

A Roundtable on Tizoc Chavez, *The Diplomatic Presidency: American Foreign Policy from FDR to George H.W. Bush*

Kelly M. McFarland, Jeffrey A. Engel, Silke Zoller, Seth Offenbach,
M. Elizabeth Sanders, and Tizoc Chavez

Roundtable Review Introductory Essay:
*The Diplomatic Presidency: American Foreign Policy
from FDR to George H.W. Bush*, by Tizoc Chavez

Kelly M. McFarland

Presidential diplomacy has arguably been more front and center in the American public consciousness than usual over the last half decade. President Trump made his personal relationship with a multitude of world leaders a key media talking point. Whether it was his use of Twitter to praise, degrade, or threaten another leader, his bombastic actions at NATO and G-7 summits, his secretive discussions with Vladimir Putin, or his eventual BFF relationship with Kim Jong Un, Trump was always quick to place himself at the helm of his administration's diplomatic endeavors. Likewise, albeit with a different tone, strategy, and oftentimes different desired outcomes, President Biden has made much of his personal diplomatic skills, and his belief in the need to use them. Candidate Biden touted his foreign policy experience on the campaign trail, noting that he personally knew many world leaders. Biden has used his experience and full Rolodex to try and repair relationships with allies. This approach has been on full display since the beginning of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

This recent atmosphere of personal presidential diplomacy makes the arrival of Tizoc Chavez's work, *The Diplomatic Presidency: American Foreign Policy from FDR to George H. W. Bush*, all the more important. Chavez makes it clear that presidential diplomacy as we know it today become part of the office, for better or worse, with Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Most importantly, Chavez demonstrates that regardless of a president's personal inclinations, personal diplomacy will come into play at points throughout their presidencies due to any one, or a combination, of four consistent structures. In doing so, he adroitly demonstrates how personal diplomacy became an ingrained part of the modern presidency.

In large part due to the fact that Chavez offers new interpretations on the role of presidential diplomacy, and links multiple administrations together through the four structural forces that he sees driving presidential diplomacy, the reviews are mostly praiseworthy. As Chavez notes in his response, his goal was to "complicate the mundane," which he has done in fine fashion.

In one way or another, Jeffrey A. Engel, Silke Zoller,

and Seth Offenbach note the importance of Chavez's introduction of four key factors that the author argues solidified personal presidential diplomacy, and that continues to drive it today. These factors are, according to Chavez: "international crises, domestic politics, foreign leaders' requests, and a desire for control." (2) This analysis is the heart of Chavez's argument and contribution, and the reviewers rightly highlight and commend it. Zoller notes that "by examining personal interactions as a structural element of the presidency, Chavez sheds new light on well-known episodes of U.S. foreign policy," and that the author's "structural approach highlights commonalities of U.S. foreign policy in the Cold War era that have previously been relegated to the margins of individual presidents' narratives." This linkage between administrations is arguably the book's main contribution to the field, and an important one. Zoller also praises Chavez's use of public polling and psychology to further his arguments.

Offenbach highlights how *The Diplomatic Presidency* fills a void in the literature as it slides nicely into the sweet spot between American foreign policy and presidential history. For his part, Offenbach believes the book really takes off in the Kennedy chapter, and finds the chapter on Reagan especially useful. This chapter demonstrated for the reviewer that "as the most powerful voice, the president can alter the course of the nation's foreign policy."

Besides making us all hum Depeche Mode songs for a few days, Engel also provides strong praise for Chavez's work, applauding the ways in which it "demonstrates... personalities mean much in not only the conduct but the result of international politics at the highest levels of power." As with Zoller and Offenbach, Engel praises the book's broad swath and its ability to demonstrate the different reasons for personal presidential diplomacy, while also "tracing the evolution" of it over decades. Moreover, Chavez's analysis starkly demonstrates for Engel, that for better or worse, personal presidential diplomacy is also here to stay. This is likely to be an especially important point for Chavez's political scientist colleagues, policymakers, and those who seek to glean something for the future.

Although these three reviews are highly laudable, the reviewers also take aim at a few spots that leave them wanting more. In his chapter on Reagan, Chavez notes a diary entry from the president in which he discusses his belief that if he could just meet with Soviet leadership, it would lessen the danger. As Engel points out, Chavez brings this insight out due to his focus on personal diplomacy, but

it also highlights how unique presidential personalities are, which “ultimately leaves the reader unsatisfied. Presidents are people, but they are also, by definition, ego maniacs.” Offenbach and Zoller also bring up the key point of technology. The rise of personal presidential diplomacy coincided with a time of rapid expansion in communications technology, as well as the growing ease of international travel. Both of these reviewers question why Chavez, while noting the increased ease of travel and communication, doesn’t go into further detail regarding technological advances as an explanation for increased personal diplomacy. In his response, Chavez notes that for him “technology facilitated more so than drove leader-to-leader engagement,” but these discussions bring up obvious areas for further study on the role of technology on diplomacy.

The fourth reviewer of *The Diplomatic Presidency*, Elizabeth Sanders, takes a different approach to her review, which is the most critical of the four. While calling Chavez’s work a “useful book,” and not wanting to “discount the significance of Prof. Chavez’s important accounts of presidential diplomacy,” Sanders does not spend much of her review discussing the significance of the book or the important accounts she says that it contains. Sanders instead uses her allotted space to critique Chavez’s work for not being one that instead focuses on the ways in which, apart from using personal diplomacy, “presidents are also the world’s most important instigators and combatants in war.” She goes on to note that “the peaceful and magnanimous aspects of presidential power are, unfortunately, not the most consequential since 1945.” Sanders is obviously not wrong about presidents making decisions that can ultimately lead to war, death, and destruction, but, as the author responds, “she provides numerous examples of presidents’ destructive decisions, but it strikes me as odd to argue that these instances mean presidents were not also still diplomats. Sanders appears to equate diplomacy with peace.” And, as Chavez notes, “war and diplomacy are not mutually exclusive.”

Overall, the reviewers find much to praise in Chavez’s well-written, engaging, and thought-provoking work. Not only does the book describe the similarities and differences between presidents when conducting personal diplomacy, but more importantly, it provides readers with the core drivers that led presidents to undertake personal diplomacy in a sustained fashion over the second half of the 20th century. It is sure to be a staple in many classrooms and on numerous bookshelves.

Review of Tizoc Chavez: *The Diplomatic Presidency*

Jeffrey A. Engel

We live in unstable times. Misinformation is rampant; the environment is in flux; the nationalism that scourged the 20th century has returned; Tom Brady may or may not be retired by the time you read this. The term “fake news” no longer refers just to late-night satire, but instead stands in for a host of problems endemic to our age: the speed of communications has never been faster, yet trust—in ourselves, our government, and the international system—seems strained at best. More likely it is failing. War rages in Europe as I write. A real war, with mass casualties, civilian deaths, and by all appearances, crimes against humanity perhaps reaching all the way to genocide. Conflict was never going to disappear from the human condition even after the overt triumphalism of the Cold War’s end, yet few writers alive in 1989 thought they’d live to see the continent once more wracked by such violence.

Perhaps this is why I was feeling nostalgic when reading, and thoroughly enjoying, Tizoc Chavez’s *The Diplomatic Presidency: American Foreign Policy from FDR*

to George H.W. Bush. The book prompted memories of my reasonably happy childhood, specifically (though not exclusively) Depeche Mode. While not a huge fan of the British pop duo, who among us does not know—and admit it, crack a wistful smile at its synthesized electronic exuberance—the refrain from their 1984 chart-topper?

