

DECEMBER 2020

Women and Statecraft History

EDITORS

Seth Center
Emma Bates

CONTRIBUTORS

Fiona Hill
Sara B. Castro
Elizabeth C. Charles
Susan Colbourn
Michelle Grisé
Sarah-Jane Corke
Stephanie Young
Marybeth P. Ulrich

DECEMBER 2020

Women and Statecraft History

EDITORS

Seth Center
Emma Bates

CONTRIBUTERS

Fiona Hill
Sara B. Castro
Elizabeth C. Charles
Susan Colbourn
Michelle Grisé
Sarah-Jane Corke
Stephanie Young
Marybeth P. Ulrich

A Report of the CSIS Project on History and Strategy

About CSIS

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) is a bipartisan, nonprofit policy research organization dedicated to advancing practical ideas to address the world's greatest challenges.

Thomas J. Pritzker was named chairman of the CSIS Board of Trustees in 2015, succeeding former U.S. senator Sam Nunn (D-GA). Founded in 1962, CSIS is led by John J. Hamre, who has served as president and chief executive officer since 2000.

CSIS's purpose is to define the future of national security. We are guided by a distinct set of values—nonpartisanship, independent thought, innovative thinking, cross-disciplinary scholarship, integrity and professionalism, and talent development. CSIS's values work in concert toward the goal of making real-world impact.

CSIS scholars bring their policy expertise, judgment, and robust networks to their research, analysis, and recommendations. We organize conferences, publish, lecture, and make media appearances that aim to increase the knowledge, awareness, and salience of policy issues with relevant stakeholders and the interested public.

CSIS has impact when our research helps to inform the decisionmaking of key policymakers and the thinking of key influencers. We work toward a vision of a safer and more prosperous world.

CSIS is ranked the number one think tank in the United States as well as the defense and national security center of excellence for 2016-2018 by the University of Pennsylvania's "Global Go To Think Tank Index."

CSIS does not take specific policy positions; accordingly, all views expressed herein should be understood to be solely those of the author(s).

© 2020 by the Center for Strategic and International Studies. All rights reserved

Acknowledgments

The Project on History and Strategy would like to thank our participants and authors for their time and effort. This report is made possible by general support to CSIS. No direct sponsorship contributed to this report.

Center for Strategic & International Studies
1616 Rhode Island Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-887-0200 | www.csis.org

Contents

Introduction	1
An Interview with Dr. Fiona Hill on Mentorship, Leadership, and the Importance of Asking the Right Questions	5
1 Sara B. Castro <i>U.S. Air Force Academy</i>	12
2 Stephanie Young <i>The RAND Corporation</i>	18
3 Michelle Grisé <i>The RAND Corporation</i>	22
4 Elizabeth C. Charles <i>U.S. Department of State</i>	25
5 Susan Colbourn <i>Johns Hopkins SAIS</i>	29
6 Sarah-Jane Corke <i>University of New Brunswick</i>	33
7 Marybeth P. Ulrich <i>U.S. Air Force Academy and U.S. Army War College</i>	37
About the Editors and Authors	42

Introduction

What does it mean to study the history of military, diplomatic, leadership, or international relations, and why do so few women historians choose to focus on such topics? The answers to these questions implicate a lack of diversity in both the practice of statecraft and in the scholars who study it, as well as a strange moment in the historical academy itself. For many years, the field has focused greater attention on previously under-studied topics like social, cultural, and experiential histories, particularly of minority or oppressed groups. This effect is also disproportionate by gender, as Sara Castro of the U.S. Air Force Academy notes in her essay; “Gaining traction studying statecraft history right now is not easy even for men, but advisers are particularly quick to urge women to pursue the cultural and social topics that have come to dominate today’s historical discipline.” This academic shift has enriched the field, but it has also further widened the wedge between the academic study of history and those who would use history to inform policy.

This is a dangerous time to abandon the big-picture topics of history that can inform strategy and statecraft. Today’s pandemic and rising geopolitical tension combine to illustrate before our very eyes the intersection of complicated traditional, transnational, and technological forces. The often-accurate charge that policy-relevant statecraft history is “the study of old white men” does not obviate the need for new generations to deeply understand the context, decisions, tradeoffs, and consequences of diplomacy and military action through history in order to make better decisions going forward. In fact, today’s leadership deficits in the face of immense change and looming great

power competition belie the notions that diplomatic and military history have been well-enough studied and that there is nothing left to learn. The world needs a new and diverse generation of historians whose reinterpretations of the history of statecraft guide us through the next several decades of international relations.

“The world needs a new and diverse generation of historians whose reinterpretations of the history of statecraft guide us through the next several decades of international relations.”

Part of the problem is basic. The gender disparity in academic and practitioner experts in statecraft history can be largely explained by the same phenomenon seen in STEM fields: young women, along with other underrepresented groups, gravitate away from fields in which they see few role models. Susan Colbourn notes in her essay that a course with Margaret MacMillan changed her trajectory: “Her presence in the classroom and her professional success sent the message that I, too, might be able to make a career as a diplomatic historian studying questions of war, peace, and statecraft” For historians of these topics, the challenge also incorporates an impoverished academic job market and the challenges of reconciling historical fidelity with the rushed and abbreviated needs of policy.

Several themes emerged from the essays in this compilation, the first of which being that *the personal is historical*. Michelle Gris  tells the story of being drawn to statecraft through seeing the human consequences of high-level decisionmaking: “our trip to Little Rock impressed upon me the impact of policymaking, for better or worse, on the lives of ordinary people, and made me realize the value of sitting down and talking with fellow citizens about how their experiences and their lives have been shaped by the structures of government and the mechanisms of decisionmaking.” And, Sara Castro reminds us that what really motivates statecraft are individual human beings in conflict, their personality and close relationships taking on even more importance given the serious issues, high stakes, and great uncertainty involved.

A second theme might be called *the gift of a new perspective*. According to Sara Castro, “Statecraft, and the study of its history, has not been a domain that welcomes women.” This does not and should not imply that we do not belong. In fact, we can and must offer a necessary fresh perspective. Sarah-Jane Corke goes further, describing “a certain superpower,” borne of existence on the periphery of the discipline. “Our positions as outsiders allowed us to ask new and different questions and to push the boundaries of historiography.”

“Our positions as outsiders allowed us to ask new and different questions and to push the boundaries of historiography.”

Third, a few of our authors shared deeply personal stories of *persistence in the face of challenges*—stories that are likely not exceptional. These ranged from subtle pressure and funneling toward “women’s issues” to discrimination and harassment. Sarah-Jane Corke superbly describes the series of discomfiting signals young women receive about their own aptitude and belonging, along with the moments of validation that kept her working toward her goals. Marybeth Ulrich, now a Colonel in the U.S. Air Force Reserves and a widely respected civilian scholar of the military, describes the regulations and quotas that limited her opportunities as a young officer. More recently, Susan Colbourn describes the experience of being the only woman on a panel, or even in the entire room: “Such situations can all too easily encourage others to assume that your participation has more to do with the fact that you happen to be a woman rather than with your relevant qualifications and expertise. In such circumstances, it can be hard to resist the temptation to wonder whether you belong there at all.”

Statecraft is understudied, especially by women and people of color. But there has been progress, and role models are key to continuing it. Many women have succeeded in these career paths, employing history to inform our policy decisions and educate future public servants and leaders. Some, like Fiona Hill, have translated their historical training into practice, serving in high levels of government to shape policy and strategy.

These women are role models for a new generation of diverse and policy-minded historians of statecraft. When Margaret MacMillan taught her history course, Susan Colbourn didn’t realize the broadening, inspiring impact it was having on her; she “saw nothing unusual or particularly novel about this at age 17, beyond being thrilled that I could take a course with a bestselling historian.” The power of mentors is only clear in retrospect once those of us who have had the benefit of it look around and see what others are missing.

Likewise, we overlook the power of context and exposure to current events in shaping what we choose to study. Most of our authors pursued history because, as Stephanie Young, put it, “Over time, I found that I was most interested in understanding the dynamics that shaped the present as I was experiencing it.” Several cited the as-yet-unabated Cold War as a formative impetus to study what was going on in the world. Elizabeth Charles remembers, “One could not help but be enmeshed in these stories and events changing the world around us. I do wonder whether I would have ended up doing what I do now if I had grown up in another time.”

And, in our interview with Fiona Hill, the former deputy assistant to the president recalled several childhood observations that had sparked key questions about how the past related to her present. A relative who had served in the British Navy during World War Two asked her how the wartime allies had become enemies so quickly. Hill recalls him telling her, “Why couldn’t you go and answer this question; we’d all like to know the answer.”

The search for history’s answers and their implications for tomorrow have led this work’s contributors across the globe and into the highest councils of government. They have pursued knowledge and public service all the way to Pakistan, Israel, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Russia, and the White House; they have written works challenging conventional narratives and translated expertise into policy decisions. Each remembers her key mentors and the impact they had, whether by asking important questions, encouraging academic pursuits, modeling female excellence—even, in one case, by staging a much-needed wardrobe intervention. Among others, Ambassador Rose Gottemoeller, Dina Zinnes, Edward Kolodziej, Cathryn Carson, Geoffrey Parker, Shirley Williams, Bernard Bailyn, Angela Stent, Antonia “Toni” Chayes, and a cousin named “Red Dot” Dorothy Long were all crucial to shaping this group of talented and successful women. We hope that the experiences shared in these pages provide some measure of similar inspiration and validation, for as Colbourn concluded, “I share these experiences . . . because, in the future, I hope that there will be more women in those rooms with me.”

“I share these experiences . . . because, in the future, I hope that there will be more women in those rooms with me.”

An Interview with Dr. Fiona Hill on Mentorship, Leadership, and the Importance of Asking the Right Questions



***F**rom 2017-19, Dr. Fiona Hill served as deputy assistant to the president and senior director for European and Russian affairs on the National Security Council. Previously she served as national intelligence officer for Russia and Eurasia on the National Intelligence Council. Dr. Hill holds a master's degree in Soviet studies and a doctorate in history from Harvard University, where she was a Frank Knox Fellow.*

Dr. Hill sat down with us for a conversation about her career as a historian—and practitioner—of statecraft and to talk about applied history and leadership. This interview has been edited for length.

Dr. Hill, thank you very much for taking the time to share your thoughts on history and statecraft. Why did you decide to become a historian and a policymaker?

