

# A Roundtable on Daniel Bessner and Fredrik Logevall, “Recentring the United States in the Historiography of American Foreign Relations”

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## Much Ado About Nothing New

Chester Pach

Daniel Bessner and Fredrik Logevall have set SHAFR astir with their article on “Recentring the United States in the Historiography of American Foreign Relations.” Even before its publication, their piece was the subject of hallway conversations at academic conferences, presumably those that occurred just before the COVID-19 pandemic closed down all such gatherings.<sup>1</sup> SHAFR had scheduled a debate between Logevall and his critics at its annual meeting in New Orleans. Had the New Orleans conference not been cancelled, that session might have produced the same anticipation as the diplomatic history heavyweight match over post-revisionism a generation earlier between John Lewis Gaddis and Bruce Cumings.

I attended that epic battle when SHAFR met at Bentley College in 1994, and I left the auditorium convinced that Gaddis had won on points but disappointed that the intellectual fisticuffs had been far less exciting than Muhammad Ali’s Rumble in the Jungle with George Foreman. H-Diplo has provided a substitute for the cancelled New Orleans session by publishing commentaries from several critics, including those who were slated to participate in the SHAFR session, along with a reply from Logevall and Bessner. While the H-Diplo forum has been valuable, it can’t produce the same drama as face-to-face debate. We’ll never know who would have left that Brawl on the Bayou more decentered.

As Daniel Immerwahr has asserted in his introduction to the roundtable, H-Diplo rarely publishes forums on articles—the same is true of *Passport*—but Logevall and Bessner haven’t written a typical article.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps Immerwahr is right. One still wonders, though, why there’s so much fuss over this article. That question arises not because the article lacks significance—it *is* important—but because Logevall has been saying the same thing for more than fifteen years. Hasn’t anybody been paying attention?

In the current article, Bessner and Logevall make two main arguments. First, they maintain that international and transnational history, despite their beneficial effects, have decentered the United States, leading “historians, at least implicitly, to deemphasize unduly subjects that traditionally stood at the center of the historiography of U.S. foreign relations: policymaking and its relationship to the

projection of power.” Second, they believe “an important task for historians of U.S. foreign relations in the coming years will be to recenter the United States and concentrate their analytical lenses more squarely” on domestic politics and processes.

Logevall began to sketch these arguments in his Bernath Lecture in 2004 on “A Critique of Containment.” He concentrated on why U.S. policymakers were reluctant to engage in negotiations with Communist adversaries during the early years of the Cold War. At the end of his analysis, however, Logevall wondered why there was so little attention in the scholarly literature to the role of domestic politics in the Cold War policies of President Harry S. Truman. Among the reasons were “numerous exhortations in recent years for historians of U.S. foreign relations to be less Americentric in their work, to be first and foremost ‘international historians.’” The result, according to Logevall, was “a proclivity to avoid looking closely at the internal sources of a state’s external behavior,” including domestic politics.<sup>3</sup>

Logevall elaborated his critique of international history in 2009 in a forum on the state of the field of diplomatic history in the *Journal of American History*. “I am also troubled by the effort of some international historians in their scholarship . . . to ‘decenter’ the United States,” he declared. “‘To privilege the foreign as much as the United States’ . . . is to risk being ahistorical, by assigning greater influence to some actors than they may in fact deserve. The United States is not merely one power among many and has not been for a very long time.” Logevall recommended “an America-centric international history” that paid more attention to the “intimate” relationship between domestic politics and foreign policy.<sup>4</sup>

Logevall made similar criticisms of international history, even while praising the explanatory power of that approach, in his coauthored study with Campbell Craig, *America’s Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity* (2009). Once again he decried “the stated desire among many practitioners of international history to ‘de-center’ the United States in their studies and to ‘privilege’ the foreign. . . . For the fact is that the United States was never, after 1945, merely one power among many. It was always supreme; as such, it had primary responsibility for much that happened during the epoch, both for good and for bad.” Logevall advocated a large infusion of “the ‘intermestic’ (international-domestic, whereby the two are dynamically intertwined) dimension of policy, which . . . is too often nowhere to be found” in

historical studies.<sup>5</sup>

The current Bessner/Logevall article expands the arguments of these earlier publications and provides more detail. But the criticisms of the international and transnational turns are essentially the same. Maybe the current article is attracting so much attention because the authors' appeal for striking a new balance in U.S. foreign relations historiography isn't a subordinate theme in a work with broader scope. Still, Bessner's and Logevall's take on the strengths and limitations of U.S. international history should be no more of a surprise than was Ronald Reagan's famous declaration in his first inaugural address in 1981, after years of inveighing against the excesses, inefficiencies, and foolishness of the federal government, that "in this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem."