“People are people so why should it be, you and I should get along so awfully?”

Presidents, you see, are people too. As Chavez aptly demonstrates across nine chapters and a thoughtful conclusion, personalities mean much in not only the conduct but the result of international politics at the highest levels of power. Like people, because they are people, presidents bring personality traits to their time in office. Harry Truman’s insecurity put a chip on his shoulder. Dwight Eisenhower had nothing to be insecure about. Having ‘saved western civilization’ on your resume does tend to help bolster one’s confidence, even if it mutes creativity. Hardly as accomplished yet infused with the confidence bred into those to the manor born, John F. Kennedy was, in Chavez’s assessment, charming and magnetic. Lyndon Johnson made damn well sure you knew he was the life of every party and the focus of every meeting. Richard Nixon was neither charming, magnetic, nor really lovable in any way, though oh how he tried. Jimmy Carter could be intense, a word never applied to his successor. Ronald Reagan required tutoring on even the most basic of strategic fundamentals even well into this second term, and for the sake of all that is thoughtful within the historical profession can we at long last excise those who insist the sincerity spawned by his simplicity obscured genuine strategic savvy? George H.W. Bush carried into office more knowledge than his predecessor but far less confidence. Reagan was popular but had few genuine friends. Even his second wife, to whom he was undoubtedly devoted, doubted her sense of the man from time to time. Bush never enjoyed Reagan’s popular appeal, save for a brief artificial high in the aftermath of the brief Gulf War. Yet Bush counted his friends by the thousands. Indeed, he desperately wanted everyone to be his friend, though more on that momentarily.

Personality traits have always infused presidential politics, but as Chavez aptly notes, not always their diplomacy. Only beginning in the twentieth century could American presidents routinely engage their international peers in person, or through the sound and tone of their voice. Moving from letters and missives to voice and sight required new technologies only invented in the century’s first half, and only made fully practicable for the art of international diplomacy in its second. Most impactful were the telephone and the airplane, affording presidents opportunity to speak for themselves when conversing with foreign counterparts, and ultimately to do so in the same room. Franklin Roosevelt in particular employed these new communications mediums to personalize American foreign policy as no prior Oval Office occupant. “By the end of his presidency,” Chavez writes, “Roosevelt had ushered in not only the modern presidency but also the practice of personal diplomacy” [23]. He had real conversations with foreign leaders, heard them, and met them.

Other presidents had done each of these before, but never before to such an extent. The new technologies fit Roosevelt’s personal style. A chameleon of a leader, he fawned, cajoled, bribed and threatened as befitted each crisis of his presidency, juggling if not the daily conduct than the full contours of the vision of American foreign policy within his own head and inner circle of advisers. Not even his last Vice-President and ultimate successor knew the full extent of FDR’s plans and promises.

Which prompted a backlash against personal diplomacy, Chavez finds, in Roosevelt’s wake. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower met foreign leaders, but “the

practice of personal diplomacy declined" [47]. Bureaucrats throughout the growing Cold War national security state took back the minute control over foreign policy FDR had accumulated, using the rapid growth of the entire national security complex to limit a president's ability to operate without their consent. In truth, neither Truman nor Eisenhower wanted to, the former being insecure of his expertise, the latter having lived every moment of his professional life either as someone's staffer or surrounded by his own.

Opportunities for personal diplomacy soared for ensuing presidents, making their ability to manage foreign relationships more intimate than ever before. "During the second half of the twentieth century," Chavez writes, "personal diplomacy became an indelible feature of US foreign relations and the presidency and a 'way of life' in international politics [208]." You need not take his word for it. Chavez brings the goods to prove his case, including statistics, befitting his training as a political scientist. Harry Truman averaged less than one meeting a month with a foreign leader. By the end of 2007, Chavez reports, George W. Bush averaged six and a half. Which is not to say the growth of personal diplomacy was linear or consistent. Eisenhower visited four foreign countries a year, on average, during his eight years in office, and personally welcomed an average of nine foreign leaders a year to the United States. Travel was easier in Ike's day than in FDR's, though aeronautical advancements were not the only factor at play in the rise of face-to-face presidential meetings with foreign counterparts. George H.W. Bush visited fifteen countries a year during his sole term, but met with an average of forty-nine fellow heads of state.

Eisenhower and both Bushes enjoyed access to the speed and comfort of jet travel, and exceptionally nice mid-flight amenities for their time, but the real reason the senior Bush met more frequently with foreign counterparts than the man he'd grown up admiring—and more than once, playing golf with as junior member of a foursome—was simply that he liked it. More importantly, Bush considered himself good with people. (Eisenhower had a tendency to simply order them around.) Other presidents required reminding. Chavez reports that Jimmy Carter's advisers repeatedly reminded their boss of the potential power of a president's personal attention. "As I consider ways to increase the effectiveness of our diplomacy in [the] coming months," Secretary of State Cyrus Vance advised, "I am struck with the fact that there is often no more persuasive means at our disposal...than ever brief visits with you... personal diplomacy by you could make the significant difference" between success or failure in the international realm [131].

Carter frequently resisted. It was time out of his personal schedule that was at stake, and one does not recall Carter's time in office as particularly care-free. As intensely engaged a president as we've seen since Woodrow Wilson, Carter made great inroads once willing to invest himself in the most complicated of negotiations. His close and mutual friendship with Egypt's Anwar Sadat, and the trust between the two required to make the Camp David accords work, alone proves that point. But Carter rarely seemed to enjoy the task. "This kind of thing should be worked out privately," he told Vance when Japan's leadership desired a greater coupling of personal and public diplomacy. "I resent their taking advantage of us like this [138]." By 'us,' he meant, 'me.' Carter's ire with the Japanese only grew in time—ironically, just as the trade imbalance between the

two grew apace, and not in America's favor. "Tell State— There [sic] will be no extension of [the] 2 hour time!" he wrote his staff, underlining "no" three times [139]. Tokyo had had the temerity to ask him to lunch.

Chavez is at his best tracing the evolution of personal diplomacy across decades, and that is the primary thrust of his book and contribution to our field. His is a nuanced point, and he a nuanced writer. Personal diplomacy doesn't explain everything, he readily concedes, nor serve as a Rosetta stone for deciphering diplomatic decisions. Domestic politics matter. So too the nature of the international system and its crises, both anticipated and unforeseen. Rarely is the solution to any foreign policy quandary simple or mono-causal. His point, therefore, is that we need to recall that the man (and someday woman) who sits in the Oval Office, who rides Air Force One, and who can invite foreign leaders to Camp David or into their own home, matters. "Personal diplomacy," Chavez writes, "thus became part of their job description [208]."