When I was setting off into this field, I didn't come at it directly through the prism of history. In fact, I didn't actually take history as a formal class in school for the university entrance exams ("A levels" in the United Kingdom). We studied history in my elementary and secondary school in the United Kingdom, but it was all the history of kings and queens of England, and it was deathly dull. I was more interested in the history of my hometown. Being in the north of England near the borders of Scotland, it's not that far from Hadrian's Wall. We had a Roman fort in a farmer's field where we'd find Roman coins and various bits of what seemed like junk because it had been the Romans' town dump. It would turn out not just what they'd had for dinner but also, occasionally, discarded weaponry and things like that. *Where did this come from? What were the Romans doing all the way up here?*

Down the street from where I grew up—in this quirky old town of ours—was one of the oldest Saxon churches in all of England. The people who had built it had pilfered stone from the Roman fort with inscriptions from the legion that had built it, and we know they probably couldn't read the Roman script because they placed a lot of the stones upside down. As a kid, this stuff was interesting to me outside of school, but I was bored out of my mind in class by the stuffy, old, elderly men—history teachers that no one could really relate to—talking about kings and queens of England.

As for more modern history, this was also an old coal mining and industrial town. I would walk by sites of former factories that were now in ruins; one of the local villages was the site of one of the United Kingdom's first major iron and steelworks, where they'd first tried out the Bessemer converter. And so, I was always confronted by industrial history in my daily life, wondering about the socioeconomic context. *Why had northern England been such a powerhouse of industry for a certain period and then . . . just not, anymore?*

I applied to college against the backdrop of a war scare with the Soviet Union in the 1980s. This was the period of the SS-20/Pershing missile standoff, or the "Euromissile Crisis." All these elderly relatives of mine, old ex-coal miners or other industrial workers who had fought in either the First or Second World War, would pose this question to me: How did we go from being wartime allies with the Soviet Union to nearly blowing each other up? My Uncle Charlie had been rescued by the Soviet Navy after his ship was sunk in World War II during the Arctic convoys in the Barents Sea. Here was this elderly relative who had lived a fairly improbable life (he'd also fought in the Spanish Civil War and been on a sinking ship in the Mediterranean); he was suffering from emphysema and sitting in his one-room row house in the former industrial powerhouse in the north of England. . . . And he said, "You know, Fiona, *you should find that out, you should find out how we went from wartime allies to current enemies.*"

We're all participating in what journalists like to call "the rough draft of history." The year I started university, 1984, was also the year of the historic British miners' strike. One of my mother's cousins—Dorothy Long, known as "Red Dot"—was the mayor of the local town of Darlington. And she was, as her nickname might suggest, a bit of a political activist on the left, a member of the Labour Party and part of the anti-nuclear movement; we'd see her and other women in the movement on television,

chaining themselves to the fence of Greenham Common, the U.S. air base in the south of England. It was at once a bit mortifying and also exhilarating to see one's relative chained—with some of the women topless at times—to a fence, trying to draw attention to something important, forcing us to ask important questions.

History, I realized, was about these important questions my relatives were raising, about these old industrial sites and Hadrian's Wall, not just the kings and queens of England and who chopped whose head off (though it has to be said, there is a lot of chopping of heads off in British history). I thought that perhaps I could analyze problems and understand how current issues came about. So, in a way, all these relatives and the larger environmental context were my early mentors in terms of framing questions that they truly wanted help answering. You know, my Uncle Charlie never looked at me and said, "Oh, you're a girl. There's no way that you could do that." He said, "You're good at school, Fiona, and you've been good at languages. *Why couldn't you go and answer this question; we'd all like to know the answer.*"

Did you have a clear vision of your career path, getting involved in both public service and teaching history?

Once I got to university at St. Andrews and started studying Russian history (which was initially a challenge because I hadn't formally focused on history in school), I got a scholarship in 1987 to go to the Soviet Union. And there I really was present at the making of history, the Gorbachev-Reagan summit in Moscow in the early summer of 1988. I got a job as a stringer for NBC News, mostly making coffee and spraying Tom Brokaw's hair on the top of the Rossiya Hotel. . . . But I heard President Reagan give a speech at Moscow State University. I saw Gorbachev and Reagan walking around Red Square. I had the opportunity to sit in and listen to people like Secretary of State Schultz and Secretary of Defense Carlucci giving interviews. Having started university in the middle of a nuclear standoff between these two countries, I knew how important this summit was.

I had always had a sense as a school kid that there would be lots of things that needed to be fixed and that you needed to understand the problem in order to fix it. But there was also always a strong sense of public service in my family. When she wasn't chaining herself to a fence and protesting, Cousin Dorothy was actually the mayor, the head of the local council. On my father's side, everyone worked in the coal mines and were very active in their local community, volunteering, and setting up all kinds of community outreach. My mother's father was an air raid warden during the Blitz, and my grandparents on my mother's side took in refugees during the war. They all stepped up to do things like this. And that really gave me a sense of that broader public service ethos. As my grandma always used to say, "Try to leave the world in a better place than you found it." And the more I understood about how things worked, the more I felt I ought to use that knowledge and apply it in a meaningful way. So while the transformational aspect of university is, of course, very important, and scholarship has been another fulfilling way of serving and training the next generation, I was primarily motivated by the application of what I was going to learn.

How did your service in the White House change your prism for thinking about Russian history and understanding U.S.–Russian relations? Did any new research questions emerge from that practical experience?

I think the National Security Council (NSC) actually did show me that the leadership factor matters. A certain personality, in certain contexts, with certain conditions, can play a disproportionate role.

When I was about 14, just a little bit older than my daughter is now, I picked up a copy of *War and Peace*, a very battered copy from a used book sale that was literally falling apart. And I thought parts of it were so boring! Tolstoy was, on the one hand, trying to tell a really good story, but he was also trying to present a treatise on historiography: How much do we focus on leadership when we relate history? Was Napoleon the driver of his moment in history, or was he sitting in a cart that was already moving on a particular track, just shaking the reins? And because this part of the book was so tedious to me as a 14-year-old, and the book was falling apart anyway, I actually took those historiography bits out, thinking, “Wonderful, now I can just focus on Natasha and the love story.”

The first lesson from this, of course, is that many books need editors! In my 14-year-old opinion, the story of *War and Peace* didn’t quite carry the history. Later, when I got to Harvard, I returned to read those extra history bits that I had put aside and kept, and in that context this part of the book was fascinating. My 24-year-old self had a very different view—and also a personal context from my own experiences that made Tolstoy’s historiographical question interesting.

Individuals and leadership are very important, and that’s why we study Kissinger’s strategies and Margaret Thatcher’s persona. On the one hand, we all know that the ultimate power of leaders to make things happen the way they want is usually circumscribed in some way. Perhaps more leaders than we think are like Tolstoy’s depiction of Napoleon, jiggling the reins as though he’s driving while, in fact, the cart is on a predetermined track.

But, of course, Napoleon had a huge impact on history, regardless of whether he was driving events or being driven along. We can sense when a particularly inspiring and honorable leader has improved our trajectory, as well as the destructive effect that some types of people can have when they wield power. My time at the National Security Council was an object lesson in the importance of personality in leadership. The personality of President Trump—and the way he managed his deputies and cabinet officials—imposed a set of outcomes that would not otherwise have occurred. It’s very clear that individual personalities and relationships have had a huge impact on the course of diplomatic history over the past few years. Whatever the impact of that may be, it certainly illustrates for us that we must pay attention to the personalities and contexts of our leadership, both today and in our study of history.

What do you see as the basic differences between a scholar and a policymaker? Does it help to be a scholar first when you go into a policy job?

I think that being a scholar first provides the benefit of a lot of analytical skills: the way that you frame issues and the way you ask questions of yourself and others. That, I think, helps overcome the problem of really not having enough depth in many of the issues because you know which questions to ask, and you can figure out how to ask them of the right person. A lot of one's job at the NSC is coordinating the interagency community and figuring out how to elicit the information that you need to move forward with policy recommendations. And you pick up those skills in an academic setting.

My early experiences with both Geoffrey Parker and Bernard Bailyn, both outstanding historians and professors of mine, cultivated that skill. Geoffrey Parker at St. Andrews assigned us short essays on topics we didn't know at all, without much time to research, which was invaluable for teaching me how to think about a question and make a plan for answering it. At Harvard, Bailyn challenged us in similar ways to consider what history was, what its relevance should be, and how we should go about answering the questions it poses.

What are your thoughts on how different types of people across the decades have approached history's questions?

You know, I think about Tolstoy's theory about Napoleon and about Archie Brown's books, especially *The Myth of the Strong Leader* and *The Human Factor*, which explore the leadership of Reagan, Gorbachev, and Thatcher. And to me, the most interesting thing about these leaders is the context in which they operated. The context of my own life has very much shaped what I became interested in.

I once went to a series of lectures by Kissinger and was fascinated by the great statesman he's been. But I also wonder what it was like for him as a young man. What shaped him before he became the Henry Kissinger we know now; what put him on this trajectory? Some people are born in a certain time and era that really shapes who they are. That's actually how I realized that my own scholarship was in pursuit of the question that Uncle Charlie had asked me. The stories we tell ourselves about who we are, where we are, where we're from, and where we're going. My own context growing up prompted important questions right away and led me to an interest in statecraft and leadership.

Why don't very many women choose to study the national security or leadership aspects of history? Is this a function of exclusion, mentorship, role models, self-selection?

In the 1970s and 1980s, when I first went to university, during the rise of the feminist movement, the concept of history and historiography expanded to include the way groups of people played a role, and how a broader set of issues shaped historical events. This was accompanied by a push for women

to go into social history rather than other history subfields. There are exceptions, some outstanding women who studied at St Andrews with me like Jane Ohlmeyer and Sarah Davies. Myself, I was always still drawn more to the leadership questions and the national security aspects because of what I'd seen in my own context, growing up in the deeply historical northern part of England at a time of great change, and where leadership obviously made a difference—the impact of Margaret Thatcher.

Mentorship is a complicated thing for women in academia. When I was at Harvard, there were a few women professors who actually seemed to like the fact that they were only a few and didn't want to give a hand up to other female graduate students. A couple of them were even notorious for hiring only male research assistants and for grading female students more harshly. They had really had to struggle; they had to be better than everybody, so they weren't going to give other women any kind of special leg up.

However, there were women I encountered at Harvard who were incredibly supportive. Shirley Williams, a visiting scholar at the time and a famous politician from the United Kingdom, spent a lot of time getting to know me. And I'll never forget Dorothy Zinberg in the Belfer Center at the Harvard Kennedy School, who did the same but also took me out and bought me a suit! When I was showing up to give talks, I had on ripped jeans and Dr. Martens boots, and she said, "People are going to spend the whole time looking at the holes in your jeans and your Doc Martens and not listening to what you have to say. You need a suit." I said I couldn't afford it, and she offered to take me shopping. I was mortified. . . but she said, "Look, I'll just get you this one suit, and then each day you just change your jewelry, change your top, and the men will never notice what you're wearing. They'll be able to focus on what you're saying." And, you know, she was right.