What Bessner and Logevall propose is modest and measured. They believe there should be more U.S.-centered studies of such topics as the national security state, the role of domestic politics in Cold War foreign policy, and the waging of "endless" war in recent decades. They call for more analysis of state processes and the role of organizations and individuals in shaping U.S. international engagement. What they advocate is similar to what they have done in their own scholarship. Their publications include sophisticated studies of the role of structure—domestic and international—and contingency in the decisions of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson to escalate the war in Vietnam and the ways that defense intellectual Hans Speier helped build formal and informal networks of expertise and influence in U.S. national security policy.<sup>6</sup> In bestowing book prizes or awarding research grants, the authors believe that scholarly committees should judge those who write about U.S. foreign relations not by the number of international archives they visit but the significance of the questions they ask and the sophistication of their analyses. It's hard to see how anybody could reasonably object.

The Bessner/Logevall article resonates with me because it describes my own scholarly work. My first major project concluded that the main reason for the startling growth of U.S. military aid programs in the late 1940s was to provide critical reassurance to friendly nations and only secondarily to raise their military capabilities.<sup>7</sup> I could have explored the effects of those assistance programs on recipient nations through a range of international sources, but the question I asked about the motivation of the Truman administration could be answered only with U.S. sources. My current research on U.S. television news concentrates on how the major networks covered the war and the effects of war reporting on White House policymaking. I've found that Lyndon Johnson believed that winning the war in American living rooms was critical to U.S. success in Vietnam.<sup>8</sup> It's possible to write a global history of news coverage of the Vietnam War. That's a different project. Mine isn't incomplete, limited, or flawed because it focuses on U.S. television networks.

Assessments of our field can be valuable. A good example is Charles S. Maier's caustic analysis of diplomatic history forty years ago as "marking time" while other fields were vibrant and innovative.<sup>9</sup> Maier's article produced hand-wringing and recriminations, but it also contributed to a reinvigoration of international relations history in the ensuing decade. Maybe Bessner's and Logevall's critique will also have salutary effects, although U.S. foreign relations history is in far better shape than when Maier wrote. Their recommendations are as sensible and timely today as when Logevall began making them more than fifteen years ago.

Still, there are bigger issues to confront. As a pandemic ravages the globe, as systemic racism and economic inequality provoke outrage and protest, businesses collapse, jobs vanish, and universities face unprecedented financial

challenges, there are many things—lives, communities, alliances, democracy—that more urgently need recentring.

Notes:

1. Daniel Immerwahr, "Introduction," H-Diplo Roundtable XXI-42, May 25, 2020, <https://networks.h-net.org/node/28443/discussions/6165504/h-diplo-roundtable-xxi-42-bessner-and-logevall-%E2%80%9CRecentring>.
2. Ibid.
3. Logevall, "Bernath Lecture: A Critique of Containment," *Diplomatic History* 28 (September 2004): 495–96.
4. Logevall, "Politics and Foreign Relations," *Journal of American History* 95 (March 2009): 1076.
5. Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall, *America's Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity* (Cambridge, MA, 2009), 4–10.
6. Fredrik Logevall, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam* (Berkeley, 1999); Daniel Bessner, *Democracy in Exile: Hans Speier and the Rise of the Defense Intellectual* (Ithaca, NY, 2018).
7. Chester J. Pach, Jr., *Arming the Free World: The Origins of the United States Military Assistance Program, 1945–1950* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1991).
8. Pach, "Lyndon Johnson's Living Room War," *New York Times*, May 30, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/30/opinion/lyndon-johnson-vietnam-war.html>; and Pach, "Journalism and US Foreign Policy," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia in American History*, August 2019, [https://oxfordre.com/americanhistory/oso/viewentry/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.001.0001\\$002/afrefore-9780199329175-e-377;jsessionid=E3B57A6F43E305DA8EF4FA21844C9472](https://oxfordre.com/americanhistory/oso/viewentry/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.001.0001$002/afrefore-9780199329175-e-377;jsessionid=E3B57A6F43E305DA8EF4FA21844C9472).
9. Charles S. Maier, "Marking Time: The Historiography of International Relations," in *The Past Before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States*, ed. Michael Kammen (Ithaca, NY, 1980).