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But presidents, while people, also remain politicians. Which mean they lie. Perhaps you prefer prevaricate? This is not criticism but fact. I, for one, do not want a commander-in-chief devoid of a poker face when international crises reach their boiling point. Bluffing is lying, just done subtly, and ideally through omission rather than bluster. Flattery matters too, and what harm is done in telling the chef his entrée was 'fabulous' when it was merely good, or in taking the time to hear out an ally's advice even if one has no intention of following it? Here I return to George H.W. Bush, whom as Chavez notes, was a master of flattery when dealing with foreign heads of state. "I need your advice and counsel," he told Francois Mitterand [182]. He wanted "the full benefit" of Helmut Kohl's wisdom as well, reiterating his "determination to get advice and suggestions" from the German leader on issues as intrinsically critical to the German as Germany's reunification [182]. During his time in office Bush said much the same to a host of world leaders, from countries big and small, nuclear powers and bit-players alike. He wanted to be liked, and more importantly wanted them to feel important. Neither was he alone in the annals of presidential history for freely buttering-up overseas contacts and leaders, or for believing in his own powers of flattery and persuasion. "I have a gut feeling I'd like to talk to him [Soviet leader Konstantin Chernenko] about our problems man-to-man," Ronald Reagan told his diary, and "see if I could convince him [158]." He'd said the same about Chernenko's immediate predecessor, during a period when Soviet leaders enjoyed life-spans similar to fruit-flies. "I felt that if I could ever get in room alone with one of the top Soviet leaders," Reagan wrote, "there was a chance the two of us could make some progress in easing tensions between our two countries [157]." His own powers of persuasion, Reagan thought, could overcome nearly two generations of structural conflict between superpowers. Would that it were that easy.

Here is an insight brought to light by Chavez' work focusing on the personal within presidential diplomacy, but one that ultimately leaves the reader unsatisfied. Presidents are people, and politicians, but they are also, by definition, ego maniacs. How else to explain the irrational confidence required to think that of all the hundreds of millions of Americans, only you are best qualified to lead? And, in the nuclear age, to be personally charged with the means to destroy all human life on earth as well. This is not normal. Such men, (and again, someday soon a woman

too) imbued with such egoism surely know its value, too. Bush and his presidential counterparts wanted foreign leaders to feel wanted, even as they also desired their advice. Chavez cannot peer into their hearts to know when presidential flattery was revelatory or tactical. No historian could. At the least, he shows that the presidents with the greatest experience tended to downplay the importance of the personal touch, at least when confiding to their own close advisers. "I can't change my position because [Soviet leader and reformer Mikhail] Gorbachev might like me," Bush said, "and he damn sure isn't going to change his because I like him [180]." The most diplomatically experienced president in modern history thought precisely the same, knowing enough to know that his own immense talent—and confidence—could not guarantee success. No person's ever could. "This idea of the President of the United States going personally abroad to negotiate—it's just damn stupid," Eisenhower said. "Every time a President has gone abroad to get into the details of these things he's lost his shirt [54]."

Thus the necessity of Chavez's book. The smartest presidents know personal diplomacy matters, and that flattery is a marvelous lubricant, but the personal touch cannot, or at least should not, be the deciding factor in any policy. They know they are not the office, nor the country they represent, but instead merely its temporary spokesperson. As Chavez shows, opportunities for personal diplomacy are quite unlikely to dissipate in any foreseeable future. Couple that with the rise of incompetent and inexperienced presidents, in the foreign policy realm in particular, as the 20th century turned into our own 21st, and we have a recipe if not for disaster, than at least for controversy, confusion, and incompetence. Donald Trump made "perfect" phone calls to foreign leaders, in his own unbiased opinion. They got him impeached. Joe Biden believes "all politics is personal, particularly international relations," adding "you've got to know the other man or woman's soul, and who they are, and make sure they know you [212]." Following decades engaged in foreign affairs as a senator and eight years as vice president, we can only hope he both means it, and knows better.

Review of Tizoc Chavez, *The Diplomatic Presidency: American Foreign Policy from FDR to George H. W. Bush*

Silke Zoller

Lyndon B. Johnson did not particularly welcome his many meetings with foreign leaders during his time in office. He did find ways to make such engagements more enjoyable, including hosting events at his ranch in the Texas hill country. There, foreign visitors could encounter a stereotypical "real" America of cowboys and Western hospitality (88).

But why did Johnson feel that he had to interact frequently with other world leaders? This aspect of a president's job is so routine today that administrations and publics rarely question it. Tizoc Chavez is a visiting assistant professor of government at Colby College. He draws back the curtain in his new monograph *The Diplomatic Presidency* to explain how personal diplomacy—face-to-face interaction with foreign leaders—became a key part of the modern U.S. presidency.

Instead of focusing on variations between different U.S. presidents, Chavez is interested in how personal diplomacy became part of the institution of the presidency. He weaves elegantly through the past ninety years of U.S. foreign relations and highlights how U.S. presidents since Franklin Delano Roosevelt acted from the same set of structural opportunities and constraints to embrace personal diplomacy. Their adoption of the practice institutionalized it and made it a standard and expected

part of the president's duties.

The Diplomatic Presidency is an example of a structural focus done well. Chavez covers a complicated set of factors that he contends motivated presidents to engage directly with their foreign counterparts. He first lays the groundwork by discussing how Franklin Roosevelt introduced personal diplomacy as a practice that a U.S. president could and should partake in. Before Roosevelt's time in office, Americans (and their presidents) did not think that the president should travel abroad or engage directly with foreign leaders; that job was reserved for trained diplomats. Roosevelt introduced many aspects of the modern presidency, and personal diplomacy was one of them.

For better or worse, subsequent presidents emulated Roosevelt's example. To explain why, Chavez traces four key factors. Presidents engaged in personal diplomacy to respond directly to international crises, to gather domestic public support, to control U.S. diplomacy without having to go through unwieldy bureaucracies, and to satisfy foreign leaders who were contending for the president's time. Chavez showcases how these four factors in tandem motivated presidents to pursue foreign policy through personal interactions.

Certain factors weighed more heavily on some presidents' minds. Most of the book's chapters cover case studies describing how one of the four aforementioned factors influenced a specific president. By examining personal interactions as a structural element of the presidency, Chavez sheds new light on well-known episodes of U.S. foreign policy. For example, he emphasizes how Richard Nixon's détente summits with the Chinese and Soviets were shaped by Nixon's obsession with his domestic standing. Emulating a strategy John F. Kennedy used in his 1960 presidential victory, Nixon designed the summits to be media spectacles that would appeal to American voters. He had his aides schedule both the main banquet with Chinese leaders in Beijing and his return trip to the United States on Air Force One so they could be broadcast to Americans live during a primetime television slot (115).

This scheduling, Chavez argues, was part of the pageantry of personal diplomacy and helped secure Nixon's reelection in 1972. In another well-known example, Chavez analyzes how Ronald Reagan bypassed most of his aides as well as the entire U.S. foreign policy establishment to conduct direct negotiations with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. That Reagan engaged with Gorbachev alone in order to have direct control over the results of their interactions is well known. What Chavez emphasizes here is that Reagan's actions were not new: they were grounded in a longer tradition of presidential personal diplomacy. He traces how all of Reagan's Cold War predecessors also cut out the State Department and other bureaucracies when they wanted to retain control over the process of engaging with a particular foreign leader.

This structural approach highlights commonalities of U.S. foreign policy in the Cold War era that have previously been relegated to the margins of individual presidents' narratives. One is the outsized influence of missteps. Because the office of the president is so influential, even the smallest perceived slight or mishap can have foreign policy ramifications. Harry Truman left an unfortunate first impression on Stalin after abruptly postponing their initial meeting in advance of the Potsdam conference (49). U.S.-Iranian relations soured when Roosevelt declined to return a courtesy visit to the Shah of Iran during Roosevelt's 1943 stay in Tehran (39). In a similar vein, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev rebuffed JFK's early attempts to engage him in part because the Kennedy administration responded to Soviet letters too quickly. While Kennedy wanted to signal an eagerness to engage, Khrushchev's impression was

that the new administration was not taking his missives seriously (69).