I've really benefited from professional mentors, men, and women (though at first, it was mostly men). But I also had great role models starting off: my grandmother and my own mother, who were very strong, resilient, gritty, and determined to make a difference. My mother is 86 now, and she still volunteers at a church, a community crisis center. Before that, she was a midwife and health visitor, somebody who made herself available at all times to help people even after she retired. She's always upbeat and very positive. Her mother was like that as well; they never let anything set them back.

As I moved along in my career, I met more women that I've thought of as mentors. One is Angela Stent at Georgetown, whom I almost think of as an older sister. Her family members were all Holocaust survivors who fled Nazi Germany, first to London and then the United States. I followed her into a couple of positions she'd held, including national intelligence officer in the National Intelligence Council. I really admire the way that Angela balanced history and international affairs . . . and also being a really good human being. She's just a nice, generous, warm person who makes time to mentor people.

Another was Antonia "Toni" Chayes, who really got to know me when I was starting out as a scholar and what made me tick, then brought me to the right meetings and introduced me to exactly the right people to drive forward my interests and my career. When I talk to young people, I try to do the same thing. I'm not focused on what they should be doing based on their resume. Rather, what is it that really makes them tick? What is of core importance to them? And then, knowing that, you help them to map out what is possible: what you need to do in order to bring out the best in yourself and how you can bring the skills you already have to bear on those goals. A good mentor asks the right questions to help you identify what you're truly passionate about and then help you pursue it.

What other bits of key advice would you give to someone looking at this kind of career path?

I think it's always important to know what you don't know. When people ask me a question that I have no clue about, I try to just say so. Overconfidence is a mistake for everybody, but particularly for women. And the more you learn, the more you realize how much you don't know. In meetings on a certain topic at the NSC, for example, I would rather not brief on a subject I don't know well myself; I would want the director who works on that topic to be there. If you have to be briefed on something in order to talk about it, then you shouldn't be the one talking about it. So that's the first bit of advice: always find the experts and learn from them.

Second, make sure that you've got a certain set of areas that you really know inside and out. For me, that's Russia, the former Soviet Union, and European affairs. You can use that, then, as a platform to pivot off from in a comparative fashion. I wrote a book with an economist, and it was very similar to the policymaking process: each of us had different pieces of the puzzle, and it was a function of teamwork to understand each other and piece it all together. Always seek out opportunities to work with others who have different fields of expertise.

The third piece is networking because we all move along in life through networks. Build a network of people you admire and respect. I don't mean you should collect famous people—the number of people I don't know at all who have approached me asking for recommendation letters or to do other things for them. . . . No, that's not how it works. The secret of a network is that it's full of people you know that you've got a relationship with. My grandmother understood this, though she would never have thought about it in “networking” terms, because she had gotten herself through a hard life by keeping good people close, then helping each other and seeing it through together.

Where do we need more questions right now? What should a young person think about delving into and developing new questions about?

We're all trying to figure out how we got to this place in the past few years, where the United States is so divided, and we're really not happy with the international situation either. It's now 75 years since the end of World War II, and some 30 years since the end of the Cold War. Why are we finding that we're not where we thought we would be, over and over again? Why are our institutions under question? What's going to happen to the international infrastructure, the United Nations, and all of its sub-component parts that were set up after that? What's going to happen with U.S. leadership? Does Europe really exist in the way we thought it should? We still have formal institutions, but we're facing a whole host of global challenges that don't fall within their purview, like climate change. A lot of historians have *some* of the answers to the current questions, but how do we put all of it together?

I'm always thinking about contemporary lessons from history and whether there's something we can learn to improve our own future. I always want to know: How can we learn from what happened in the past to set ourselves up to better for dealing with these challenges? On climate change, for example, what can we learn from our long geological history and from documented episodes like Pompeii and Krakatoa, when clouds and ash were traveling around the world and causing all kinds of unexpected

impacts? People at the time didn't know what had happened, but we can learn from the ways they tried to adapt to a changing environment. What can we learn about leadership and decision-making in 1918 for today's set of strikingly similar threats centered around a global pandemic?

At the statecraft and leadership level of history, we have some enormously important questions that need to be framed and studied by this new and diverse generation in order to address the particular challenges they will face. Of course, it's very difficult to figure out a way forward when you don't see leaders who look like you or who come from a similar background as you do. That's why highlighting an outstanding group of women historians of statecraft, like the authors in this compilation, is so important.

Sara B. Castro

U.S. Air Force Academy



In 2015, fiction author and literary scholar Claire Vaye Watkins published a provocative essay titled “On Pandering,” in which she describes how much of her life has been arranged around what she calls “watching boys do stuff.” She explains how her writing began as a plea for approval from a canon of white male writers.¹ “I read women (some, but not enough) but I didn’t *watch* them. I didn’t give them the megaphones in my mind,” Watkins wrote. I encountered Watkins’ essay during the media storm following the arrest of Harvey Weinstein and the foregrounding of the “Me Too” movement, and it stopped me in my tracks. As a woman who is a historian of statecraft, am I, too, just watching boys do stuff? Was I “writing to impress old white men,” as Watkins describes it? Yes. And no. And not anymore.

Studying the history of statecraft involves integrated analysis of numerous factors: strategies; weapons

systems and technologies; scientific theories from philosophy, sociology, economics, and psychology; and formidable insider jargon. The scope of these relevant concepts can easily mask a fundamental truth. In fact, what really motivates statecraft is human beings, specifically human beings in relationships and conflict. Although the history of statecraft speaks to the most vexing of the “big questions” that scholars and policymakers make their living by pondering, the history of statecraft is profoundly personal.

Studying People

The human element of statecraft is what has always drawn me to it. My favorite mentor in college, a religious studies scholar, had demonstrated to me through the academic study of religious traditions that human relationships drive everything. Communicating and relating are the most essential human acts. My education up to that point had been directed at a potential career in public service, or perhaps journalism, and I intended to apply my developing understanding of humanities to those fields.

But my encounter with the People’s Republic of China, where I first traveled abroad as an undergraduate exchange student in the late 1990s, reoriented me toward seeking a greater understanding of the relationship between that country and my own (the United States). Since my first trip, this has been my life’s work, in one form or another.

“The history of statecraft is profoundly personal.”

It became clear to me from my months in China that most Americans, including our leaders, knew little about the country. Exposure to news media in China left me with little confidence that Chinese leaders understood American interests any better than U.S. leaders understood theirs. Similarly, my Chinese friends and teachers harbored many misconceptions about the United States. I found that relationships, conversations, and shared experiences improved the level of understanding. This did not always yield agreement on sensitive topics, but it could at least foster some empathy.

My first career moves after college were not into academic life but into public service. I worked briefly at a non-governmental organization focused on fostering programs to encourage understanding between the United States and China. Shortly after that, I pursued a career in intelligence analysis, hoping that my insight on China could help develop familiarity with U.S.–China issues among U.S. policymakers, and in turn, help encourage policies that supported U.S. national security and global security more broadly. Interactions with U.S. policymakers, and the questions they asked, made me want to know more about China’s history and its statecraft, so I returned to academia.

Studying Leadership

The human-centered nature of statecraft has extensive implications for its historiography and for those who attempt to participate in it. Most notably, the history of statecraft has often focused on the influence of leaders. Traditionally, this has meant a focus on men, who absorbed most of the statecraft

positions in global history, particularly in the Western tradition. In the past few decades, cultural and global historians have—appropriately—critiqued and dismantled this approach, encouraging scholars and teachers to push beyond leader biographies to tell the whole story. The historical discipline is now focused on new methods to include diversity and elevate the voices of the masses, exploring issues of race, ethnicity, and gender.

However, residual tension lingers. Leaders remain at the center of any effective historical study of statecraft, and for centuries and across civilizations, leaders have mostly been male and often white. The history of statecraft is, therefore, a history of patriarchy. Statecraft, and the study of its history, has not been a domain that welcomes women. This does not and should not imply that we do not belong. In fact, we can and must offer a necessary fresh perspective.

Beyond the Great Men

When I teach undergraduates about the history of intelligence and national security, I often include *The Very Best Men* by Evan Thomas as a key reading.² In this book, Thomas examines the founding and early history of the Central Intelligence Agency, mostly by describing the careers and personalities of four of its most influential early officers—Frank Wisner, Tracy Barnes, Richard Bissell, and Desmond FitzGerald. Today’s generation of students usually reassures me of how far our national discourse has come by immediately noting that these four CIA founders embody the old adage about American statecraft elites: they are “pale, male, and Yale.” Thomas describes the career journeys of these four CIA officials from privileged white childhoods to expensive Ivy League educations, followed by a stream of tony, tobacco-infused Georgetown cocktail parties that birthed the modern U.S. intelligence regime. The “very best men” seem to today’s students like caricatures of themselves as they hatch secret plots to assassinate Fidel Castro, each crazier than the next (lethal shoe powder?), with almost no oversight or even critiques of their actions.

Further excavation of this text reveals the reasons why intelligence functions ended up in the hands of these Americans and some of the hazards thereof. Statecraft involves serious issues, high stakes, and great uncertainty. Therefore, the relationships that govern statecraft often rely on trust and familiarity, which comes easily among small groups of demographically narrow elites. A select few women and people of color have achieved positions in statecraft through overpowering excellence and determination, but on the whole, humanity has yet to move away from the insular, networked model of fostering and promoting our foreign policy leaders.

Historians are beginning to reveal and explain the serious liabilities of this reality, such as groupthink and a willingness to use the instruments of state power to protect elite interests, often at a high social and cultural cost. *The Very Best Men* highlights many examples of the conflicting interests behind the operations the book’s subjects launch. For instance, the U.S. intelligence intervention in Guatemala in the early 1950s was described at the time as a national security mission to prevent the spread of communism by protecting the interests of the United Fruit Company, whose owners came from the same demographic as the intelligence officials (“pale, male, and Yale”).

Human relationships are as important in the history of statecraft as in statecraft itself. Just as would-be intelligence officers and diplomats in the 1950s had to emerge from an elite background to become trusted influencers in that system, statecraft and the study of it still have such invisible gates today.

The stakes of the mission of statecraft and the uncertainty entailed in the work tacitly encourage gatekeepers (who are not just men). Those attempting to secure entry-level positions in national security or diplomacy experience many of the same hurdles as early career historians studying statecraft. Some mentors from the previous generation of diplomats, leaders, and scholars convey a very real sense of the sacrifices they made—often in the realm of work-life balance—in order to be accepted as valued contributors. It is not unusual for younger scholars and practitioners to encounter bitterness and invisible resistance from certain mentors if they do not seem willing to pay the same dues.³ My experience suggests that this gatekeeping norm is under some pressure and that emerging scholars have an opportunity—if we seize it—to change this.

History Today

My current career focuses on teaching about China and studying U.S.–China relations in the past century through the lens of intelligence history. In graduate school, I studied both the domestic history of China and China’s relationships with the rest of the world, especially the United States. My vocation toward public service has continually attracted me to questions in the realm of statecraft and diplomatic history. Thus, the deep questions animating my research have boiled down to how governance can work better and how states can prevent and avoid war.

