert Wohlstetter had similar misgivings:

“... of all the disasters of Vietnam, the worst may be the ‘lessons’ that we’ll draw from it”.¹⁹

Hans Morgenthau objected strongly, as did Stanley Hoffman, arguing: "Of all the disasters of Vietnam the worst could be our unwillingness to learn enough from them".²⁰

The controversy emanated from the very ambiguity and vagueness of the concept of "lessons" of history. Basically, all were agreed that thoughts leading to public policy were in essence historical. However, this did not answer any questions concerning specific "lessons" of history. It is also interesting to read the debates of the Adlai Stevenson Institute conference in connection with a study by George Liska which appeared simultaneously, *War and Order: Reflections on Vietnam and History*. In this analysis Liska viewed American foreign policy in a perspective transcending current events, contending that it had conformed "to the same evolutionary pattern of other major nations, moving from the favored conditions surrounding its origins into the full complexity of mature international life".²¹

As far back as 1959 William Appleman Williams had in his book *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* formulated the theme that – with variations – was to become a standard one in most New Left writings of the following decade.²² Its essence was that the "Open Door ideology", the search for an Open Door world for American economic penetration, i.e. the establishment of an informal, global American empire, had been the pervasive key factor in American foreign policy.²³ Walter LaFeber's *The New Empire* appeared in 1963.²⁴ One year later came Lloyd Gardner's *Economic Aspects of New Deal Diplomacy*.²⁵

The revisionist assault of the middle and late 1960s was closely linked to the controversy over the American intervention in Vietnam.^{25a} Thus problems concerning inferences from the past and their effects on current foreign policy making was the subject of another conference on the Vietnam war, similar to the one sponsored by the Adlai Stevenson Institute but with a different set of participants. The conference took place at the Center for Research and Education, Estes Park, Colorado in March, 1967. The stated purpose was "to examine the basic historical causes of overall United States posture in an age of 'Multirevolution on all Continents'". The participants were mostly revisionists of various kinds – among them William Appleman Williams and D. F. Fleming – and the papers were later published by Neal D. Houghton under the title *Struggle Against History: U.S. Foreign Policy in an Age of Revolution*.²⁶ Houghton contended that the United States, lacking extensive experience as a world imperialist power as well as a functioning historical perspective, had launched an unprecedentedly ambitious new kind of imperialism. The basic factor influencing American foreign policy had been economic. Thus the Cold War had not been precipitated by the Soviet Union "but was inherent in the unwarranted wartime London–Washington illusion that, following the war, pre-1914 Europe and European capitalist imperialism in Asia could be re-established – with Communist Russia's acquiescence and cooperation".²⁷

One of the contributors, John M. Swomley, Jr., devoted his paper specifically

to the military-industrial complex and its influence on American foreign policy, particularly in the early post-war era.²⁸ He later gave a more elaborate presentation of his views in a volume entitled *American Empire: The Political Ethics of Twentieth Century Conquest*, published two years later.²⁹ Swomley defined his purpose as a critical analysis of the myths about the past, about historical events which had been widely promoted by establishment spokesmen within “the military, the government, the Church, the university, the Labor movement and the business community” from the beginning of the Second World War.³⁰ Of course, the problem was that even if the revisionists set out to analyze, expose and destroy existing myths, one of the functions of revisionism, as observed by Robert E. Osgood in his foreword to Robert W. Tucker’s study *The Radical Left and American Foreign Policy* (1971), is also “to create historical ‘myths’ that influence opinion and policy”.³¹ According to Swomley the Vietnam war, which had demonstrated for all the world to see “the American Imperialist goals and the harsh brutality of the American military-industrial complex” which sought those goals, was only a logical consequence of America’s past. Thus it could not be said “by any objective mind” that Japan had been the aggressor in the war with the United States. Japan had reacted to an intolerable situation that had been forced upon her. The aims of the Roosevelt administration had been to maintain the colonial empires of the European Great Powers in the Pacific, maintain the Open Door and American influence in China, destroy Japanese power in the Pacific, and use the war with Japan as a pretext for entering the war in Europe. Far from being a war fought for idealistic aims, World War II had been a realist war fought to maintain and enhance the position of the economically dominant world powers.³²