Another commonality is the proliferation of spectacle meetings, ones that by design do not end in substantive results. Instead, these are meant to make their participants look good. Such meetings can have a strong signaling effect, highlighting the cohesiveness of an alliance, the capacity of a president to act as a statesman, or the willingness of superpower rivals to continue talking to one another. In 1955, for example, Dwight Eisenhower traveled to a four-powers summit that “allowed the Soviets to demonstrate equality with the West, and the United States was pleased that its allies remained united” (55). Such meetings boosted popular support for a president’s policies and could help them both at the polls and in Congress.

However, these spectacles could not overcome significant domestic issues. Richard Nixon’s “Kitchen Debate” with Khrushchev in 1959 was widely publicized, but Nixon lost the 1960 presidential election. Between 1972 and 1974, his summitry could not distract the American public from Watergate. And at the close of the Cold War, George H. W. Bush could not convince voters that his personal diplomacy mattered enough to reelect him. When there is trouble at home, the empty calories of personal diplomacy spectacle can distract from it, but not necessarily overcome it.

The impact of an event is not always an easy thing for historians to pin down, but Chavez deftly showcases how U.S. audiences reacted to decades of personal diplomacy. He interweaves polling results and newspaper commentaries throughout the text to emphasize how the American public condoned or condemned specific presidential meetings with foreign leaders. Roosevelt faced significant public criticism of his personal diplomacy, with Americans opining that such interactions with foreign leaders wasted the president’s time.

By the time Truman and Eisenhower took office these initiatives were gradually becoming more acceptable to ordinary Americans. When Kennedy and Johnson were in office, Americans came to expect that their presidents would meet with foreign leaders to smooth the way to policy agreements through personal contact. For example, the public expected Johnson to seek a summit with Soviet leaders in 1968 even after he had announced that he was not running for re-election and after it was made clear that Americans did not approve of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia (102). Chavez deftly uses polls and newspapers to reveal how Americans went from critiquing personal diplomacy to expecting it.

Another important contribution this work makes is that it elevates the influence of psychology in foreign relations. In recent years, historians have emphasized the importance of emotions within diplomatic interactions, stressing the roles that likes, dislikes, stereotypes, and personal preferences played for those who created foreign policy and those who carried it out.¹

Chavez goes beyond this focus to highlight how U.S. presidents utilized psychology and the latest psychological research to shape U.S. foreign policy to their advantage.

In particular, Chavez analyzes how the Kennedy administration used psychology to conceptualize how the president interacted with other world leaders. He emphasizes that Kennedy and his aides viewed his role as a “counselor,” someone who assuages others’ concerns and helps them alleviate their stress and overcome their worries (67). By taking this role, the president could emphasize U.S. credibility as a good ally to his foreign counterparts.

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Chavez includes two strong examples of Kennedy’s interactions with Iran’s Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and West German chancellor Konrad Adenauer. In Kennedy’s view, both men seemed needy, requiring constant reassurances of U.S. support. In the Kennedy administration’s paternalistic view, it was the role of the president to soothe these men. (This view begets an idea for further study: how do changes in the field of psychology influence personal diplomacy?) Chavez aptly demonstrates that Kennedy understood himself as pursuing U.S. foreign policy interests by acting as a counselor for, listening to, and mollifying other leaders.

Because this work is about personal interactions, a key focus is on how leaders leverage friendly connections to one another in the service of their countries. Chavez emphasizes (often) that U.S. presidents pursued contacts with other leaders not for friendship’s sake, but to advance U.S. interests. This statement, while true, invites further evaluation. Chavez analyzes the difference between true friendship, without strings attached, and utilitarian forms of friendship, where one or both sides have something concrete to gain from their interaction.

This analysis appears rather late in the book, however, in the chapter on George H. W. Bush, which begins some fifty years after the start of Chavez’s narrative. An earlier assessment of presidents’ use of labels such as “my friend” might reinforce Chavez’s claims in prior chapters without forcing him to resort to unwieldy reminders that presidents were first and foremost pursuing U.S. interests. The study of “friendship” as a concept also opens new opportunities for research. For example, how often did U.S. presidents deploy this term compared to other world leaders? Calling someone a friend has a distinct place in U.S. culture, and the embrace or rejection of this term in other societies might reveal a new angle to foreign relations in general and personal diplomacy in particular.

Since Chavez examines the institution of the presidency, his analysis is by default centered on the United States and on U.S. foreign relations. His work opens the gate for future studies that could explore how widespread personal diplomacy has been as a practice throughout the world and through time. For example, Chavez discusses how unusual a secret backchannel between Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald was for foreign relations of the 1930s. Yet soon after, the reader hears of Chiang Kai-Shek’s manifold attempts to use personal diplomacy to secure his position in China (25, 41). These examples strongly suggest that there is much research yet to be done on the global use of personal diplomacy.

Another factor that will benefit from further study is how technological changes enabled personal contact at the highest levels of government. Chavez focuses on power and structural factors to explain why personal diplomacy increased over time. Yet tantalizing hints abound in his work about the role that new technologies might have played. In the introduction, Chavez mentions that the 1959 introduction of the new Boeing 707 aircraft enabled the president to travel on Air Force One and yet work and communicate at the same time (10). Two chapters later, the reader hears that Eisenhower increased his foreign travel dramatically at the end of his presidency, and in 1960 went “on multiple world tours, visiting Europe, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia” (58). There is a potential correlation here. Similarly, an increase in the quality and quantity of telephone connections might play a role.

In a slightly different vein, the dissemination of television probably fostered the pageantry and spectacle

associated with state visits. Chavez discusses Nixon's adept use of television cameras during his presidency, highlighting how he played to the camera when he traveled abroad to portray himself as a capable statesman and leader. Chavez's work hints at strong interplays between technology and personal diplomacy that may provide rich ground for future research.

The Diplomatic Presidency is an elegantly written work about the structural factors that promoted personal interactions between the U.S. president and foreign leaders. This study will appeal to historians and international relations scholars alike. Chavez deftly analyzes how all presidents since Roosevelt used personal interactions to serve their own and their country's goals and how, in turn, personal diplomacy grew throughout the latter half of the twentieth century to become a defining feature of the U.S. presidency.

Note:

1. See, for example, Barbara Keys, "The Diplomat's Two Minds: Deconstructing a Foreign Policy Myth," *Diplomatic History* 44, 1 (January 2020): 1-21; and Frank Costigliola, *Roosevelt's Lost Alliances: How Personal Politics Helped Start the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ, 2012).

Review of Tizoc Chavez, *The Diplomatic Presidency: American Foreign Policy from FDR to George H.W. Bush*

Seth Offenbach

In *The Diplomatic Presidency*, Tizoc Chavez posits that "regardless of who occupied the post-war White House, presidents were driven to use personal diplomacy for the same reasons: international crises, domestic politics, foreign leaders' requests, and a desire for control (2)." Chavez's work identifies Woodrow Wilson as a presidential trailblazer (in terms of his use of personal diplomacy) and argues that President Franklin Roosevelt also helped "usher in . . . the practice of personal diplomacy (23)." But it was not until the administrations of presidents Dwight Eisenhower and John Kennedy that personal diplomacy really became engrained.