What I found in my graduate studies was that these are not the questions that are driving the discipline of history at the moment. In fact, some senior advisers indicated that my research questions were the opposite of trendy, even tacky. Military issues, diplomatic issues, and nuclear proliferation were too entrenched in the history of patriarchy that most historians were trying to discharge. Instead of studying the evolution of Chinese Communist military doctrine, perhaps I should study the women in the People’s Liberation Army. That would be more compelling and maybe more appropriate for a scholar like me (i.e., a woman). Shouldn’t I want to study other women?

“Instead of studying the evolution of Chinese Communist military doctrine, perhaps I should study the women in the People’s Liberation Army. That would be more compelling and maybe more appropriate for a scholar like me (i.e., a woman). Shouldn’t I want to study other women?”

Gaining traction studying statecraft history right now is not easy even for men, but advisers are particularly quick to urge women to pursue the cultural and social topics that have come to dominate today’s historical discipline. Earning a doctorate focused on diplomatic history, therefore, required conviction and acceptance that I might be rejected from a life of scholarship within my discipline. It was not likely that I would land a coveted tenure-track job following the path I had designed. This was

an acceptable risk for me because I had confidence that the public service sector would reclaim me if necessary, and I knew from my work prior to graduate school that the statecraft policy conversation needs to be informed by history. lasting influential norms.

“Military issues, diplomatic issues, and nuclear proliferation were too entrenched in the history of patriarchy that most historians were trying to discharge.”

The conversations motivating our current statecraft decisions do not need any more “great man” history, but neither can they make much use of proliferating histories of experience, culture, and detail. The culture-focused conversations currently inspiring most professional historians are vital to understanding human civilization over time, but they fail to address the needs of policymakers directly. Closing this gap became a conscious career challenge that I accepted. In my work, I scrutinize the individuals supporting statecraft at lower levels and consider how their collective actions create.

The Value of More Statecraft History

Being outside the male elite demographic that has traditionally dominated both statecraft and the writing of its history helps me see more clearly what contribution I can make. Diversity among historians exposes important aspects of the past that some find invisible. Historians are constantly reassessing the work of those that came before them and re-interpreting the records of the past through the eyes of increasingly diverse generations. To return to Watkins and “On Pandering,” the history of statecraft could easily be more of us just watching boys do stuff, but we can do better than that. The first step in solving a problem is recognizing that one exists. Women as historians of statecraft can move beyond the narrow paradigms of this field’s past and bring it into the future.

Sara B. Castro is an assistant professor of history at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado, where she began teaching global and East Asian history in 2019.

The views expressed in this essay are those of its author, Sara B. Castro, and do not represent the official policy or position of the United States Air Force Academy, the Air Force, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.

Stephanie Young

The RAND Corporation



As historians of leadership and state-level decisionmaking, our work is situated at the border of domestic politics and the projection of U.S. power abroad. The stories we tell can address international threats that motivate military action, as well as the political, social, and economic factors that make such action possible. This broad lens on the dynamics shaping state-level decisionmaking is not meant to deny the critical role individual leaders can play in shaping outcomes (“great man histories”), but to emphasize that they are not the only factors affecting outcomes. Broad historical context matters. This approach also emphasizes the importance of operating across the seams between different fields of history, or even the seams between history and other disciplines, in our explorations of statecraft. As a researcher with multidisciplinary training who works at a research institution that leverages interdisciplinary teams for most of our policy analysis, I enjoy the complexity of such study.

Interdisciplinary

I came to the history of statecraft through training in the history of science, and the history of science has deeply informed my professional interests and research approach. The history of science is itself a field long defined by “great man histories,” especially stories of Western European men. As a graduate student in the aughts, the default language requirements for doctoral students in the history of science were German and French, indicative of long-standing traditions in historiography and assumptions about whose stories were worth telling. In addition to prioritizing post-Enlightenment Western European traditions, this approach was also informed by the epistemological claims of science and a conception of both science itself and the history of science as the history of progress moving ever closer to truth. In recent decades, much work has been done to expand the boundaries of the field from the “internalist” histories of geniuses to exploring the broader context of science and its implications. It feels cliché to recommend philosopher Thomas Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, which developed a classic and widely influential theory of paradigm shifts, but the book meant a great deal to me in its quietly revolutionary assertion that science is historically situated.

I came to the history of science through training in science, and my experiences as a woman in the physical sciences deeply informed me as well. As an undergraduate, I majored in physics and astrophysics, and in the course of my studies and in my experiences as a woman on campus, I became aware of science’s political, social, and cultural context. During my time in college, political controversies involving science—such as stem cell research and the inclusion of evolution and “intelligent design” in school curriculums—were topics of national attention. As a woman, I also became acutely aware of the lack of diversity in the physical sciences.

Over time, I found that I was most interested in understanding the dynamics that shaped the present as I was experiencing it. As an undergraduate, I took courses on the history of science in the United States and the history of modern physics with Cathryn Carson, and I found them thrilling. Both personally and professionally, my path as a historian was profoundly influenced by Dr. Carson, who eventually served as my graduate adviser. In addition to studying the history of ideas, I learned that studying the history of science was also to explore people, processes, and the public role of scientific knowledge. I became fascinated, for example, in the funding models for research and development and the federal government’s role in them, in exploring science as economic driver and foundation for military innovation, and in historical debates about science and religion that felt reminiscent of the current moment. I learned about the construction of gender and race, and how the professionalization of science includes and excludes certain practices and people. In the course of my studies with her, Dr. Carson was completing a history of an undisputed “great man” of science, German physicist and Nobel Laureate Werner Heisenberg.⁴ Yet far from a great man hagiography, Carson’s analysis explores Heisenberg in the “public sphere” and situates this complicated figure in a tumultuous time in German history: the Nazi period through to the Cold War. My training in history of science taught me that science, scientists, and “great men” do not exist in the ether.

For an aspiring historian interested in the role of U.S. scientists in public life, I found the Cold War fertile ground for inquiry. The Manhattan Project and the development of nuclear weapons during World War II, as well as the emergence of a Cold War with geopolitics defined by nuclear arsenals and competition in the science and technology sphere, brought science to the forefront of public life. I became particularly interested in the role of scientific expertise in shaping public debates. In

this context, the proliferation of *rational* approaches and decision sciences, especially applied to complex issues of statecraft, struck me as particularly fascinating. I was interested in how new modes of knowledge and expertise interfaced with deeply political decisionmaking and in how processes affected outcomes.

Decisionmaking in Defense

For my dissertation, I had the opportunity to explore these questions through the study of new analytic approaches for resource allocation in the Department of Defense. This was a story pitting the expertise and authority of young civilian social scientists against that of military leaders over questions of “how much is enough” for our national defense and who gets to decide.⁵ The story also allowed me to explore questions of how the process of defense budgeting affected outcomes within both national politics and national defense. I also explored debates about the political and economic role of the defense budget and about what the ratio of defense investments relative to other national priorities (“guns vs. butter”) suggested about the nation we aspired to be. While it is not a work of history, I have since been deeply influenced by CSIS’s Todd Harrison’s “The New Guns and Butter Debate,” which analyzed the shifting balance between “guns” (equipment-related costs such as weapons systems) and “butter” (personnel-related costs such as pay, pensions, healthcare, and education) within the defense budget.⁶ The work deeply informed my understanding that the defense budget needs to be understood as more than a black box that enables military action. The Department of Defense is also the single largest employer in the United States, a critical driver of economic activity, and a provider of education and healthcare to millions of Americans. I am excited by a growing historical literature that considers the Department of Defense in all of its multifaceted dimensions.

I joined the RAND Corporation as a policy researcher shortly after completing my PhD degree. As a historian, I was no doubt attracted to RAND in part due to its illustrious history through the Cold War as the locus of innovative and pathbreaking work on areas such as nuclear strategy, game theory, and other decision sciences. Today, RAND is a non-partisan, not-for-profit research institution that supports government decisionmaking through research and analysis, and it conducts a substantial portion of its work for the Department of Defense. As a researcher, I found RAND to be an excellent fit for my interest in the defense budget. The Department of Defense continues to be animated by questions related to the efficient and effective allocation of resources, and I have found many circumstances for which analysis of such current policy issues has benefited from a historical perspective. The federal government, including the military, does not have robust mechanisms for maintaining historical memory. Policy priorities shift with political transitions, and senior leaders and military personnel frequently rotate into new roles. Bringing a historical perspective, even just to explain how the government arrived at the current moment, can be a surprisingly valuable contribution and can open space to reevaluate assumptions and consider a wider range of policy options.

In my years at RAND, however, I have also worked on a broad range of policy issues (many far from budgeting or history), including projects related to security cooperation and building partner capacity, countering weapons of mass destruction, and defense acquisition. I also spent three months in Afghanistan as an embedded RAND researcher in support of special operations forces. Methodologically, I have found that training as a historian has been invaluable in allowing me to work in areas of statecraft not explicitly related to my formal training. As historians, we learn to develop narratives out of tremendous quantities of information. I have found this to be a critically important

skill for making sense of complex policy problems. In Afghanistan, we used the term *semper Gumby* to describe agility in the face of the unexpected. In my current position, when I approach unfamiliar policy problems, I proceed with confidence that a story will emerge, diving into a voluminous source base using the skills for careful and critical analysis I developed as a historian. *Semper Gumby*.

“I was fortunate to have the support of exceptional role models who made me feel that I could be successful in any path.”

The Current Moment

In hindsight, my personal career path looks pretty linear. I attended the University of California, Berkeley, and loved it so much I stayed for 11 years, learning voraciously while completing my BA, MA, and PhD degrees. When I left Berkeley, I took a position at RAND, and I have been here for almost 11 years. However, linear this path might look, and it actually involved a lot of searching. I was fortunate to have the support of exceptional role models who made me feel that I could be successful in any path—my graduate adviser, mentors at RAND, and (perhaps most importantly) my mother, Dr. Mary Young, who had a distinguished career as an engineer at Hughes Research Labs, where she became the first woman lab director.⁷ Needless to say, I am still searching and still finding a great deal fascinating about history, science, and statecraft. When I have the opportunity to engage PhD students in history, I remind them that they are developing exceptional skills—for example, foreign language proficiency, deep regional expertise, and the ability to draw stories out of unexpected places—and encourage them to leverage those skills in the service of informing public debates. Too often, we historians are discouraged from “presentism,” making us reluctant to comment at all on the current moment. I think this is a missed opportunity: Historians of state-level decisionmaking have a great deal to contribute to our understanding of current affairs.

Stephanie Young is associate director of the Defense and Political Sciences Department and senior researcher at the RAND Corporation, where she conducts research and analysis on a broad range of foreign policy and security related issues.