### Review of Daniel Bessner and Fredrik Logevall, "Recentring the United States in the Historiography of American Foreign Relations"

Cindy Ewing

Daniel Bessner and Fredrik Logevall offer a welcome reminder of the importance of domestic politics in U.S. foreign relations history. They assert that "domestic processes and phenomena . . . often have had more of an effect on the course of U.S. foreign relations than international processes." Out of this provocative claim comes a set of recommendations that they say scholars should incorporate into their research, writing, and field service.

At first glance, it is difficult to see any problem with a general call for historians to deepen their engagement with the domestic dimensions of U.S. policymaking. But Bessner and Logevall's altogether reasonable prompt sits on top of a specific vision of the U.S. in the world, which begs a few questions about the assumptions underlining their diagnosis, the claims that emerge out of that assessment, and the subsequent changes they hope to see in the field.

The framing of the United States as the dominant power of the post-1945 global order bolsters a familiar story about the "American century." Woven into the empirical assertion quoted above is a supposition of monocausal agency: that the authors of America's history and its foreign relations are Americans. Surely that is part of the story, and Americans have often taken center stage in the design and execution of U.S. foreign policy. But as a starting point, this focus on Americans in their domestic setting would be unnecessarily limiting for, and perhaps even counterproductive to, understanding the complex ways that different kinds of actors, interests, and institutions have shaped international relations as a whole.

Historians have shown the roles played by a wide range

of other actors outside of U.S. policymaking circles who shape how U.S. foreign policy is transmitted, extended, and circulated beyond the United States, sometimes in support of U.S. objectives and at other times, in direct opposition to them. The scope of interactions and activities that comprise foreign relations, including formal policy, are not developed in a vacuum but involve the interplay of actors and institutions within and beyond U.S. borders, including its large diplomatic apparatus and overseas basing as well as informal networks, civil society, and interest groups that in turn shape political and policy debates in Washington. How the United States has projected its power and maintained that power through a wide range of relationships, including alliances and client states, suggests that its foreign relations cannot be understood from within the United States alone.

To declare that domestic politics “had more of an effect” than the sum of all aspects of the global context in which the United States operates is to situate this history in a narrow causal hierarchy, one that is antithetical to the thick description and contextualization that historians prize.

The key conceptualization of the United States that Bessner and Logevall put forth is one of its “overweening power.” But is power the most important dimension with which one should frame U.S. foreign relations history? The call to “recenter” the United States is not only a question of deepening the level on which historians are willing to engage American sources or the policymaking process within the United States; it also entails a more significant “rebalancing” of the field around one specific dimension of American primacy that folds into international history an underlying assumption about the U.S.’s unremitting influence in the world when that power was not always determinative.

To situate the United States in international history as the “sun” around which the world rotates is both a methodological and historical proposition. Methodologically, even historians of other regions of the world utilize U.S. sources and probe deeply into the nature of U.S. involvement and into the intricacies of U.S. policy and American political discourse. Historically, the United States was not always or in all places the primary driver of change.

For example, the anticolonial movements that surged after 1945 in South and Southeast Asia were not in the throes of another Wilsonian moment—simply deciding between alignments and foreign aid—they were responding directly to the collective trauma of Japanese occupation and the colonial systems of rule that were re-imposed in the vacuum created by Japan’s withdrawal. In Vietnam, it is commonplace to tell the stories of the First and Second Indochina Wars (to the extent those wars are discussed at all) as wars against imperialism without beginning with the United States. Historians still debate the extent to which U.S. decisions and actions were more decisive to the Vietnam War’s ultimate outcome on a grand scale or at specific turning points than the agency of local actors in Vietnam at a more granular level.

What kind of histories would we tell if we started with U.S. hegemony as our working premise and examined American dominance from primarily an American point of view? Even American exceptionalism was first formulated outside of the United States, whether one attributes its coinage to Tocqueville or Stalin. If the United States is international history’s sun, then Bessner and Logevall’s call for rebalancing is not simply to see domestic and international approaches as complementary, but to position the United States squarely in the center, as both object and site of inquiry, thereby undermining an international history approach that not only contextualizes U.S. history

but also reveals the limits of that dominance through the excavation of other histories.