The first chapter of *The Diplomatic Presidency* begins with an analysis of Roosevelt. The second covers the administrations of Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower. While the book does an excellent job of chronicling Roosevelt's use of personal diplomacy, chapter 1 is unfortunately its driest chapter, as it relies primarily on descriptions of Roosevelt's letters, meetings, and proposed meetings. Chapter 2 describes the decline of personal diplomacy under the Truman administration, in large part because of Truman's personality. It also chronicles how Eisenhower was reluctant to engage in it until the end of his second term. However, by the end Eisenhower's administration, personal diplomacy was here to stay.

The analysis embedded within *The Diplomatic Presidency* really begins to take off in chapter 3, with Kennedy's administration. It was Kennedy who truly embodied the importance of relying upon personal diplomacy, and under him it became an extremely important part of American diplomacy. *The Diplomatic Presidency* argues that Kennedy, in part because of his lack of experience and in part because of his youth, needed to devote a lot of time to reassuring international leaders (all of whom were his elders) of the United States' commitment and resolve. This task was more important than during previous presidential administrations.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 cover the Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Jimmy Carter presidencies (with a brief detour into the short term of Gerald Ford). These chapters describe how each president's personality meant that he

would use personal diplomacy differently. For instance, Nixon focused more on his domestic audience and on cultivating the publicity (via the U.S. media) that using personal diplomacy created. In contrast, Johnson abhorred the international spectacle of international travel but used other tools (such as meetings with ambassadors and letters to foreign leaders) to help promote American interests abroad.

The strongest chapter, from my perspective, is chapter 7, which covers the presidency of Ronald Reagan. By that point personal diplomacy was already an accepted part of the American presidency. Chavez describes Reagan, whom some viewed at the time as aloof from policy decisions, as "deeply involved, knowledgeable, and the driving force behind his administration's policy (151)." Chavez argues that world leaders were quick to recognize that "the most powerful and authoritative messages come from the White House, not from the sprawling US foreign policy bureaucracy (154)."

This view of presidential power is one of the key reasons personal diplomacy is so important. As the most powerful voice, the president can alter the course of the nation's foreign policy. And alter it Reagan did. By going around the State Department, Reagan was able to move diplomatic mountains quickly. And he was not the only president who was able to use his personal connections with a leader to achieve his goal. In chapter 8, which covers President George H.W. Bush, Chavez describes how Bush helped bring about a peaceful end to the Cold War in part because of his solid relationship with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

While *The Diplomatic Presidency* does a good job of highlighting presidential communications with foreign leaders and diplomacy, it is not perfect. The book describes, in chapter nine, that personal diplomacy was "double-edged" and was able to hurt the president as much as help. However, the work fails to document it hurting a president. The only exception was in the one paragraph devoted to President Donald Trump's attempt at personal diplomacy with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy which led to Trump's first impeachment. While that is a big example of personal diplomacy failing, it is also the only example I can recall Chavez describing. *The Diplomatic Presidency* notes this idea that when presidents engage in personal diplomacy they risk failure, but it offers few examples of failure. I wonder if that is because when the leader takes the reigns of diplomacy, it becomes less risky or if this is merely a byproduct of the United States' economic, military, and diplomatic dominance during the latter half of the twentieth century? This question is not addressed.

The mark of a good book is that it answers many questions while leaving open more questions for future scholars to tackle. *The Diplomatic Presidency* accomplishes this. For instance, while Chavez does an admirable job of documenting various reasons why presidents would push to open and increase presidential diplomacy, the book does not attempt to analyze how changing technology influenced diplomacy. How did improvement of the telephone (and later video conferences) alter and enable personal diplomacy? How did the improvement in airplanes and transportation change diplomacy? How did these technologies shrink the world? How did they make war more deadly and thus increase the need for more diplomacy (both presidential-level diplomacy and State Department-level diplomacy)? And how did U.S. economic power, and the need for the U.S. to expand its economic clout, promote more diplomacy? These are questions which future scholars should investigate.

The Diplomatic Presidency does an excellent job of covering how and why presidents communicated with world leaders. Chavez describes the creation of a custom which was new to twentieth century Americans: that

their president would travel abroad, meet foreign leaders, and actively engage in diplomacy. Chavez succeeds in expanding our understanding of the American presidency. It fits in nicely at the intersection of American foreign policy and presidential history and would be of interest to both historians and political scientists alike. In short, this is a wonderful book to have reviewed in a SHAFR publication!

Are American Presidents Diplomats? A Review of Tizoc Chavez, *The Diplomatic Presidency*

M. Elizabeth Sanders

Tizoc Chavez has written a useful book on *The Diplomatic Presidency: American Foreign Policy from FDR to George H. W. Bush*. It would be advantageous for high school and university students to learn about how Americans at the highest political level interacted with foreign leaders... as long as this is not the only book assigned. Presidents do engage in "negotiating alliances, treaties, and agreements" with other heads of state and the results of such agreements can be very important in shaping other nations' futures as well as improving the president's public support at home. Unfortunately, presidents are also the world's most important instigators and combatants in wars, and those events, too, change history.

The Chavez book has little to say about that side of the office. The peaceful and magnanimous aspects of presidential power have not, unfortunately, been the most consequential since 1945. Presidents have been responsible for millions of deaths in wars that need not have occurred (up to three million in Vietnam, and many who survived the war were permanently scarred --as was their environment-- by terrible chemicals like Agent Orange), and U.S. chief executives have pushed countries like Iran and Guatemala off their democratic paths, permanently.

The Congressional Research Service compiles lists of U.S. uses of force abroad (see <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R42738>). Omitting humanitarian/rescue and evacuation missions, there were about 216 U.S. armed forces missions after 1945. The U.S. is a war power; its president is a warrior far more often, and more consequentially, than a creative diplomat. The following table contains estimated deaths in those wars.

This is not to discount the significance of Prof. Chavez's important accounts of presidential diplomacy. One might argue that diplomatic actions are intended primarily to excite admiration and enhance personal prestige (as well as electoral prospects), although there have clearly been some altruistic humanitarian advantages to the people of foreign nations targeted by presidents, and some cases in which lives were saved by more altruistic presidential actions. However, inclusion of major non-diplomatic actions for each of the post-WWII presidents would deepen our assessment of presidential contributions to conditions in the U.S. and

the world.

One could start with an earlier president who has long been appreciated for his presumed diplomatic ambitions. Woodrow Wilson's military actions in Mexico, his insistence on preparation for joining the European war, his refusal to call a peace conference as the German chancellor pressed him to do after 1915, his offering of implausible arguments to persuade Congress to join the war, and his unwillingness to compromise on the League of Nations proposal led to millions of additional war deaths and paved the way for World War II.²

The presidents whose diplomacy Chavez analyzes are Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and George H.W. Bush. Certainly, Franklin Roosevelt's diplomatic efforts were extremely valuable in World War II. He was highly skilled in his relationships with allied leaders and his own competent advisors. But after his administration, one could argue that only Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter were (or became) diplomats.