In summing up the purpose of the volume *Struggle Against History*, its editor contended that in the necessary quest for more adequate perspectives no factor was more essential than history.³³ Exactly the same point was made in another revisionist effort, Edmund Stillman’s and William Pfaff’s *Power and Impotence: The Failure of America’s Foreign Policy* (1966).³⁴ The authors argued that the real danger to America was not the Soviets, or Chinese communism, or nuclear weapons, but the fact that American policy was mired in illusions about the world, illusions rooted in history. The basic historical beliefs that underlay American foreign policy were, in the opinion of Stillman and Pfaff, curiously unsophisticated, and, of course, also misleading. They – as the other revisionists had done – then set out to set the record straight.

The same year that the seminar at Estes Park took place, 1967, another interesting volume of revisionist essays appeared. Its appropriate title was *Towards a New Past: Dissenting Essays in American History*, and the volume was wider in scope and much more comprehensive and systematic than *Struggle Against History*.³⁵ Its editor was Barton Bernstein, and he began his introduction with a quotation:

“A comprehension of the United States to-day, an understanding of the rise and progress of the forces which have made it what it is, demands that we should rework our history from the new points of view afforded by the present”.³⁶

This succinct statement of the point of departure for revisionism is a quotation from Frederick Jackson Turner’s Presidential Address at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in 1910. As Bernstein tells us, it had already been used by Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., on the title page of *New Viewpoints in American History*, which appeared in 1923. This was a conscious effort by Bernstein to establish a link with historians before the age of consensus, and he stated explicitly that the book represented “the revisionism in process during the late sixties, the new departures and the break with the old consensus”.

The radical revisionists of the 1960s perpetuated in important respects the tradition from the progressive historians, particularly from Charles Beard, a tradition to a large extent abandoned in the 1940s and 1950s.³⁷ The New Left historians were activists in quest of a usable past, with little or no interest in the emphasis on consensus of the previous decade. They also inherited from Beard the “economic” interpretation of American foreign policy, even if their analyses differed from his in various respects. Of course, not all revisionists of the 1960s shared the same interpretation of history or view of the world: there were neopopulists, leftist liberals, anarchists, pacifists, socialists, etc. However, the core was the New Left and individuals close to this group.

Among the authors in *Towards a New Past* we find a number of the most interesting names of the New Left: Barton Bernstein, Lloyd Gardner, Eugene Genovese, Staughton Lynd, Robert Freeman Smith, Stephen Thernstrom, and others. The foreign policy area was covered by Marilyn Blatt Young, Lloyd Gardner and Robert Freeman Smith³⁸. The latter’s contribution is of interest not only as a good example of revisionist writings on the American intervention in World War II, but also – and in this context particularly – for the author’s explicit statement about the role of the historian in the foreign policy process:

“Historians play an important role in shaping beliefs about the past, and these in turn have a significant effect about present and future policy. Thus historians help to provide the intellectual justification for current foreign policy.”³⁹

Freeman Smith and other revisionists with their outspoken presentist concerns often complained about the adverse affects of misperceptions caused by myths and false images of the past. More traditionalist historians, on the other hand, while also warning against misreading the past, generally emphasized the necessity of learning from history and the benefits to be derived from it. This point is emphasized in a book published simultaneously with the one edited by Barton Bernstein, *The Historian and the Diplomat: The Role of History and Historians in American Foreign Policy* (1967).⁴⁰ It was edited by Francis L.

Loewenheim and contributors were Arno J. Mayer, Herbert Feis and Louis Morton. The essays were revised and expanded public lectures given at Rice University.