As historians continue to problematize the place of the United States in international history, returning to a U.S.- and Western-centric perspective risks undoing the significant decolonial work of which the international and transnational turns were just a part. That work also enabled us not only to tell the histories of peoples onto whom U.S. power was projected, but also to look more closely at how the construction of the United States itself involved sustained interactions and collisions with the world. Moreover, postcolonial approaches, still uneasily situated in foreign relations history, integrate other modes of critique that help reframe policymaking and other forms of political expertise as a kind of knowledge-making bound by culture and other social forces.

This rich story of projection, construction, and constraint has opened many new areas of research and suggests that U.S. power was not only of American making but constitutive of a larger story about a global order that was constantly contested and remade across the latter twentieth century.

Perhaps Bessner and Logevall state their case too strongly, given the ways that the United States and its position in the world are constructed both in and beyond its borders. While Bessner and Logevall are careful to note that a domestic approach would not displace attention to international factors, to separate the domestic from the foreign may be to risk drawing a distinction without a difference. One need only look outside at recent militarized police action to see how swapping out the operational use of munitions can blur such lines.

Finally, the approach that Bessner and Logevall call for, which is grounded in interpretations that they worry have already become “deemphasized,” need not compete or exclude a plurality of narratives, perspectives, and critiques. Rather than delineate fixed causal hierarchies, embracing complexity has served SHAFR well and fruitfully brought historians of U.S. foreign relations and international history into closer contact with other scholars of area studies and different thematic lenses. This approach did not come at the expense of studying policy and politics but rather, helped us move towards a deeper understanding of them while attending to the problematic construction of U.S. power as a source of global change. As a gesture of invitation, Bessner and Logevall’s article raises worthwhile questions for SHAFR members as a community to contemplate. What vision of U.S. and international history should we work to realize? How should we engage the many approaches that have emerged and since expanded the horizon of inquiry, not only in method but in our very definition of what the United States was and is?

## Recentering the United States in the World—Without Exceptionalism<sup>1</sup>

Kevin Y. Kim

In August 1946, at the dawn of a global era after World War II, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leader Mao Zedong sat with American journalist Anna Louise Strong at a table outside his Yan’an hideout in north China. Before Strong, Mao laid out a four-zone theory of world politics. On one side of the table he put a big teacup, which represented the United States’ “reactionary” imperialists. On the other side stood a full set of teacups: the Soviet Union. Between these two zones, Mao chuckled, was a chaotic assemblage of capitalist nations, a third, intermediary zone, which he drew with loosely strewn cups, matches, and cigarette boxes. More important, he argued, was a fourth zone—a

ring of small wine cups—which he placed around the first zone of U.S. reactionary elites.<sup>2</sup>

Hemming in their imperialist leaders, this ring of cups stood for “the American people,” who did “not want war.” Mao inferred this from recent congressional debates over price controls and trade policies, which CCP leaders followed intently as part of the United States’ shifting domestic scene. (Why dump U.S. goods abroad, Mao asked Strong, “when the American people could use those goods themselves”?) To launch a “Third World War” across the table, U.S. reactionaries would have to conquer this fourth zone by imposing a neo-“fascist” system to hold down U.S. society. “I think the American people might resist this,” Mao predicted. “I do not think they would accept fascism easily.”<sup>3</sup>

Daniel Bessner and Fredrik Logevall have stirred considerable controversy for making several points that Mao and many global actors instinctively grasped after the Second World War. First, in a post-1945 world, U.S. power mattered enormously. Second, U.S. power was not fixed or monolithic, but dynamic and complex. The United States was a major power, in a constellation of competing powers, whose movements bore close watching. Finally, those movements might have nothing to do with the international system, but much to do with the internal system of the United States. “[D]omestic processes,” Bessner and Logevall write, “often have had more of an effect on . . . U.S. foreign relations than international processes.” Or, as Mao put it, the big cup only moves with the little cups, if at all.<sup>4</sup>

So why such controversy? Judging from the wide-ranging reactions to Bessner and Logevall, it is not because many historians deny these points. Rather, many critics seem to perceive the authors’ call for reviving a U.S.-centered historiography as a call for dominating, distorting, or even reversing the entire field. They do so even as Bessner and Logevall stress that U.S. foreign policy (a potent force with significant “limits”) must reclaim “a—not the—central place” in a field of diverse approaches and “spatial geographies.” Restoring balance, not hegemony, is what these authors are after.