However, Reagan's illegal and destructive covert war on Nicaragua was appalling.³ Carter's diplomatic principles and skills were unable to arouse strong American support in the context of a failing economy and weak public attraction to Middle East peace issues. Reagan, on the other hand, made a clear turn from destructive war in Central America to a momentous open diplomatic involvement with the United States' most important enemy, the Soviet Union, and the shift served both the world and his reputation.⁴

More discussion of non-diplomatic coups and wars would be useful for assessing presidential impact on the country, and world. Truman, for example, in his first major use-of-force decision, insisted on dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, devastating actions that were not needed to secure Japanese surrender.⁵ In 1950, he approved the ambitious proposal of Douglas McArthur to expand the Korean War past the 38th parallel North/South Korean boundary in 1950, apparently hoping that such a U.S. advance would garner Democratic votes in the midterm elections. Fortunately, Truman opposed the general's desire to bomb China (and ultimately fired him). But the post-October battles likely cost over a million military and civilian lives, and the North-South boundary remained in place.⁶

Eisenhower put little effort into diplomacy. He relied instead on right-wing advisors like Dulles who had personal interests in the use of force; and he used the new Central Intelligence Agency to organize the overthrow of Iran's first democratic prime minister, Mohammad Mossadegh, in 1953. That was a favor to the British who wanted to prevent Mossadegh from nationalizing their oil company. Since this venture was accomplished so easily and did not attract criticism from the American media, Eisenhower masterminded another coup the following year against a

Deaths in Major Presidential Uses of Force Since WWII

| War | U.S. Deaths | Target Country Deaths, Civilian and Military | Total |
|--|----------------------|--|-----------|
| Korean War | 36,568 ¹ | 1,911,579 ² | 1,948,147 |
| Vietnam War | 58,177 ¹ | 1,419,000 ³ | 1,477,177 |
| Dominican Republic | 44 ⁴ | 2,500 ⁴ | 2,544 |
| Lebanon, US phase 1982-3, US deaths only | 273 ¹ | | |
| Grenada | 19 ⁵ | 45 ⁵ | 64 |
| Panama | 23 ⁶ | 847 | Check 870 |
| Iraq | 4,489 ^{7,8} | 102,464-113,681 ^{9,10,11} | 117,801 |

leftist who had been elected president in Guatemala.⁷

President Kennedy's wars included the attempt to defeat Cuba's communist government and the beginning of preparations for the Vietnam war. His diplomacy, fortunately, prevented a disastrous Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. In the case of Lyndon Johnson, his reliance on hawkish advisors like Walt Rostow, McGeorge Bundy, and Dean Rusk⁸ and his emotional determination to win the Vietnam War had devastating results. The rise of social movements and ensuing congressional action ultimately caused Johnson's decision not to seek reelection in 1968 and eventually led to the end of the war the president had embraced in 1964. His successor, Richard Nixon, not only expanded and prolonged the Vietnam war and supported the Pinochet coup in Chile, but he also provided Israel large-scale military supplies for its war against the Arabs in 1973.⁹ The anger of the Arab nations led to OPEC's oil embargo and a surge in oil prices that cost Jimmy Carter—a true diplomat with a very low body count—any chance of victory in 1980.¹⁰

The Chavez chapter on George H. W. Bush and his move to a more positive relationship with Gorbachev provides a good example of presidential diplomacy at the highest level, but Bush's invasion of Panama in 1989 is more typical of presidential involvement with less powerful countries.¹¹

Bill Clinton, whose administration was not covered in the Chavez book, was hardly a diplomat, and his actions in the first years after the end of the Cold War have raised serious questions. Faced with the opportunity to help guide Russia toward democracy, he supported a group of Harvard economists who were paid by USAID to back an economic transition to democratic capitalism. Instead, they contributed to the formation of today's Russian economic oligarchy.¹² Clinton's Republican successor, George W. Bush, experienced regime invigoration after the 9-11-01 terrorist attacks, which dramatically boosted his administration's public support and led to twenty years of war in Afghanistan and Iraq. It is also difficult to support a presidential diplomacy argument for Barack Obama, given his remarkable investment in drone warfare and support for coups in Libya and Honduras and the Saudi war in Yemen.

Clearly, American presidents have little claim on diplomatic expertise or commitment. One can argue that they have more notably been presidents of war and regime change.¹³ The Chavez book clearly supports an argument for the potential importance of presidential commitments to diplomacy. But it should also lead us to pay attention to questions about the incentives to war in presidential powers and party and interest group politics, and to explore how Congress and social movements might encourage the development of the peaceful side of the presidential office.

Notes:

1. Matthew White, "American War Dead," *Necrometrics*, accessed April 1, 2013, <http://necrometrics.com/warsusa.htm>. In the Korean War, South Korean military and civilian deaths were 595,000; North Korean deaths were 1,316,579 (based on median estimates). As in the Vietnam War, other nations also contributed, and lost, military personnel, but only the US and target country deaths are included in the table.

2. Matthew White, "Death Tolls for the Major Wars and Atrocities of the Twentieth Century," accessed April 1, 2013, <http://necrometrics.com/20c1m.htm#Ko>. See Korean War (1950-53)

3. Matthew White, "Death Tolls for the Major Wars and Atrocities of the Twentieth Century." See Second Indochina War (1960-75). Where reputable sources in his lists differ, the table in most cases uses the median estimate of deaths. As an example, in the case of the American phase of the Vietnam War (1965-73), I calculated the numbers for the table as follows ("mw" here references White's median of major published estimates):

SVN military: 224,000 mw; SVN civilian: 430,000 Kennedy Commission, just below mw median; NVN + VC mil: 700,000 one below mw median due to question re Lewy estimate; NVN

civilian: 65,000; The estimated target country total then is 1,419,000, probably conservative.

4. Matthew White, "Minor Atrocities of the Twentieth Century," accessed April 1, 2013, <http://necrometrics.com/warstat6.htm#Dominican2>. See 43. Dominican Republic (1960's).

5. Matthew White, "Minor Atrocities of the Twentieth Century." See 102. Grenada, US Invasion (1983).

6. Matthew White, "Minor Atrocities of the Twentieth Century." See 104. Panama, US Invasion (1989).

7. "Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) U.S. Casualty Status Fatalities As Of: March 12, 2013, 10 a.m. EDT," Department of Defense, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://www.defense.gov/news/casualty.pdf>. US deaths in Iraq taken from Department of Defense reports for Operations Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn, as they respectively refer to the US operation in Iraq pre- and post-September 31, 2010.

8. "Operation New Dawn (OND) U.S. Casualty Status Fatalities As Of: March 12, 2013, 10 a.m. EDT," Department of Defense, accessed March 12, 2013, <http://www.defense.gov/news/casualty.pdf>.

9. "Incidents," Iraq Body Count, accessed March 15, 2013, <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/incidents/page85>.

10. "Iraqi deaths from violence 2003-2011," Iraq Body Count, accessed March 15, 2013, <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/analysis/numbers/2011/>.

11. "Iraqi deaths from violence in 2012," Iraq Body Count, accessed March 15, 2013, <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/analysis/numbers/2012/>. Iraqi civilian deaths based on Iraq Body Count's data up until December 15, 2010. Annual deaths in Iraq in 2012 and 2011 based on IBC's reports "Iraqi deaths from violence in 2012" and "Iraqi deaths from violence 2003-2011," which along with a count of IBC's records from December 30, 2010 until December 30, 2012, was subtracted from the present sum.

12. "Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) U.S. Casualty Status Fatalities as of: November 21, 2013," Department of Defense, accessed November 21, 2013, <http://www.defense.gov/news/casualty.pdf>. The first line of American casualties in Afghanistan based on DoD's November 21, 2013 figure for Operation Enduring Freedom's Afghanistan-only deaths.