The editor stated that the book was for those who

“believe in the relevance of past to present, who believe there is something to be learned from historical experience, and above all for those who insist that we must first know what really happened in the past before we can make useful judgments about it, before we can hope to apply the experience of yesterday to the problems of today and tomorrow”.⁴¹

To demonstrate his point Loewenheim undertook a critical examination of the historical premises for the realist approach to American foreign relations, as represented by George F. Kennan, Walter Lippman and Hans Morgenthau. Loewenheim himself might be described as a traditionalist, a “neo-Wilsonian internationalist”. Focusing on the realists-judgments of earlier diplomacy and historical events he concluded that the evidence had in several instances been tailored to fit the judgment.⁴² Implicitly, his criticism aimed at excessive educational ambitions. The same criticism was levelled by Charles E. Neu, who found that some of the realists’ writings were “marred by an extensive preoccupation with what went wrong, almost an obsession in pointing out the alleged errors of American diplomacy”.⁴³

However, Loewenheim was far from disillusioned about the value of and need for the study of history as a means for a greater understanding of the challenges of foreign policy, contending:

“. . . it is not too much to hope that from a renewed study of the U.S. record in world affairs, we may approach the events of our days with greater faith in the American tradition and through such faith reach out to build a better world in our times.”⁴⁴

Irwin Unger and others have accused New Left historians of exaggerated, excessive and undue presentmindedness, of being guilty of serious distortions in their quest for a usable past – distortions, for example, through various forms of selectivity.⁴⁵ The revisionists have countered with similar criticism of consensus and traditionalist historians. These reciprocal accusations are usually closely linked to the controversy over current American foreign policy problems and indicate the awareness in both camps of the potentials and the importance of images of the past for contemporary foreign policy-making.

A certain presentism is natural and unavoidable. As Marc Bloch once remarked, man is the son of his times even more than of his father. But presentism has been an especially noticeable trait in the recurring debates between “internationalists” and “non-interventionists” – to use one of many simplified formulations of the central dichotomy – in the historiography of American foreign relations. The present-mindedness of revisionists is self-evident, but also “traditionalist” historians have regularly looked to the

American past – the “uniqueness” of the American experience – when dealing with current foreign policy problems. This is true, for example, of Wilsonian internationalists as well as realists. The problem is not presentism but *excessive* presentism, which virtually entails an inability to understand the past.

In a European perspective it seems as if the radical revisionists and their opponents usually also shared another trait which I have already mentioned: an America-centered view of international history, the belief in American exceptionalism. Sometimes it almost amounts to parochialism, a narrow “home-bound” view of international relations. In some revisionist writings of the 1960s, in particular, it seems as if the only things that mattered were U.S. decisions and actions.

If “presentism” is an illusive concept since it covers a necessary, unavoidable and positive perspective as well as “undue present-mindedness”, the same is true of the concept of an instrumentalist view of history. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., maintained that he did not believe that knowledge of the past was any guarantee for superior wisdom in making present choices or that the historian was better qualified than anyone else to counsel in the field of foreign policy. He was also critical of the persistent use of analogies such as the Munich analogy and similar stereotypes, “historical generalizations wrenched illegitimately out of the past and imposed on the future”.⁴⁶ He sounded the same warning as, for example, Robert Jervis, a reversal of George Santayana’s famous maxim: “Too often those who *can* remember the past are condemned to repeat it” (or: “are condemned to make the opposite mistakes”).⁴⁷