Michelle Grisé

The RAND Corporation



I am a researcher at the nonprofit, nonpartisan RAND Corporation, where I use my training as a historian to inform current policy debates and decisionmaking. Since joining RAND, I have assessed the role of the U.S. military in past conflicts, lessons learned from historical pandemics, and how legal and regulatory structures have adapted to the introduction of emerging technologies over time. As a policy researcher, I like to think of history as a rich source of insight into the successes and failures of decisionmakers and institutional frameworks. I find it incredibly rewarding to work with colleagues from disparate disciplinary backgrounds to translate historical analysis into actionable policy recommendations.

Interest

My understanding of the relationship between historical analysis and policymaking grew out of my experiences as an undergraduate history major at the University of

Chicago. During my third year, I enrolled in a seminar on the history of the civil rights movement that focused on the history of efforts to desegregate public schools. Our professor, Adam Green, arranged for our class to travel to Little Rock, Arkansas, to meet with community leaders and members of the Little Rock Nine. The seminar and our trip to Little Rock impressed upon me the impact of policymaking, for better or worse, on the lives of ordinary people, and made me realize the value of sitting down and talking with fellow citizens about how their experiences and their lives have been shaped by the structures of government and the mechanisms of decisionmaking.

After graduating from college and spending some time in Israel on a Fulbright fellowship, my interest in the history—and practice—of statecraft led me first to law school at the University of Michigan and then to doctoral studies in history at Yale, where I found an intellectual home within the International Security Studies program. Through weekly lunchtime seminars and dinners with eminent historians, scholars of international relations, and policymakers, I became immersed in enduring debates on international security, grand strategy, and the importance of historical analysis in decisionmaking. When it came time to select a dissertation topic, I decided to write about the history of Pakistan's nuclear program. I wanted to apply rigorous historical methods to explain how leading scientists and decisionmakers in Pakistan had initially embarked on a project to develop their country's nuclear energy capabilities—and how they had ultimately decided to switch gears and develop nuclear weapons.

Challenge

My dissertation committee members were supportive of my idea, but they initially seemed skeptical that I would be able to write a comprehensive history of Pakistan's nuclear program, the origins and precise evolution of which have been closely guarded secrets for decades. Even so, the prospect of trying to locate hard-to-find documents appealed to me. In addition to conducting research at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, I also visited archives in Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Russia, and Pakistan, gathering documents in multiple languages and learning about archival traditions and recordkeeping in each country. Collecting documents from these different archives allowed me to eventually piece together the story of Pakistan's nuclear program. To supplement the archival record, I made several additional trips to Pakistan, where I interviewed scientists about their experiences working for the nuclear program. These conversations allowed me to understand how decisions made at the highest levels of the Pakistani bureaucracy—from the early decision to invest in nuclear energy research to the later decision to develop nuclear weapons—had affected the lives and careers of scientists, engineers, and bureaucrats. Since my days as an undergraduate at the University of Chicago, understanding the consequences of state-level decisionmaking for ordinary people has always been one of the things that I find most engaging about studying the history of statecraft and policymaking. As a historian, I also enjoy learning more about the historical underpinnings of present-day decisionmaking.

Opportunities

Throughout my academic career, I have been fortunate to work with historians who not only modeled how to conduct rigorous historical research but also supported me as I took on challenging projects and explored and refined my historical interests—most notably Mark Bradley and Adam Green at the University of Chicago, Bill Novak at the University of Michigan Law School, and Tim Snyder, Jenifer

Van Vleck, and Rohit De at Yale University. As an undergraduate and graduate student, I took a wide range of history courses, from the history of human rights to the history of Central Asia to early American legal history to the history of the Vietnam War. Before settling on a dissertation topic, I even spent a summer investigating the availability of archival resources in Myanmar. I traveled, I read widely, and I attended seminars and job talks representing a variety of historical subfields and methodological traditions. At Yale, where my interest in statecraft fully emerged, I was fortunate to have female colleagues who were similarly interested in the history of diplomacy, international security, and grand strategy. As a result, it never occurred to me that my historical interests were out of the ordinary.

In the course of conducting my dissertation research, I realized that there were no prominent women among the major figures about whom I was writing. This realization was unsettling. In the archives, I discovered many cover sheets and telegrams that had been signed and sent by female secretaries and assistants, but there was no mention—across dozens of archives in countries around the world—of female policymakers or scientists. If few women end up studying the history of statecraft, perhaps it is because they do not see themselves reflected in the archival record. Hopefully, as women play increasingly prominent roles in decisionmaking and diplomacy, and as women write themselves into the historical record, that will change.

“If few women end up studying the history of statecraft, perhaps it is because they do not see themselves reflected in the archival record.”

As an undergraduate and graduate student, I would have liked to have known more about the different career paths available to historians. Although I knew that I wanted to pursue a career outside of academia, I was unaware of the range of institutions that value historical training—especially training in the history of statecraft and related fields. I would have also liked to have more exposure to historians who worked in non-academic settings and the opportunity to ask them questions about their careers. Historians who work on statecraft-related topics outside of academia have much to gain from engaging with students of history and exposing them to the variety of rewarding career options for which they are prepared.

Michelle Grisé is an associate policy researcher at the RAND Corporation.

Elizabeth C. Charles

U.S. Department of State



Arriving at my current career in history and statecraft was more of a meandering journey than an intended outcome. I am currently privileged to work on the *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) series at the Office of the Historian at the Department of State. In our office of about 50 employees, 18 are women, an uncommonly high percentage in the field of diplomatic history. Why more women do not enter this field is a tough question to answer. I will say that throughout my graduate school career, I met many engaged and intelligent women doing their best to move their various historical fields forward, diplomatic history included. I am also pleased when I go to conferences for organizations such as the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAHR) and the National Council on Public History (NCPH) and see many young, professional female scholars presenting and commenting on panels. However, the small number of people from underrepresented groups

in our field remains acute and troublesome. How can we encourage more women and people from underrepresented groups to pursue the fields of diplomatic history and statecraft? I do not have the answers, but I can speak to what I think shaped me and led me into this field.

Early Studies

My trajectory started well before college. I had high school teachers that encouraged me to think about the broader world, and I became interested in international affairs and how the United States interacted with other countries. I was in junior high and high school in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a time of momentous change in the world with the fall of the Berlin Wall, Velvet Revolutions, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War. One could not help but be enmeshed in these stories and events changing the world around us. I do wonder whether I would have ended up doing what I do now if I had grown up in another time. But because I had excellent history and government teachers who pushed us to think about the world outside my small southern town, several of my high school colleagues and I have gone into careers in diplomacy, international relations, and history.

As an undergraduate at the University of Georgia, I thought I would apply to law school. There are five generations of lawyers and judges in my family, and it seemed like a natural path until I realized I was only going down it because I hadn't figured out what I actually liked doing. As a history major, I became fascinated with Russian history and culture—not in small part from watching *Doctor Zhivago* too many times and then writing my senior thesis on Boris Pasternak and the Nobel Prize crisis surrounding the book. I found the friction of the Cold War intriguing. I quickly realized I wanted to know more about the Russian side of the story.

This led me to ditch the law school idea and head to Boston College for a master's degree in Russian history. I wasn't entirely sure if I wanted to pursue a PhD or go on to some other career. My adviser rightly pointed out to me after I wrote my thesis on back channels between the Soviets and Americans during the Cuban Missile Crisis that I kept returning to Cold War themes in my work. At this point, George Washington University (GWU) and several other schools—such as the London School of Economics and the University of California, Santa Barbara—were starting centers to study the international history of the Cold War. More Soviet and Warsaw Pact documentation was being released, and it seemed like a natural fit to head to GWU and pursue a PhD in Russian and Cold War history. The “other side” of the story was waiting to be told.

Washington Networking

I moved from Boston to Washington, D.C., in August 2001, right before the September 11 attacks. That was certainly a strange time to be a new DC resident. But I was fortunate to end up in Washington for many reasons. Resources such as the Cold War International History Project and National Security Archive provided treasure troves for research and finding a dissertation topic. Through their connections to GWU, I also found a cohort of young scholars working in the field of Cold War history, as well as several mentors who learned the ins and outs of researching in Russian and other difficult archives. Almost 20 years later, many of these people remain some of my closest friends and colleagues.

I have no doubt that being in D.C. was crucial to landing my current job. Through GWU, I met people at my current office during conferences and talks and events around town. Some people I met early on at Cold War conferences ended up working in my office years before me. I cannot stress enough the value of meeting people, talking to other scholars, and making informal connections and cohorts. You never know when this will pay great dividends. Go to talks and events. Go to conferences (when funding allows). Perhaps most importantly, do not be afraid to talk to former officials and policymakers at these talks and events. This might be intimidating, but they are people too. Most of them are happy to talk to young scholars, do interviews, and reminisce about their work and careers.

“The “other side” of the story was waiting to be told.”

Women in Statecraft and Diplomacy

For those of us who study leadership, diplomacy, and state-level decision-making day in and day out, the imbalance of underrepresented groups and women in source material is incredibly frustrating. As I shift the focus of my current projects on the Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations forward in time to the Bill Clinton and George W. Bush administrations, I hope I will notice a marked, if slow, improvement. I say this as someone who wrote a dissertation about Gorbachev, his nuclear learning, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, and his relationship with Reagan, so I suppose I am as guilty as others of doing “great man” history. Even though we recognize these issues, in our own work, it is hard not to focus on the major players and the documents and evidence that is available.

Reading documents for FRUS volumes, I have noticed that 97 percent of the diplomatic players are men. When Roz Ridgway, who was assistant secretary of state for European and Canadian affairs from 1985 to 1989, appears in a document, I am gleeful. In our current day, I do not believe that women are purposefully excluded from the ranks of high-level diplomats or from the negotiating table. Since the Clinton administration, we have had three female secretaries of state; the Department has done more to promote women entering the Foreign Service; and the number of women in the field of diplomacy is slowly growing.

Women such as Ambassador Rose Gottemoeller provide an example: an arms control guru who worked in various positions at the Department of State, most recently on the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), then advanced to the post of deputy secretary general of NATO. Rose is an example of a woman who worked her way up through the ranks. There are many like her working tirelessly behind the scenes and providing mentorship to young women and men alike in these fields. But for every Rose, there are 15 or 20 men in those senior positions—and countless women like her who have not been able to advance as far.

As we move forward as women historians in this field, I think we can try to do better in telling the stories of women diplomats and negotiators. We can certainly mentor younger generations of professionals and scholars and explain how we entered the field, its pitfalls and perils, and how we can all promote the work of women. In the academic realm of diplomatic history and statecraft, I hope scholars will start to seek out the lesser-known actors and participants in the high-level statecraft world. There are stories to be told about these people, who are often the ones shaping policy and decision-making from the bottom up.