13. "Coalition Deaths by Year," iCasualties, accessed March 15, 2013, <http://icasualties.org/OEF/ByYear.aspx>. Since numbers are given per month and per year, I included the parenthetical number in the first row (2292), which is the total number of U.S. deaths from 2001 through mid-March of 2013, to be consistent with the second line, which shows the post-surge total (from the spring of 2010 through 2012) from iCasualties.

14. "Afghanistan civilian casualty figures drop for the first time in 6 years," United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, <http://unama.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=12254&ctl=Details&mid=15756&ItemID=36445&language=en-US>. The first line of Afghanistan numbers is the sum total of casualties; the US casualties were counted since 2001; the civilian casualties are from the UN's civilian casualties since 2007, when they first started counting. The second line is from the December announcement of Obama's surge (2010-2012). The civilian numbers are from the same UN report.

15. "Covert War on Terror-The Datasets," The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, accessed March 16, 2013, <http://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/category/projects/drone-data/>. Drone strike deaths are from the Bureau of Investigative Journalism. The wide range between the high and low limits is due to the secrecy surrounding their operations. The low limit excludes 277 "possible" deaths, which may be the result of drone strikes, whereas the high number not only accounts for "possible" strikes but also the high estimate of resultant deaths.

16. Elizabeth Sanders, "The Enigma of Woodrow Wilson and the Second Lost Chance for Peace."

Presented at the June 20, 2019 SHAFR Roundtable on World War I.

17. The events that may well have led Reagan to the momentous shift are interestingly described by Beth Fischer in *The Reagan Reversal*; see also Frances Fitzgerald's detailed account (*Way Out Yonder in the Blue*) of the polarization between the "hardliners and pragmatists" Reagan had appointed, and his second-term move toward the latter camp and momentous diplomacy with Mikhail Gorbachev.

18. Sean L. Malloy, *Atomic Tragedy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008). The Malloy book is especially important for its presentation of presidential ability to construct arguments for the use of force—even the first use of atomic bombs—and for its examination of the role played by McGeorge Bundy, later a major presidential advisor for the war in Vietnam.

19. David McCullough, *Truman* (NY: Simon and Shuster, 1982), 798-856.
20. Steven Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2008); Greg Grandin, *Empire's Workshop* (NY: Picador Metropolitan Books), 60-67. See also the eight Latin American cases described in Michael Grow, *U.S. Presidents and Latin American Interventions* (Lawrence, KS, 2008).
21. David Milne, *America's Rasputin: Walt Rostow and the Vietnam War* (NY: Hill and Wang, 2008).
22. <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/henry-kissinger/2019-08-09/kissinger-told-soviet-envoy-during-1973-arab-israeli-war-my-nightmare-victory-either-side-soviet>
23. <https://www.history.com/topics/1970s/energy-crisis>
24. Jane Kellett Cramer, "'Just Cause' or Just Politics? U.S. Panama Invasion and Standardizing Qualitative Tests for Diversionary War," *Armed Forces & Society*, vol. 32, number 2, Jan. 2006, 178-201. Cramer "finds that this use of force was likely a type of diversionary war...motivated by a need to solve 'domestic political problems' rather than to achieve strategic goals."
25. Janine R. Wedel, "The Harvard Boys Do Russia," <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/harvard-boys-do-russia/> MAY 14, 1998; Marshal I. Goldman, *The Privatization of Russia* (NY: Routledge, 2003).
26. For a list of countries targeted by "Covert United States involvement in regime change" since 1948, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1954_Guatemalan_coup_d%27%C3%A9tat.

Author's Response

Tizoc Chavez

Having read and enjoyed many *Passport* roundtables over the years, I consider it an honor to have my own book reviewed by such accomplished scholars. I would like to thank Silke Zoller, Seth Offenbach, Elizabeth Sanders, and Jeffrey Engel for taking the time to read and critically engage my work and for their thoughtful comments. I would also like to thank Andy Johns for organizing the roundtable.

One of my goals in *The Diplomatic Presidency* was to complicate what has become mundane. Presidential personal diplomacy is so common today that it often goes unnoticed. The media still reports on it, but except for dealings with the leaders of major powers like China or Russia, or major trips abroad, the public is often unaware and uninterested. This was not always the case. But over time, what was once a new and exciting diplomatic practice became routine and an expected part of a president's global leadership.

Personal diplomacy is not a new scholarly topic. FDR's wartime conferences, Richard Nixon's trips to Beijing and Moscow, Jimmy Carter's thirteen days at Camp David, and Ronald Reagan's engagement with Mikhail Gorbachev are well-known stories. But I was interested in what connected them. I was struck by how all modern presidents, regardless of personality, partisan affiliation, or leadership style, engaged with foreign leaders face-to-face, on the telephone, and through correspondence. Personal diplomacy was not unique to any individual president, but rather, as I argue, it became a practice of the presidency. As multiple reviewers note, I see modern presidents as having been motivated to use personal diplomacy for similar reasons: the nature of the postwar international environment, where crises were constant; domestic political incentives; foreign leaders' efforts to establish close and frequent contact; and the desire of presidents for centralization and control of policy formation and execution.

Saying that the same forces operated on all modern presidents does not mean that they all engaged in personal diplomacy in the same way or had the same success. But as a group, modern presidents resorted to the practice with increasing frequency and for similar reasons.

I am pleased that all the reviewers found value in *The Diplomatic Presidency* and that Zoller and Offenbach note its appeal to both historians and political scientists. In her review, Zoller commends the structural approach of the book. When dealing with a topic like personal diplomacy, the expectation is a focus on the "personal." While the book discusses this aspect, as noted, my goal was to highlight commonalities. I am glad Zoller recognized this and thought the book did an effective job.

But while Zoller applauds the book's structural focus, she raises an important question about a more intimate aspect: the concept of friendship. What do leaders really mean when they call each other "friend"? In chapter 9, after having provided case studies of presidents from FDR to George H. W. Bush, I discuss various aspects related to personal diplomacy, such as risks and benefits, the utility of the practice, and the concept of friendship. Zoller states that this analysis of friendship occurs too late in the book. I agree; my evaluation of the topic could have appeared earlier. As she notes, if I had discussed the concept of friendship sooner, I would not have needed to emphasize so frequently in each case study that presidents engaged in personal diplomacy not because of any sentimental attachment, but rather to advance U.S. interests.

I did this often because I wanted to make it clear that despite language used by leaders about close personal ties—sometimes sincere, often merely diplomatic nicety—personal diplomacy is not simply about forming "friendships" as we might do in everyday life. It is not a sentimental activity. Building a bond with another leader is often a goal of American presidents, but the relationship is a means to an end. This often gets overlooked in contemporary media coverage. By emphasizing the point, I hoped to illustrate connections across administrations that might get obscured if the focus was on two leaders being "friends."

Zoller also notes, not critically but as a matter of fact, that my story is an American one. I agree with her that there are many avenues for exploration of personal diplomacy in global and non-U.S. contexts. It would be interesting to see what motivated leaders of other nations to engage frequently in personal diplomacy. I suspect that some of the same factors motivating American presidents were at play for other world leaders. And understanding the role of particular national contexts would further enrich our understanding of what became a global practice in the second half of the twentieth century.