Yet, the image many of Bessner and Logevall’s critics probably imagine, upon reading their article, isn’t Mao projecting a restrained United States in a polycentric world, but rather President Lyndon B. Johnson, at the height of the Vietnam War, trying to manage, at once, the Green Revolution in India, U.S. global leadership, and his domestic Great Society agenda—all of which comprised, historian Nick Cullather has aptly argued, an arrogant “package” of U.S. power that U.S. presidents often misused. A turn toward U.S.-centered historiography, in other words, carries the great traumas of U.S.-centered history as it actually unfolded, committed by a polity imbued with exceptionalist views of its global destiny.<sup>5</sup>

Such concerns are understandable. As a supporter of Bessner and Logevall’s viewpoint, I also share them. There is a perilous line between studying preponderant U.S. power and normalizing it. As both authors insist, the United States was a “global hegemon”; as “the sun” around which the world orbited, it “could afford to remain parochial.” This begs the question: can our field host a resurgence of U.S.-centric approaches, particularly domestic-focused ones, without reinscribing the U.S. state and society’s worst tendencies?<sup>6</sup>

I believe we can, but only if we exercise a methodological self-consciousness that recenters the United States without exceptionalism. For decades, “U.S. in the World” historians (diplomatic historians, we once called ourselves) produced a vibrant literature addressing Bessner and Logevall’s concerns. Through the work of scholars like Robert Divine,

John Lewis Gaddis, Lloyd Gardner, Michael Hogan, Melvyn Leffler, Marilyn Young, and many others, we know a great deal about the U.S. state and its domestic and global dimensions. However, Bessner and Logevall’s proposed new wave of U.S.-centered scholarship is needed precisely because much prior work too comfortably assumed—or, at the other extreme, polemically dismissed—the views and interests of the U.S. state. Focused on leading policy elites (those same dozen or so presidents, secretaries of state, and bipartisan “wise men”), reliant on actors’ categories (“containment,” “internationalism,” “anti-Communism”), confined by Washington-defined frameworks (“nuclear deterrence,” “U.S. credibility,” “the Marshall Plan”), our predecessors left us with many questions concerning the national security state, private interest groups, Cold War “consensus,” the economic aspects of U.S. diplomacy, and other issues identified by Bessner and Logevall.

As we search for answers, reasons for optimism abound. Ideologically, “U.S. in the World” historians routinely challenge the analytical confines of “American Century” exceptionalism. Practically, we possess an array of technological and linguistic skills as well as social backgrounds, making our field more productive and diverse than it has ever been. But these positive factors will not help

us if we recenter the United States merely to reinstate its imperial center. We will fail if we do not enrich traditional conceptions of U.S. political power—presidential elections, White House decision-making, military and intelligence agencies—with new actors and themes infused not only with international and transnational approaches, but social, cultural, economic, and domestic political ones.

In my own work on Cold War America and postcolonial Korea, I try to avoid exceptionalism by approaching U.S. power as an unstable, pluralistic phenomenon whose meaning and scope are contested by U.S. and non-U.S. officials, businessmen, soldiers, activists, and citizens. Inspired by Emily Rosenberg’s call, some thirty years ago, for SHAFR historians to boldly “walk the borders” of the U.S. state to illuminate its central halls of power, I am struck by how dialectically linked the acts of decentering and recentering U.S. power were in the lives of historical actors we study. Following their lead, we must widen our definitions of U.S. state-making, expose the state’s complex interconnections with civil society, and diversify our archives and geographies domestically as well as globally. Only then can we fully grasp, as Bessner and Logevall are urging, how U.S. power shaped and was shaped by the domestic and global arenas.<sup>7</sup>

To international and transnational historians still skeptical of a de-exceptionalized U.S.-centered turn, I ask why, then, do so many of you write about the United States? Many of you do so tangentially or equally alongside other global actors; some of you, admittedly, don’t write about the United States at all. But as there is a place for pure international history, so is there a place for domestic history. Furthermore, the specific chronology here is crucial. We are concerned here with the post-1945 Pax Americana: an immensely consequential but comparably brief period. Today, as we live in its shadow, a reinvigorated debate about its inner-driven dynamics seems as crucial as international history’s different, equally pioneering work on its external ones. Both approaches are vital if we are to comprehend a global age of total war, unleashed by the First and Second World Wars, where the line between “domestic” and “foreign”—indeed between “war” and “peace,” as Mao’s and LBJ’s radically different dilemmas suggest—grew tragically blurred.<sup>8</sup>

Historians are creatures of their own history. It is no surprise that, during the United States’ global ascendancy,

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that the importance of these approaches should not be assumed, but proven—as scholars of policing who have adopted international and transnational lenses have done.