I know I am lucky to have my job and to have stumbled into such an amazing career. Writing this essay has certainly made me think about how I can do a better job of proactively encouraging young female scholars and people in underrepresented groups to consider this field or that of international relations or to enter the foreign service. I do occasionally get calls from friends of friends asking me to talk to people about how to get a job at the Department of State. I enjoy having these conversations—but getting a job in the federal government, in general, is a task in itself. I, for one, will do better at ensuring younger generations know these fields and careers are options and guiding them as best I can. I will also task my colleagues with doing the same.

Elizabeth C. Charles is a historian in the Office of the Historian at the U.S. Department of State, researching and compiling for the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series.

The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of State or the U.S. government.

Susan Colbourn

Johns Hopkins SAIS



Invariably, in some circles, fields such as diplomatic history, military history, and the history of statecraft still elicit the same old responses, disparaged for their narrow focus on the study of old white men. Shorthands such as “pale, male, and Yale” or “maps and chaps” underscore this sense of narrowness, though these quips have little relation to the current state of the field.

My research interests generally tend toward the more traditional elements of diplomatic history. Most of my research engages questions long present in the field: how alliances form, why they endure, and how these partnerships between states interact with and shape the broader international system. Certainly, that choice has elicited a few perplexed looks over the years, given the field’s continued reputation for being stodgy, conservative, and filled with old white men. Why, more than a few have asked, would I want to study diplomacy?

“Why, more than a few have asked, would I want to study diplomacy?”

Studying History and Statecraft

What drew me initially to the study of diplomacy and statecraft was simple, if a bit trite: a desire to understand more about why the world operates as it does and how international politics has shaped the world we currently know. I enjoyed—and still do—the complexities of studying statecraft: the human dimensions of the policymaking process, the competing perspectives and interpretations at play, and the contingencies and roads not taken.

Perhaps that explains why I decided to study the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), an institution made up of countless committees with an alphabet soup of associated acronyms. Currently, I am finishing writing a book on the Atlantic alliance and the so-called Euromissiles—the “theater” or “intermediate-range” nuclear forces that the INF Treaty of December 1987 ultimately did away with. I am also, as part of a postdoctoral fellowship at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), starting two new book projects on the history of the alliance, one about how NATO navigated the Cold War and the other providing a brief history of NATO’s continuation and its various forms of expansion in the 1990s.

Why bother? After all, there are already plenty of works dealing with the alliance’s history. But, fundamentally, that is the work of the historian. We are in the business of interpreting and reinterpreting the past, putting forward new understandings, and placing new combinations of sources in dialogue with one another. Who does that work also matters; it shapes the questions posed and the avenues of research pursued. Alexis Coe’s recent biography of George Washington, *You Never Forget Your First*, tackles this head-on in recounting how a school of Washington biographers—“the thigh men of dad history,” in Coe’s words—seemingly fixated on the first president’s masculinity.⁸

A more diverse set of scholars can offer new perspectives, uncover new connections, and reevaluate the conclusions reached by an earlier generation of historians. In my own work, I seek to blend old questions and new approaches. In making sense of NATO’s struggles over the Euromissiles, for instance, I consider allied policymakers alongside anti-nuclear activists to illustrate how broader conversations about the nature of security in the atomic age extended far beyond foreign ministries and planning staffs.

Why bother? After all, there are already plenty of works dealing with the alliance’s history.

Representation and Networks

Looking back, it is easy for me to see how representation mattered in my own career. As a freshman at the University of Toronto, I had the opportunity to take a small seminar with Margaret MacMillan. I saw nothing unusual or particularly novel about this at age 17, beyond being thrilled that I could take a course with a bestselling historian. (*Paris 1919* had come out a few years earlier.) In retrospect, I now have a far greater appreciation for how much she shaped my career trajectory. Her presence in the classroom and her professional success sent the message that I, too, might be able to make a career as a diplomatic historian studying questions of war, peace, and statecraft.

The road from that early seminar to a PhD degree was not as straightforward or as smooth as it might look in retrospect. But I finished my undergraduate degree at Toronto with a double major in history and international relations (a multidisciplinary mix of economics, political science, and history, not the U.S.-style subset of political science) and went on to do an MA degree at the London School of Economics (LSE). At LSE, I took courses about the global Cold War and got a taste for archival research.

I was hooked. When I went back to the University of Toronto to start my doctorate, and afterward as a postdoctoral fellow at Yale University's International Security Studies program, I was fortunate to be part of a small but tight-knit community of women also working on questions of diplomacy, foreign relations, and strategy. It would be impossible to explain how valuable those friendships have been and continue to be, both in personal and professional terms. Not only have these friends and colleagues been sounding boards for various research ideas, harebrained schemes, and career choices, they have also been a source of support at times when other professional circles have diminished or ignored the challenges facing women (especially early career women) in academia.

Challenges and Opportunities Ahead

At this stage, it is hard to reflect on the challenges and successes of my career, as I am still starting out in many respects. A few, however, do merit mention.

First, the scarcity of stable academic jobs in the humanities and social sciences—including, but by no means limited to, tenure-track positions for historians of statecraft and diplomacy—is an obvious obstacle, one that is almost certain to continue as we navigate the long-term economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. It bears repeating, however, that a tenure-track academic job is only one of countless professional avenues for someone interested in studying diplomatic history, a fact showcased by many of the other reflections in this collection.

Second, there are still barriers to even entering this field in the first place. Here, I think about my own experiences teaching. At Yale, I was lucky to teach an exceptional group of students in a junior seminar, "NATO in Crisis, 1949–2019." Our discussions were rich and gave me new perspectives on my own research, but the makeup of our small group was also a stark reminder of the various barriers and pipelines that stop women from studying topics in statecraft. As a group, we certainly lacked the kind of representation I had hoped to see in the classroom. It left me wondering about how and why women are deterred, dissuaded, and discouraged from studying certain topics.

Third, and by no means least, there is still much more work to be done. At conferences and panels, I often lament that I remain an obvious outlier in the room as a woman. (This is to say nothing of other ways in which representation is still sorely lacking.) I have regularly been the only woman on a panel and, on a handful of occasions, the only woman in the room. Such situations can all too easily encourage others to assume that your participation has more to do with the fact that you happen to be a woman rather than with your relevant qualifications and expertise. In such circumstances, it can be hard to resist the temptation to wonder whether you belong there at all.

I do not share these recollections to dissuade women from studying the history of statecraft or from pursuing a career based on those studies, whether in academia, government service, think tanks, or beyond—the opposite, in fact. I share these experiences because I wish I had been better equipped for what that kind of environment might feel like and because, in the future, I hope that there will be more women in those rooms with me.

Susan Colbourn is a DAAD postdoctoral fellow at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

Sarah-Jane Corke

University of New Brunswick



In 1954, my mother joined a book-of-the-month club to pass the time while she waited for my sister and me to arrive, first through years of trying and then through the adoption process. She built up quite a library, though for as long as I can remember, those books were her books, and we were not allowed to touch them. Then one day in 1979, when I was home sick from school, she told me to go downstairs and pick one book from her library.

It took me about ten minutes to settle on my choice: George Kennan's *Memoirs, 1925-1950*. To this day, I still do not know why I picked it up. I think part of me was always interested in questions of power, who has it, who does not, and why. But why this grand stage of power, why diplomatic history, why the history of the Cold War? I honestly do not know, yet I confess I am not particularly bothered by this. There is a lot about our lives and the choices we make that are unknowable; as scholars who study important historical decisionmaking, we need to be comfortable with that.

Validation

What I do know is that my love of history began that day, though it has endured some challenges. One roadblock stands out as particularly formative: my Grade 13 American History class with Mr. Miller, the teacher who notoriously liked to make girls cry. I was sitting in the cafeteria with a group of friends when I realized my grades did not add up on the final exam. I kept doing the addition over and over. I asked a few friends to check it, too (because, apparently, I did not have enough confidence in my own ability to add to 100). But they confirmed that the total should be ten points higher than what he had written in red ink on the cover: my grade was 86, not 76. I went to ask him about the grade, and after he reviewed it, he turned to me and said, “You are not an ‘A’ student. I am not changing the grade.” Despite the “A” I received on the midterm, the essay, and the final exam, my final grade in the class remained a “B+.” I left his office in tears, assuming he knew something about me that I did not. The first time I told anyone this story was the day of my PhD defense.

In the second semester of my junior year in college, I took a course on war and society. This was so long ago that professors still posted student grades on their door, along with their names. I remember going to look for my grade on the essay—and there it was, third from the top. I had the third-highest grade in a class of one hundred. I was stunned. I also remember taking a closer look at the list and realizing that I was the only woman in the top fifteen names. That grade changed me, giving me the confidence I needed to say out loud what I had been thinking to myself: I wanted to be a historian of the Cold War.

The next year I applied for graduate school. I received no invitation to do so. No one encouraged me. No one gave me any advice. I decided by myself to stay at the University of Guelph because they offered me a scholarship and had a reciprocal agreement with the University of Toronto, one of the best universities in Canada, where I could take a course on U.S. Foreign Relations. It never dawned on me that I could apply to do my master’s degree at the University of Toronto—it was the best university in Canada, and I was still, in my heart, “not an ‘A’ student.”

Pressure

When it came time to register for the course, however, our department chair turned to me and said, “We have a graduate course in cultural history that you should take instead.” I refused. The next thing I knew, the professor who taught the course on cultural history came to see me, and he, too, tried to convince me to take his course. I explained to him that I wanted to study the Cold War. He tried to convince me to do a cultural history of the Cold War. At first, I was confused. Why this pressure? But when I looked around the department, I realized that every single female MA or PhD student was doing social or cultural history. Every single one. Today, not much has changed: Women are still being funneled into cultural history, international development, or peace studies.

However, I stuck to my guns, and my reward was to be the only woman in a group of four male graduate students working in the area of diplomatic history. This was not an easy experience. I was treated more like a pet than a peer. When I rebuffed one of these fellow students’ advances, he looked at me and said, “I can destroy you.” I managed to get out of the situation, but I knew in that moment he was right. He was at home in our department; I was an interloper. Only 32 years later, when a similar issue occurred at my home university, did I finally share this story.

There are many more such stories. Women who work in non-traditional fields face numerous challenges. Not only are we not doing a good job of funneling women into fields such as diplomatic history and intelligence history, but when we do, these women find themselves alone and unprepared to face the discrimination that still exists. Of course, there are exceptions to this rule. And while the number of White female faculty members has grown, the number of Black, Indigenous, and other racialized faculty⁹ at Canadian universities remains very low.

Perspective

The best question I was ever asked at a job interview was whether I thought men and women wrote history differently. I immediately said yes, then I had to pause. At the time, I could not articulate why I believed this, but I just knew it to be the case. Eventually, I realized that women of my generation existed on the periphery of the discipline and that this position accorded them a certain superpower, although it was not often viewed as such at the time. Our positions as outsiders allowed us to ask new and different questions and to push the boundaries of historiography. I firmly believe this was one of the reasons why I was able to challenge the myth of “containment” in my first book.