Another point raised by Zoller, as well as Offenbach, is about the role of technology in the development of presidential personal diplomacy. While I do not ignore the issue, both are correct that the book does not focus on it. My interest centered on why presidents resorted to personal diplomacy, and overall, I do not see technology as a driving force. As I discuss in the introduction, technological advances made frequent personal diplomacy possible. However, technology facilitated more than drove leader-to-leader engagement. Just because world leaders could communicate by telephone or fly to see each other did not mean they necessarily would. They needed reasons.

Although new technologies may have made presidents more eager to interact with their foreign counterparts early on, because it was something new and they wanted to try it, over time, the novelty wore off. Thus, those technologies were not enough to explain the long-term growth of personal diplomacy. For me, the simple ability to call or meet another leader, absent other motivating factors, is not a compelling explanation for the proliferation of the practice. That said, Zoller and Offenbach rightly suggest that the impact of technology on personal diplomacy is an important and fruitful area for further study. Both raise excellent questions to explore, because technology certainly shaped the nature and quality of interactions between

leaders and global diplomatic practice in general.

We are witnessing the impact of technology on diplomacy today, as COVID-19 has made virtual meetings commonplace not only for the average person, but for world leaders as well. With video conferencing now widespread, is there really a need for American presidents and other leaders to leave their countries for expensive, time-consuming trips? As a form of personal diplomacy, do virtual meetings produce the same benefits as face-to-face encounters? Furthermore, how have social media platforms like Twitter impacted personal diplomacy? Obviously, this question was raised during the Trump years. Trump occasionally praised, congratulated, and tagged other world leaders in his tweets. However, the personal attacks he launched on various leaders are the ones we remember best. We clearly need further study on how world leaders' use of social media fits into other uses of digital diplomacy.¹⁴

In addition to critiquing the book for its lack of discussion of technology, Offenbach states that it fails to focus enough on those occasions when personal diplomacy was unsuccessful and hurt presidents. Indeed, failure is not the central theme of any chapter. However, I believe the book does not neglect this critical aspect. In chapter 9, I discuss the potential pitfalls of the practice and the dangers involved. Likewise, throughout the book, I cite numerous examples of a president's leader-to-leader engagement failing. For example, I note Harry Truman's inability to bring the leaders of Pakistan and India together over Kashmir; Dwight Eisenhower's failed summit in Paris in May 1960 following the U-2 incident; Lyndon Johnson's often frustrated attempts to deal with a variety of crises; and Deng Xiaoping's initial rebuff of George H. W. Bush's outreach following the Tiananmen Square massacre.

But Offenbach's suggestion that we examine the practice more critically is a good one. Personal diplomacy is not a panacea. But one of the challenges of studying it is defining what constitutes success. Does a formal, written agreement need to be produced? Is constructive consultation enough? Is the generation of "goodwill" adequate? These are essential questions that, while I touch on them, are not at the center of the book. Thus, further study on the risks involved in personal diplomacy and how it can hurt presidents would be valuable.

Like Offenbach, Sanders wishes the book had discussed the darker side of presidential power and highlighted more of the undiplomatic behavior of White House occupants. She rightly notes that presidents are not simply peace-loving diplomats, and their frequent use of military action has had tragic results for millions around the globe. This is a point I could have made clearer.

But if American presidents have been, in Sanders' words, "presidents of war," that does not mean that they have also not been presidents of diplomacy. She provides numerous examples of presidents' destructive decisions, but it strikes me as odd to argue that these instances mean presidents did not also remain diplomats. Sanders appears to equate diplomacy with peace. In doing so, she is in good company, as many scholars emphasize its peaceful aspects.¹⁵ But war and diplomacy are not mutually exclusive.¹⁶ Indeed, diplomacy can further violent objectives. And as I demonstrate in the book, presidents engaged in personal diplomacy for numerous reasons, many of which had nothing to do with producing global tranquility.

Thus, when I speak of diplomacy, I do not see it as synonymous with peace but rather as a method to advance a nation's objectives, whatever they may be. As renowned diplomat and scholar Harold Nicolson wrote, diplomacy is "the management of international relations by negotiation."¹⁷ So a president could use his personal diplomacy for anything from seeking peace in the Middle East (as Jimmy Carter did) to forming a coalition to wage war (as George H. W. Bush did).

In this light, Sanders' comment about Eisenhower putting "little effort into diplomacy" would be true only if "effort" was defined strictly as advancing peaceful policies. But when I use the term "personal diplomacy," I am referring not to peaceful intentions but rather to occasions when a president engaged directly with foreign leaders through various means to deal with a myriad of issues. By that measure, Eisenhower and other modern presidents all devoted quite a bit of energy to diplomatic endeavors.

I was particularly gratified by Engel's praise, as he has written extensively on George H. W. Bush's personal diplomacy. He highlights one of the key points I hoped to convey. He observes that presidents as a group are an egotistical bunch, politicians to their core, and though some are wiser and more skillful than others, they are all going to engage in personal diplomacy. Yet presidents have different personalities and styles, and these matter in the conduct of personal diplomacy, a point also raised by Zoller when commending the book for its discussion of psychology and emotion.

Because presidential authority in foreign affairs is broad, they have wide latitude in their interactions with foreign leaders. But as Engel asks, what happens when a president is inexperienced and incompetent? Or more concerned with his own interests than the nation's? His comments on the dangers of presidential diplomacy echo the question raised by Offenbach about failure.

There are few guardrails in personal diplomacy. And from the beginning, there have been critics. When Woodrow Wilson announced during his 1918 State of the Union address that he would travel to Europe to participate in the postwar peace conference, few in Congress applauded. His secretary of state, Robert Lansing, thought he was "making one of the greatest mistakes of his career."¹⁸ Even after decades of presidential engagement with foreign leaders, enough skepticism persisted that a former U.S. ambassador wrote an op-ed at the beginning of the Reagan years calling personal diplomacy "The Dreaded Diplomatic Disease."¹⁹

Dreadful or not, presidential personal diplomacy has become an expected part of a president's duties. No matter how much some wish this were not the case, it is unlikely to change anytime soon. Thus the need to understand why and how presidents do it.

Notes:

1. Cornelius Bjola and Marcus Holmes, ed., *Digital Diplomacy: Theory and Practice* (New York, 2015).
2. For example, Adam Watson defined diplomacy as "the process of dialogue and negotiation by which states in a system conduct their relations and pursue their purposes by means short of war"; and in his classic work *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice*, Sir Ernest Satow stated that diplomacy was "the conduct of business between states by peaceful means." See Watson, *Diplomacy: The Dialogue between States* (New York, 1983), 11; and Satow, *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice*, 4th ed. (London, 1957), 1.
3. Tarak Barkawi, "Diplomacy, War, and World Politics," in *Diplomacy and the Making of World Politics*, ed. Ole Jacob Sending, Vincent Pouliot, and Iver B. Neumann (Cambridge, UK, 2015), 55–79.
4. Harold Nicolson, *Diplomacy* (Oxford, UK, 1963), 4.
5. Richard Ellis, *Presidential Travel: The Journey from George Washington to George W. Bush* (Lawrence, KS, 2008), 184; Memorandum, Robert Lansing, "The President's Going to the Peace Conference," November 18, 1918, Papers of Woodrow Wilson Digital Edition, University of Virginia Press, <https://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/WILS.html>.
6. J. Robert Schaezel, "The Dreaded Diplomatic Disease," *Los Angeles Times*, January 13, 1981.