Charles Yost concluded that “the unexamined past is usually misleading and often corrupting, because it transmits deeply imprinted error and rationalization”.⁴⁸ “The minds of men are cluttered with ideas, and illusions, about the past”, wrote William Fulbright contending that “history – or, at any rate, the interpretations that men place upon it – tends as much to obscure as to clarify the future”.⁴⁹ However, usually even those who questioned the positive influence of history or the knowledge of history in the foreign policy process did not deny its importance. Thus even if Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. maintained that the salient fact about the historical process was its inscrutability, he also argued that history was “the indispensable underpinning of statesmanship”.⁵⁰ The same point was made by David Trask,⁵¹ Paul Gordon Lauren,⁵² Henry Kissinger,⁵³ and others. History did not “furnish the statesmen with a detailed scenario of particular relationships or policies”, wrote Schlesinger. This, however, was not an argument against the knowledge of history: “The only antidote to a shallow knowledge of history is a deeper knowledge, the knowledge which produces not dogmatic certitude but diagnostic skill, not clairvoyance but insight.”⁵⁴ And a decade later Henry Kissinger explained that whereas history was no cookbook with pre-tested recipes, it was “dangerously arrogant to believe that foreign policy can be conducted effectively without knowing something of how other generations have faced comparable problems – the compromises they have had to make, how their best judgments turned

out, and how limited human foresight is, even in the best of men and under optimal circumstances".⁵⁵

This view of history might of course be called instrumental, but, if so, it is an instrumentalism that probably would be acceptable to most historians. However, an instrumentalist view of history could also mean something rather different. During the 1960s a pertinent question was raised by activists like Howard Zinn, who more or less explicitly maintained that history and historical truth must be considered instrumental, subordinate to moral truth and serving contemporary ends. Consequently, presentism was not only unavoidable but a virtue. The role of historian and social critic should merge.⁵⁶

That attitude is not, understandably, unusual in Third World countries. However, it is not acceptable. The search in the past for a new understanding of contemporary issues does *not* present a problem. But not to respect the autonomy and the integrity of the past, to use it selectively in order to substantiate a policy position already established, is a form of manipulative presentism, inviting anarchy and compromising the very credibility of historical research. It must also be said that this is *not* the kind of instrumentalist view of history *dominating* the revisionist writings of the 1960s.

What May called Rankean intent and a multinational approach is more satisfactory than Actonian intent and a national approach. However, writings of the latter kind are nevertheless indispensable. They provoke reappraisals and renewed analyses, which often result in new insights and sometimes open up new vistas to be explored.

I would like to conclude these observations with a quotation from an essay by Charles E. Neu:

"Those who employ their knowledge of the past to right the wrongs of the present must somehow remain reconciled to the dilemmas of nations and the ambiguities of man's condition. Perhaps all will remember that the certainties of our own time may become the historiographical curiosities of another era, and perhaps all will recognize the vastness and complexity of the historical drama of which they are part."⁵⁷

NOTES

1. Louis Morton, "The Cold War and the Diplomat", in Francis L. Loewenheim (ed), *The Historian and the Diplomat: The Role of History and Historians in American Foreign Policy* (New York, 1967), p 142.
2. Cf for example Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, 1976); Paul Gordon Lauren, "Diplomacy, Theory, and Policy", in Lauren (ed), *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory, and Policy* (New York, 1979); Alexander George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (Columbia University Press, 1974); James Chase, *A World Elsewhere: The New American Foreign Policy* (New York, 1973), and others.
3. Michael Roskin, "From Pearl Harbor to Vietnam: Shifting Generational Paradigms and Foreign Policy", *Political Science Quarterly*, Fall 1974, p 567.
4. Nathan Glazer, "Theory and Practice in the Social Sciences", *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 31, 1978.
5. Daniel M. Smith, *The Great Departure: The United States and World War I* (New York, 1965).
6. John Braeman, "American Foreign Policy in the Age of Normalcy: Three Historiographical Traditions", in *Amerikastudien/American Studies*, 26:2, 1981, p 127.
7. Cf Michael Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy, 1937-1947* (Westport, Conn., 1976); also Braeman, p 128.
8. Göran Rystad, *Prisoners of the Past? The Munich Syndrome and Makers of American Foreign Policy in the Cold War Era* (Lund, 1982), pp 8 ff.
9. Cyril Clemens (ed), *Truman Speaks* (Webster Grove, Missouri, 1946), p 53.
10. Louis W. Koenig (ed), *The Truman Administration: Its Principles and Practice* (New York University Press, 1956).
11. Charles E. Neu, "The Changing Interpretive Structure of American Foreign Policy", in John Braeman, Robert H. Bremner and David Brody (eds), *Twentieth-Century American Foreign Policy* (Ohio State University Press, 1971), pp 46 ff; David Trask, "Writings on American Foreign Relations: 1957 to the Present", *ibid.*, p 112; Braeman, pp 132 ff.
12. Separating historians into schools of thought is at best a rather reckless simplification. If Osgood, Kennan and Morgenthau may be said to represent a certain view of foreign policy, and similar ideas can be found in writings by, for example, Norman Graebner, Louis J. Halle, Betty Glad and Edward Buerigh, it is not difficult also to find "realist" arguments in writings by for example Robert H. Ferrell, Herbert Feis, or Ernest R. May. However, simplified classifications are useful and necessary in any historiographical survey.
13. Ernest R. May, "Emergence to World Power", in John Higham (ed), *The Reconstruction of American History* (New York, 1962), pp 180 ff.