Today I know we do not have to exclusively pursue cultural or social histories in order to write inclusive history. In my new project, I am working on a dual biography. I had originally envisioned this project as a biography of John Paton Davies Jr., a man whom intellectual historian David Hollinger recently characterized as one of the two “most recognizable” men to have ever served in the U.S. Foreign Service. However, after going through his papers and reading the letters between him and his wife, I came to believe that neither understood their lives apart from the other: it was their life and, as his wife Patricia conceded, “their troubles.” Upon reflection, I realized that in our [hi]stories, there is this strange and deeply misleading belief that one’s successes and failures are one’s own. This is even more true in the biographies of the “great men” of the twentieth century. Women pop up when they are being courted, upon marriage, and sometimes at death. Occasionally, in passing, the birth of a child is noted, often as a casual aside. Rarely have spouses been given their due as life partners.

“Our positions as outsiders allowed us to ask new and different questions and to push the boundaries of historiography.”

Our failure to give proper attention to the wives of “great men” is telling. Borrowing language from Ronan Farrow, “It sends a message about who we are as a society, what we’ll overlook, who we’ll ignore, who matters and who doesn’t.”¹⁰ To complicate our understanding of biography by insisting that we give due consideration to the role played by “wives” is an intervention in the historiography of statecraft that is worth making. If you had told me twenty years ago that I would eventually find my

way to giving equal treatment to the wives of our “great men,” I probably would have laughed at you. But life has taught me that women played critical roles in our [hi]stories and deserve our attention.

“Despite the challenges I faced, I can unequivocally state that I love my job.”

Despite the challenges I faced, I can unequivocally state that I love my job. While I went through some difficult times, which I firmly believe I would not have had to endure had I been a man, I also know that many of the opportunities I have received were due to the fact that I am one of the few women in Canada working in the area of intelligence history. In retrospect, I do not think there is anything I wish I had known as a student, other than that I would survive these years. There are no lessons here, as “we” seem to make the same mistakes over and over. The more important issue is what can we do now to make sure that the next generation of young women studying national security do not face similar challenges. I think we can all agree that there is still a lot of work to do.

Dr. Sarah-Jane Corke is an associate professor at the University of New Brunswick in Canada. She is also serving as the president of the North American Society for Intelligence History (NASIH).

Marybeth P. Ulrich

U.S. Air Force Academy and U.S. Army War College



My interest in statecraft began as a cadet at the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA) in the early 1980s. Within my political science major, I was required to choose a track to specialize in; I chose international politics because I was most interested in the behavior of states and the consequential nature of their actions. The Cold War had not yet abated, and the existential struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union loomed large—especially for cadets who would soon be taking part in directly implementing the military instrument of power.

Implementing Statecraft

My short-term career aim was to begin my graduate studies as soon as possible. However, first I was required to complete at least one operational assignment. I embraced this opportunity to apply statecraft as a KC-135Q navigator in Strategic Air Command. I was assigned to a squadron with the mission to refuel the SR-71 spy

planes that flew sorties to gather intelligence on Soviet military power. I experienced firsthand the human dimension of strategic directives. Later, I learned that the intelligence cycle begins with the political leadership setting requirements for the information that intelligence assets such as the SR-71 should collect. These requirements resulted in directives to conduct particular sorties, which required the participation of legions of personnel to fly and maintain the planes, analyze the data gathered, and disseminate the intelligence to policymakers. I took pride in my specific role, which consisted of mastering the procedures of dead reckoning, radar reading, and celestial navigation. After six years of navigation training and operational missions, I had met the requirements to “career broaden” and apply for graduate school through the Air Force Academy’s faculty program. At the time, only military officers (with the exception of a few visiting civilian faculty) taught at USAFA. There was a program to select promising junior officers for fully funded graduate studies, followed by teaching tours at the academy. As a young captain, my dream was to get one of those coveted slots to study International Relations and then return to teach cadets.

Becoming a Scholar of Statecraft

I was very fortunate to be accepted into and begin a doctoral program at the University of Illinois. I was mentored by Professor Edward Kolodziej, a giant in Security Studies and International Relations. He shaped my program of study so that I would be well-equipped not just to teach but to participate in statecraft as a national security professional throughout my Air Force career. I started graduate school in 1990 and was captivated by the implications of the fall of the Soviet Union. I wanted to understand the impact this geopolitical earthquake would have on the national security transition of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc countries. This began an in-depth comparative study of several post-communist cases, including their varied histories of civil-military relations. History was an important tool as I studied how the post-communist states were overhauling their domestic political systems, strategies, and alliances to adapt to the new international order. For example, the historical literature on Latin America’s transitions away from authoritarian rule in the decades preceding the collapse of the Soviet Union helped me understand the “third wave” of democracy in the post-communist era.

The Advent of Women in Statecraft

It is important to note that throughout this period, there were very few women doing what I was doing. Women comprised 11 percent of my graduating class at USAFA, its fifth class with women. Women had only recently been allowed to attend flying training when I entered active duty. There were only a handful of women faculty at USAFA when I was a cadet, and they were junior-ranking. Only one of my professors at the University of Illinois was a woman, Dina Zinnes, who conducted pioneering work in international relations (IR) modeling and data analysis. Of my PhD cohort, only 3 of the 16 doctoral students were women. After two tours teaching at USAFA, I left active duty to pursue teaching opportunities as a civilian scholar. I was appointed to a faculty position in the Department of National Security and Strategy at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Only after I started my new job in 1999 did I learn that I was the first civilian woman professor hired in any of the departments and also the youngest faculty member by far.

Throughout each of these assignments, I was working in a male-dominated environment with virtually no network of senior women to help me progress as a student, as a junior officer in a flying

squadron, or as junior faculty. However, I focused on my academic interests and military missions. I was conscious that I had opportunities that women even several years older did not: to attend a service academy, earn an aeronautical rating, conduct field research in Eastern European ministries of defense completely devoid of women, and teach statecraft to senior officers at the pinnacle of the U.S. military education system. I had interests that I could pursue just as doors were opening to permit me into worlds that previously had excluded women. For every door in this field that truly opens to young women, there will be smart and capable young women interested in walking through it.

There are many more women studying and participating in statecraft today, but their work is still often overlooked. A couple of years ago, an Army War College student conducted an inventory of the readings assigned throughout the core curriculum and reported that over 95 percent of the authors were men. Recently, a female colleague completed a survey of civil-military relations syllabi, with similar results. She then set out to compile and publish a list of female-authored publications that could have been included. I thought this was a brilliant act because so much of course design from year to year is the result of the inertia of the existing networks and syllabi. Presenting concrete alternatives challenges the status quo and suggests ways to improve diversity of thought and representation.

“For every door in this field that truly opens to young women, there will be smart and capable young women interested in walking through it”

Seeking a Path amid the Barriers

I have found that academic work itself is a refuge and the aspect of my career most in my control. I cannot control institutional biases that bar women from leadership or exclude them from some of the male-dominated networks that are influential in my field. I *can* control the effort I apply to research and publishing. I *can* encourage young women and men alike in my undergraduate courses to pursue careers in national security. I *can* control the quality of my teaching and seek to mentor my students.

That said, I will never know what direction my career could have taken if I had all of the options open to my male colleagues. For example, in the 1980s, I was not able to participate in competitive opportunities for which I had qualified, such as some leadership jobs at USAFA and selective programs like the service academy exchange. There were quotas limiting the participation of women, so my name was removed from lists multiple times to be replaced by a male cadet or faculty member below me in rank. I chose the Boeing KC-135Q because it was the only airframe open to women navigators at the time. Positions on combat aircraft did not open up until after the Gulf War in 1993, and by then, although I only had nine years of service and was just 30 years old, my cohort was deemed too old to make the transition.

However limited the options were, there was always a path remaining. For me, this was primarily teaching and research, complemented with a parallel second half to my military career in the Air Force Reserve. There I was able to apply statecraft to part-time jobs as a political-military officer and

a reserve attaché in U.S. embassies in the Czech Republic, Russia, and Greece. My efforts resulted in earning promotion to the rank of colonel and a military pension.

“I will never know what direction my career could have taken if I had all of the options open to my male colleagues.”

Connect with Senior Scholars and Practitioners

As a student, I wish I had understood better the path that my professors took to become established in their fields. It was hard to imagine any of them as graduate students, novices in academia, or junior officers. I came to understand that one small step can lead to many others. Submitting a proposal to a conference is the first step to completing a research project, which will then be critiqued and improved before you submit the revised product for publication. Adding a particular topic to a CV begins to build recognition of your subject matter expertise in that particular niche, which leads to invitations and opportunities to make even more inroads in the field. As a student, I also wish that I had worked harder to get to know my professors and to leverage opportunities that they could have made available to me. For example, this summer, one of my former students from Dickinson College reached out to me because he was interested in transitioning to a job in the national security field. I took him on as a volunteer research assistant to develop a case in a group project on the phenomenon of the global civil-military gap. He chose to research the case of Spain since he had studied abroad there and was well attuned to the culture and language. I would never have been so bold as to seek out such an opportunity.

Discover Your Niche in Statecraft

Find the niche in the study of statecraft that most interests you. For me, this was digging deep into the role of civil-military relations (CMR) in strategy and policy. I found that when this often overlooked lens is applied, it reveals another critical dimension of a case. The CMR approach highlights the role of individual personalities, decision-making processes, and intra-governmental institutional relationships, not just relationships between armed forces and societies. An emerging question in this field is the role of militaries in democratic consolidation and, more recently, de-consolidation—the process of democracies sliding into authoritarian rule. The subfield of civil-military relations is also interdisciplinary and affords the opportunity to collaborate with scholars from such disciplines as history, political science, and sociology.

Build Your Network through Service

Over the years, I have also learned how valuable professional service can be to advancing my own career. Agreeing to be on a colleague’s panel or to write a chapter for an edited volume—even if such commitments take me away from my primary research effort at the time—can result in significant

opportunities down the road. Taking the time to read and comment on a colleague's work is the ultimate compliment to the author and the best kind of professional service. I have found that assisting colleagues in their professional endeavors also helps to cement networks and build a strong reputation in the field.

The New Landscape for Women in Statecraft

Finally, my most recent academic posting has given me a rare chance to look back on my entire academic trajectory while re-entering it at its launch point. I am spending the academic year as the distinguished visiting professor of political science at the U.S. Air Force Academy. I have returned almost 40 years to the day since I first entered in 1980. I am teaching an interdisciplinary core course on international security studies to third-year cadets. It is an incredible opportunity to mentor the twenty-first-century version of myself as an undergraduate and faculty member and to pass on all that I have learned in the intervening 40 years. The environment has changed markedly. Today, women make up 30 percent of the student body, and the dean and commandant are both women. The officer who has been appointed the permanent professor and head of my department is a woman, as are 25 percent of the department's faculty.