That said, we disagree strongly with the assertion that there is no distinction between the domestic and the foreign. As we stated in our H-Diplo roundtable response:

Several of the respondents [to our original piece] criticize our supposed reification of the foreign/domestic dichotomy, asserting that recent scholarship demonstrates that this dualistic framing is a construction that doesn't reflect the complexities of historical "reality." Well, yes, but the same can be said for all categories of analysis—not only foreign and domestic, but international and transnational as well—each of which necessarily introduces its own conceptual and interpretive narrowness. No historical phenomenon is ever solely "foreign," "domestic," "international," or "transnational." As scholars, we decide which of these constructed categories we privilege and why we are doing the privileging.<sup>3</sup>

We hold firmly to this claim.

We concur with Ewing that after 1945 "the U.S. was not always and in all places the primary driver of change." Would any responsible historian suggest otherwise? Rather, we maintain that, regardless of whether or not the United States was the main impetus of change, most world powers and movements at most times needed to consider potential U.S. behavior (as Kim's anecdote about Mao in this forum confirms). Moreover, we disagree with Ewing's claim that "American exceptionalism was first formulated outside of the U.S."—as early as John Winthrop's 1630 sermon "A Model of Christian Charity" (delivered on the ship *The Arbella* as it crossed the Atlantic Ocean), proto-Americans were expounding exceptionalist themes.

Ewing is surely correct to say that "the construction of the U.S. itself involved sustained interactions and relations with the world"; "that U.S. power was not only of an American making but part of a larger story about global order that was constantly contested and remade"; and that "other modes of critique from literary studies and political theory ... can be applied to policymaking as a kind of knowledge-making bound by culture and other social and political forces." (The latter was indeed the method adopted in Bessner's first book.) The United States has always operated on a crowded international stage. After 1945, however, it was the world's most powerful country, and this power enabled it to have preponderant impact on international history.

Finally, a word about causality. Ewing writes that "the approach that Bessner and Logevall call for ... need not

compete or exclude a plurality of narratives, perspectives, and critiques" and that "embracing complexity [as opposed to constructing causal hierarchies] has served SHAFR well" in various ways. We agree; not every historian must focus her or his attentions on developing a causal narrative that explicates why a particular event or phenomenon proceeded as it did. Yet to abandon, or even downplay, the search for causality seems to us to abandon one of the most important goals of historiography—and one of the most powerful justifications for the historical profession itself. If we don't construct causal narratives, we present history as being just "one damn thing after another," which is hardly a compelling or interesting way to understand the past.

The search for causality seems likely to be a central component of Pach's much-anticipated study on U.S. television news and the Vietnam War. As Pach notes, his study could have adopted an international approach that surveyed how foreign TV reporters and networks interpreted developments on the ground and articulated those findings to their viewers. But that book would not have done much to explain the effect U.S. television news had on the war's course. Put another way, expanding his purview to include foreign coverage would have made Pach's story more complex, but not necessarily superior, richer, or more compelling; as we note above, expanding the field of vision in one area often means narrowing it in another. What mattered to most Americans in the late 1960s, including the occupant in the White House and his advisers—and, therefore, what mattered to U.S. policymaking—was the war's portrayal on U.S. nightly news, not what was being beamed into living rooms in Japan or Australia or France.

Our thanks once again to Ewing, Kim, and Pach for their thoughtful responses and critiques. We're glad that our article has inspired a field-wide discussion that, we hope, will make all of our work stronger.

Notes:

1. Fredrik Logevall, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of the War in Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Daniel Bessner, *Democracy in Exile: Hans Speier and the Rise of the Defense Intellectual* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018); Fredrik Logevall, *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam* (New York: Random House, 2012).
2. See, for example, Stuart Schrader, *Badges Without Borders: How Global Counterinsurgency Transformed American Policing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019).
3. H-Diplo Roundtable XXI-42 on Bessner and Logevall, "Re-centering the United States in the Historiography of American Foreign Relations," 25 May 2020, <https://networks.h-net.org/node/28443/discussions/6165504/h-diplo-roundtable-xxi-42-bessner-and-logevall-recentering>.