14. John Higham, "The Cult of the 'American Consensus': Homogenizing Our History", *Commentary*, XXVII, Feb., 1959, reprinted in S. A. Eisenstadt (ed), *The Craft of American History*, I, (New York, 1966), pp 193 ff.
15. Rystad, pp 45 ff.
16. Neal D. Houghton, "The Challenge Facing American Statesmen", in Houghton (ed), *Struggle Against History: U.S. Foreign Policy in an Age of Revolution* (New York, 1968), p 329.
17. Richard M. Pfeffer (ed), *No More Vietnams? The War and the Future of American Foreign Policy*. Published for the Adlai Stevenson Institute of International Affairs (New York, 1968).
18. *Ibid.*, pp 1 f.
19. *Ibid.*, p 4.
20. *Ibid.*, pp 5 f.
21. George Liska, *War and Order: Reflections on Vietnam and History* (Baltimore, 1968), pp 8 f.
22. William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (Cleveland, 1959).
23. Irwin Unger has summarized William's views: "From the very outset the United States has been an expansionist nation, preying on its weaker neighbors, whether the precivilized Indian tribes or the weaker national states and decrepit empires on its borders. This expansionism is a strangely persuasive mirror image of Turner's frontier thesis. Rather than a succession of new opportunities, each American frontier was a new evasion. It was not democracy that renewed itself in each new 'West', it was capitalism, and American foreign policy was merely the instrument of this evasive westward thrust". Irwin Unger, "The 'New Left' and American History: some recent Trends in American Historiography", *AHR* 72, July 1967, p 1246.
24. Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire, An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca, New York, 1963).
25. Lloyd C. Gardner, *Economic Aspects of New Deal Diplomacy* (Madison, Wis., 1964).
- 25a. In the torrent of revisionist writings on foreign policy during the second half of the 1960s contributions by Gar Alperowitz, Richard J. Barnet, Lloyd Gardner, David Horowitz, Gabriel Kolko, Walter LaFeber, N. Gordon Levin, Arno J. Mayer, William Neumann, Robert Freeman Smith and, of course, William Appleman Williams, are of special interest.
26. Neal D. Houghton, *Struggle Against History: U.S. Foreign Policy in an Age of Revolution* (New York, 1968).
27. *Ibid.*, pp XVII f.
28. John M. Swomley, Jr., "The Military-Industrial Alliance", *Struggle Against History*, pp 41 ff.
29. Swomley, *American Empire: The Political Ethics of Twentieth-Century Conquest* (New York, 1970).
30. Swomley (1970), pp 2 ff.
31. Robert E. Osgood, Foreword to Robert W. Tucker, *The Radical Left and American Foreign Policy* (Baltimore, 1971), p V.
32. Swomley, *American Empire*, pp 68 f.
33. *Struggle Against History*, p XV.
34. Edmund Stillman and William Pfaff, *Power and Impotence: The Failure of America's Foreign Policy* (New York, 1966), pp 4 ff.
35. Barton J. Bernstein (ed), *Towards a New Past: Dissenting Essays in American History* (New York, 1967; Vintage Book Ed., 1969).