I hope to mentor and share my experience with peers and students alike in order to give them the role model and assistance that was not available to me when I was their age. I am sure there are many other senior women who would be willing to mentor young women thinking about entering the field or trying to establish themselves. I encourage you to seek out these mentors across the disciplines that contribute to the study of statecraft. Do not limit your reach to just the historians. Learn their paths and discover how their journeys can inform your own. Participating in events, programs, and publications like this in policy and academic fields is an important step toward connecting with women who have made their way in the study of statecraft and who stand ready to assist those seeking to follow them.

Dr. Marybeth P. Ulrich is the distinguished visiting professor of political science at the U.S. Air Force Academy and professor of government in the Department of National Security and Strategy at the United States Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

About the Editors and Authors

Seth Center is senior associate and director of the History and Strategy Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). His work employs a historical lens to examine the contemporary national security agenda, develop applied history findings to inform responses to future challenges, and connect diplomatic and military historians to the policy community.

Prior to joining CSIS, Dr. Center served at the National Security Council (NSC) and the U.S. Department of State. He served as director for National Security Strategy and History at the NSC from 2017-2019, where he helped conceptualize and write the 2017 National Security Strategy. Dr. Center joined the NSC staff as a historian in the fall of 2016 to document the evolution of key national security initiatives of the Obama administration including managing the China relationship, counterterrorism policy, Iran policy, and broader strategic questions. He provided historical context and lessons learned for the NSC across the 2017 presidential transition. As a State Department historian, he produced policy-supportive historical research and analysis on a broad array of subjects including the origins and conduct of the Iraq War, post-conflict and stabilization operations, strategic communications and public diplomacy, and the organization and development of U.S. diplomacy. He also supported the department's lessons learned efforts in partnership with the U.S. military and the intelligence community. He has taught and lectured on U.S. foreign policy and international history at universities, the Foreign Service Institute, and professional military education institutions. Dr. Center received his PhD in diplomatic history from the University of Virginia and his BA from Cornell University in history and government.

Emma Bates is the research associate for the Project on History and Strategy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), where she manages program initiatives and publications and conducts research on U.S. grand strategy and national security. Previously, Emma interned with the Project on International Order and Strategy at the Brookings Institution and with the Office of Egyptian Affairs at the U.S. Department of State. Prior to that, she spent three years working for universities and NGOs in Latin America and Spain. She holds a BA from Wellesley College and an MA in international economics and American foreign policy from Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

Fiona Hill is a senior fellow in the Center on the United States and Europe in the Foreign Policy program at Brookings. She recently served as deputy assistant to the president and senior director for European and Russian affairs on the National Security Council from 2017 to 2019. From 2006 to 2009, she served as national intelligence officer for Russia and Eurasia at The National Intelligence Council. She is coauthor of *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin* (Brookings Institution Press, 2015). Prior to joining Brookings, Hill was director of strategic planning at The Eurasia Foundation in Washington, D.C. and held a number of positions directing technical assistance and research projects at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, including associate director of the Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project, director of the Project on Ethnic Conflict in the Former Soviet Union, and coordinator of the Trilateral Study on Japanese-Russian-U.S. Relations.

Hill holds a master's in Soviet studies and a doctorate in history from Harvard University where she was a Frank Knox Fellow. She also holds a master's in Russian and modern history from St. Andrews University in Scotland and has pursued studies at Moscow's Maurice Thorez Institute of Foreign Languages. Hill is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Sara Bush Castro is an assistant professor of history at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado, where she began teaching global and East Asian history in 2019. Dr. Castro is also a non-resident China Fellow at the Wilson Center. From 2016 to 2019, Dr. Castro served as a teaching assistant professor in the Curriculum on Peace, War, and Defense at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill specializing in global security and intelligence history. She earned a doctorate in history from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and a master's degree from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. Castro previously served as an intelligence analyst for the federal government. Her current research focuses on the history of U.S.-China relations through the lens of intelligence collection and analysis. The manuscript of her forthcoming book focuses on interactions between U.S. intelligence officials and the later top Communist leaders of China during and right after World War II and how these interactions translated into both U.S. policy toward China and norms for intelligence operations.

Elizabeth C. Charles is a historian in the Office of the Historian at the U.S. Department of State, researching and compiling for the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series. She completed Reagan administration FRUS volumes on the Soviet Union 1983-85, 1985-86, and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. She is now researching in the George H.W. Bush records on the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Elizabeth finished her PhD in Modern Russian and Cold War History at the George Washington University in 2010, with her dissertation: "The Game Changer: Reassessing the Impact of SDI on

Gorbachev's Foreign Policy, Arms Control, and US-Soviet Relations." She has an MA in Russian History from Boston College and a BA in History from the University of Georgia. She currently serves as president of the Society for History in the Federal Government. She is a member of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations and serves on the Curriculum and Training Committee for the National Council on Public History.

Susan Colbourn is a DAAD postdoctoral fellow at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. A diplomatic and international historian, her research focuses on the history of NATO, the Cold War, and the role of nuclear weapons in international politics and society. She is the author of a forthcoming book on the 'Euromissiles' which examines how and why the NATO allies decided to deploy new theater nuclear forces to Western Europe in the 1970s, why these deployments were so controversial, and how and why these same missiles were destroyed within a few short years of their initial deployment. She is also at work on two new projects on the history of the Atlantic Alliance. Prior to joining SAIS in 2020, she received a PhD in History from the University of Toronto and spent two years as a Henry Chauncey Jr. '57 postdoctoral fellow at International Security Studies at Yale University.

Sarah-Jane Corke is an associate professor at the University of New Brunswick in Canada. She is also serving as the president of the North American Society for Intelligence History (NASIH). Her first book, *US Covert Operations and Cold War Strategy: Truman, The CIA and Secret Warfare* was published by Routledge in 2008. Dr. Corke has also published articles in the *Journal of Strategic Studies*, *Intelligence and National Security*, and *The Journal of Conflict Studies*. She is currently working on a biography of John Paton and Patricia Grady Davies.

Michelle Grisé is an associate policy researcher at the RAND Corporation. Prior to joining RAND, she was a law clerk at the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas, the Society for the History of Technology's NASA Fellow in the History of Space Technology, a visiting researcher at the Lahore University of Management Sciences, and a policy fellow at the Yale Institution for Social and Policy Studies. She received a PhD in history from Yale University, a JD from the University of Michigan Law School, and a BA in history from the University of Chicago. In addition to her work at RAND, she teaches at the Institute for Politics and Strategy at Carnegie Mellon University.

Marybeth Peterson Ulrich is the distinguished visiting professor of political science at the U.S. Air Force Academy and professor of government in the Department of National Security and Strategy at the United States Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. She received her PhD in political science from the University of Illinois and a BS from the U.S. Air Force Academy where she was a distinguished graduate in the class of 1984. Her research interests are focused on strategic studies with a special emphasis on civil-military relations, European security, and national security democratization issues. Among Dr. Ulrich's many publications is a book, *Democratizing Communist Militaries: The Cases of the Czech and Russian Armed Forces*. Dr. Ulrich served 15 years on active duty and 15 years in the Air Force Reserve. In her last Air Force assignment, she was the reserve air attaché to the Russian Federation. She retired with the rank of Colonel.

Stephanie Young is associate director of the defense and political sciences department and senior researcher at the RAND Corporation, where she conducts research and analysis on a broad range of foreign policy and security related issues. Her primary interests relate to defense budgeting and resource allocation, but other recent work has focused on strategic competition, social media analysis,

force modernization, security cooperation and building partner capacity, and countering weapons of mass destruction. In 2012, she spent three months as an analyst embedded with the Special Operations Joint Task Force – Afghanistan, in Kabul. She has also taught a PhD level course on the U.S. defense budget at the Pardee RAND Graduate School. Young was educated at the University of California, Berkeley, where she earned a BA in physics and astrophysics, and a PhD in history.

Endnotes

- 1 Claire Vaye Watkins, “On Pandering,” *Tinhouse*, November 23, 2015, <https://tinhouse.com/on-pandering>, accessed on July 26, 2020.
- 2 Evan Thomas, *The Very Best Men: Four Who Dared – The Early Years of the CIA* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006).
- 3 A quiet debate among women working in the State Department raged during the years Hillary Clinton was Secretary of State. For examples, see Anne-Marie Slaughter, “Why Women Still Can’t Have it All,” *The Atlantic* (July/August 2012), <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/why-women-still-cant-have-it-all/309020/>, accessed on July 26, 2020 and Mary Thompson-Jones, *To the Secretary: Leaked Embassy Cables and America’s Foreign Policy Disconnect* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2016), Chapter 9.
- 4 Cathryn Carson, *Heisenberg in the Atomic Age: Science and the Public Sphere* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
- 5 The seminal work on these issues from a first-person perspective is Alain C. Enthoven and K. Wayne Smith, *How Much is Enough: Shaping the Defense Program, 1961-1969* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1971), https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/commercial_books/2010/RAND_CB403.pdf (accessed August 1, 2020).
- 6 Todd Harrison, “The New Guns Versus Butter Debate,” Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, May 24, 2010. <https://csbaonline.org/research/publications/the-new-guns-versus-butter-debate/publication/1> (accessed August 3, 2020).
- 7 “Episode 04: Mary Young,” *History of the Future* (Podcast), HRL, December 3, 2018, <https://www.hrl.com/podcast/2018/12/03/episode-004-mary-young>.
- 8 Alexis Coe, *You Never Forget Your First: A Biography of George Washington* (New York: Penguin, 2020), xxxi-1.
- 9 In choosing the word “racialized,” I am relying on a point made by a colleague of mine, which I have since internalized. She advised me that, instead of “persons of color,” one should employ the term “racialized” because it puts the emphasis on a system that “renders specific people as racialized, whereas ‘persons of color’ refers to a person’s physical appearance.” My thanks to Angela Tozer for sharing this insight with me.
- 10 Ronan Farrow, “My Father, Woody Allen, and the Danger of Questions Unasked (Guest Column),” *Hollywood Reporter*, May 11, 2016, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/my-father-woody-allen-danger-892572>.

PHOTO CAPTION *The cover image depicts Christine de Pizan, one of the earliest women historians (born in Venice in 1364). She wrote a biography of King Charles V of France and championed female heroism and virtue among various other topics of prose and poetry. Widowed with three children, she became the first woman in Europe to have made a living from her writing. Click to [read](#) more about her work and [see images](#) of her publications.*

COVER PHOTO CULTURE CLUB/GETTY IMAGES

CSIS | CENTER FOR STRATEGIC &
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

1616 Rhode Island Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20036
202 887 0200 | www.csis.org