36. *Ibid.*, p V.
37. Bernhard Sternsher, *Consensus, Conflict, and American Historians* (Bloomington, Ind., 1975) pp 276 ff. Braeman *op. cit.* pp 142 ff; Unger, *op. cit.*, pp 1242 ff.
38. Marylin Blatt Young covers the period 1870–1900, Lloyd Gardner 1900–1920 and Freeman Smith 1920–1942. On the whole, Lloyd Gardner and Robert Freeman Smith offer the established revisionist interpretation of the Open Door ideology as the key element in twentieth century American foreign policy. While sharing their criticism of the traditionalist and realist “political” interpretation of American foreign policy, Marylin Blatt Young maintains that the quest for markets during the late 19th century was based upon dubious economic analysis. In her view, further elaborated in her book *The Rhetoric of Empire: American China Policy, 1895–1901* which appeared in 1968, the violent rate of urbanization and industrialization, combined with the flow of immigrants, produced tensions and divisions in society. Nativism and nationalism appeared to be ways of channeling frustrations, and the anxiety and the national neurosis was “acted out in the fantastic fervor which preceded, and perhaps made inevitable, the war”.
39. *Towards a New Past*, p 254.
40. Francis L. Loewenheim (ed), *The Historian and the Diplomat: The Role of History and Historians in American Foreign Policy* (New York, 1967).
41. *Ibid.*, p VII.
42. *Ibid.*, pp 64 ff.
43. Neu (1971), pp 47 f.
44. Loewenheim, p 71.
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46. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., “The Historian and History”, *Foreign Affairs*, XLI, April 1963, 99–102 ff. Reprinted in A. S. Eisenstadt (ed), *The Craft of American History*, I (New York 1966), pp 102 ff; “The Inscrutability of History”, *Encounter*, November, 1966. Reprinted in *The Bitter Heritage* (New York, 1966), pp 89 ff.
47. Jervis (1976), pp 216 ff.
48. Charles W. Yost, *The Conduct and Misconduct of Foreign Affairs* (New York, 1972) p 31.
49. J. William Fulbright, *Prospects for the West* (Cambridge, Mass, 1963), pp 1f; 7. Cf also Fulbright, *The Arrogance of Power* (New York, 1966), p 182.
50. Schlesinger, “The Historian and History” (in Eisenstadt, ed), pp 107 f; “The Inscrutability of History”, *The Bitter Heritage*, pp 101 ff.
51. David A. Trask, “A Reflection on Historians and Policymakers”, a speech delivered in August, 1976 and quoted by Paul Gordon Lauren in *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory, and Policy*, New York, 1979), p 10.
52. Lauren, pp 9 f.
53. Henry A. Kissinger, *The White House Years* (Boston, 1979), p 54; *For the Record* (Boston, 1981), p 114. On Kissinger and history, cf Peter Dickson, *Kissinger and the Meaning of History* (Cambridge, 1978).

54. Schlesinger, *The Bitter Heritage*, pp 101 ff.
55. Kissinger, *For the Record*, p 124 f.
56. Howard Zinn, *The Politics of History* (Boston, 1970); *The Logic of Withdrawal* (Boston, 1967); *Postwar America, 1945–1971* (New York, 1973). Cf Alexander DeConde, *American Diplomatic History in Transformation*, AHA Pamphlets 702 (1976), p 13. The controversy is by no means new, cf John Higham, *History: Professional Scholarship in America* (Princeton University Press, 1965, chapters two and three, and Gerald N. Grob/George Athan Billias, *From Progressivism to the Cold War: Historical Interpretations*, Vol. III, 1896 to the present (New York, 1979), pp 9 ff.
57. Neu, p 57.